GLOBAL POLITICS

VCE Units 3 & 4

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Preface and acknowledgements

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This revised edition has been updated to reflect both the dynamic nature of global politics and educators' increased familiarity and experience with the VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design.

The production of any textbook is a complex task subject to very tight time frames. This process has been made more challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we would like to congratulate the authors, the researchers, the design team, the editors, the proofreaders and the printers for the commitment, diligence, patience and skill they have exhibited over the journey. I would also like to thank the SEV office staff for their invaluable contributions and support, and the SEV Textbook and Resource subcommittee for their guidance.

It should be noted that SEV regards this textbook as an ongoing project and we are always working on additional materials and professional learning events to complement this work. Please visit www.sev.asn.au for further details.

In closing, I wish to highlight the online support SEV will provide as a part of your textbook purchase. A website with additional material has been created for students and teachers of **VCE Global Politics 3 & 4**, and is available to purchasers of this textbook via the hyperlink below.

For access to these online resources visit:

www.sev.asn.au/textbook-resources/gp34

We at Social Education Victoria trust that this publication and its online resources will play a part in your enjoyment and understanding of this subject, and wish you all the best for your studies.

Laura Newman
Executive Officer
Social Education Victoria

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3 GLOBAL ACTORS

Area of Study 1:
Global Actors

Area of Study 1: Global Actors
Outcome 1

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to evaluate the power of key global actors and assess the extent to which they achieve their aims and are able to challenge state sovereignty. To achieve this outcome, the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

- the key terms: nation, state, sovereignty, power, global governance, multilateralism, globalisation

States

- aims, roles and power of states
- the impact on state sovereignty of:
  - regional groupings
  - contested borders
  - issues that require multilateral resolution.

Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs)

- aims, roles and power of:
  - the United Nations (UN)
  - the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
  - the International Criminal Court (ICC)

Non-state actors

- aims, roles and power of TWO non-state actors chosen from the following (both may be chosen from the category of legal organisations):
  - legal organisations, including human rights NGOs, environmental NGOs and/or organised religions
  - global terrorist movements.

Transnational corporations (TNCs)

- aims, roles and power of ONE transnational corporation.

Key skills

- define and explain key global politics terms and use them in the appropriate context
- explain the aims and roles of key global actors
- evaluate the power of key global actors
- assess the extent to which key global actors achieve their aims

- analyse the challenges facing state sovereignty
- evaluate the extent to which global actors are able to challenge the sovereignty of states
- use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments.

3 Global Actors

Area of Study 1: Global Actors

Global actors

In this Area of Study, you will consider the key **global actors** that hold power in the twenty-first century. Beginning with an analysis of states and the concept of **sovereignty**, you will discuss the aims and role of the state as well as explain the reasons that states remain the most powerful global actors in the international arena. Despite this, the sovereignty of states is being constantly challenged.

Through the use of contemporary case studies (within the last 10 years), you will consider three challenges to state sovereignty: regional groupings, contested borders and issues that require multilateral resolution.

Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) will also be investigated, including the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Criminal Court (ICC). You will evaluate the power of these actors and the extent to which they have achieved their aims.

Similarly, non-state actors continue to expand their presence on the world stage. These can be divided into two groups. There are legal organisations, such as human rights non-government organisations (NGOs), environmental NGOs and organised religions; and illegal organisations, such as global terrorist movements. Through the study of two non-state actors from these categories, you will evaluate the extent to which these non-state actors are able to challenge the sovereignty of states and pursue their global objectives.

Lastly, you will study a transnational corporation (TNC), examining whether or not TNCs have become powerful enough to challenge state sovereignty and whether their contributions have been progressive or exploitative. Once you have completed this Area of Study, you will be able to evaluate the power of a range of global actors, with a clear understanding of how each actor both challenges and is challenged by states.

> A **global actor** operates on an international level and has a certain level of global power and influence.

> **Sovereignty** is the legitimate or widely recognised ability to exercise effective control of a territory within recognised borders. This is the primary organising principle of global politics, providing states with the authority to represent their territorial entity within the international community. State sovereignty can be challenged internally (for example, by secessionist groups) or externally (such as when one state invades another).

The global political arena

The global political arena is made up of a number of key global actors in the twenty-first century. Since the **Peace of Westphalia** (1648) acknowledged the sovereignty of a significant number of states, the global arena has evolved. It was the Treaty of Westphalia that established the rules that govern statehood today. At the centre of this treaty was an agreement from Europe's rulers to recognise each other's right to rule over their own territories without interference. States therefore had equality under the treaty, as no higher power could intervene in state affairs and there was no authority more powerful than the state.

> **Peace of Westphalia** describes the result of treaties that ended the Thirty Years War, establishing equality between states and granting monarchs the rights to maintain standing armies and levy taxes.

> Figure 3.1.1 overleaf is a graphical representation to keep handy, to remind you of what you will achieve after completing this Area of Study.

Figure 3.1.1 – Unpacking: Global Actors

Core concepts

Key terms:
- nation
- state
- sovereignty
- power
- global governance
- multilateralism
- globalisation

Over-arching 'big picture' idea

In this Area of Study you **examine** the key actors in contemporary global politics.

Key actors:
- States
- Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs)
- Non-state actors
- Transnational corporations (TNCs)

Focus questions

- Who are the key actors in contemporary global politics?
- From where does their power stem?
- What impact do these actors have on global politics?
- What challenges do these actors face in achieving their aims?
- To what degree can these global actors challenge state sovereignty?

Unlocking YOUR understanding

Impact on sovereignty

- Regional groupings
- Contested borders
- Issues that require resolution

Key skills:

Analyse the challenges facing state sovereignty.

Global actors (aims)

Key skills:

Explain the aims of key global actors.

Assess the extent to which key global actors achieve their aims.

Global actors (roles)

Key skills:

Explain the roles of key global actors.

Global actors (power)

Key skills:

Evaluate the power of key global actors.

Evaluate the extent to which key global actors are able to challenge the sovereignty of states.

States, which remain the main global actors, have long been the central force in global politics. The mutual recognition of each state's right to exist independently and to individually determine its own affairs was the traditional focus of **international relations**. However, states share the space with a range of global actors, and are facing an increasing number of social, economic and cultural issues.

The state, despite maintaining its position as the main global actor, is constantly facing challenges from a range of other key global actors that each influence the global political arena in different ways. **Globalisation** has challenged the Westphalian constitution of global politics in the past few decades, and continues to transform the traditional role of states and the roles of other global actors that assert power on the world stage. Networks and global bodies now transcend territories and borders. States increasingly collaborate with other governments to combat issues and meet their citizens' demands.

International relations is the study of relationships and interactions between states.

Globalisation refers to the acceleration and intensification of exchanges of goods, services, labour and capital, which promote global interdependence. These have been facilitated by rapid changes in communication and technology.

✳ Global actors

- **Intergovernmental organisations**, such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, can threaten the power of the state. Allowing smaller states to have a voice in global debates and international lawmaking can also have this effect. These organisations still recognise the sovereignty of states, allowing membership based on the understanding of equality and self-determination.

- **Non-state actors** include legal organisations that are committed to promoting issues such as protection of the environment and ending human rights violations. Global terrorist movements are non-state actors that seek to achieve their aims through the use of violence. Non-state actors have been able to increase their influence on the global political arena through developments in technology and communications, enabling growth beyond the boundaries of the state.

- Similarly, **transnational corporations** (TNCs) have had a major impact on the world economy, with many TNCs generating revenue larger than some states. In some cases, they have turned this economic supremacy into political influence.

States

The **state**, as it is now commonly known, was first established in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia. After many decades of war in Europe, a complex negotiation process established a number of treaties between the countries that constituted a peace settlement. A key aspect of the treaties was non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries (which was further developed in the eighteenth century). A general recognition of exclusive rights over land and population was also agreed to. States would be seen as equal regardless of their size.

After World War II, membership of the United Nations (UN) became an essential marker of statehood, with 51 states joining the organisation in 1945. Between 1945 and 1960, three dozen new states in Asia and Africa achieved independence from their European colonial rulers, and in the 1990s the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe led to a significant number of new states joining the UN, which now has 193 member states.

Statehood acknowledges that states have legitimacy and a right to exist. The government authority within a state has the power to make decisions for the population within the recognised borders, and the leader of each state has equal authority with other leaders, regardless of the geographical area or population of their state. States have obligations to each other, which must be fulfilled. They must abide by the rule of non-interference and agree to international laws and customary arrangements that have evolved since the establishment of the state. In order to become a state, it must have a clear government and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. Examples of states include Australia, Bhutan, Norway, Uganda, Turkmenistan and Paraguay.

An **Intergovernmental organisation** (IGO) is an organisation primarily composed of states, established by a treaty (a founding charter for the organisation) and thus subject to international law. Examples include the United Nations (UN), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

A **non-state actor** (NSA) is an organisation that has significant political influence without being associated with only one state. NSAs can be legal or illegal organisations. Examples include Oxfam, Amnesty International, Boko Haram and al-Qaeda.

A **transnational corporation** (TNC) is a company whose operations and investments extend beyond the boundaries of the state in which it is registered. TNCs can also be referred to as a multinationals. Examples include Coca-Cola, Royal Dutch Shell, Adidas and Walmart.

State is a term that traditionally refers to the central actor in global politics. States possess a permanent population, defined territory and recognised sovereignty. States are not necessarily culturally homogenous – Australia is a good example of this.

✳ Main features of a state

By definition a state has three main features:

- a permanent population
- defined territory
- recognised sovereignty.

The difference between states, nations and nation-states

There are many terms used to refer to states, including 'nation' and 'nation-state'. However, each has a separate definition within Global Politics.

Nation

A **nation** is a group of people who share common bonds based on culture, language and history. Nations do not have recognised sovereignty and therefore cannot seek membership of the UN or similar organisations. Some nations desire statehood and are located in one geographic area, such as the Kurdish people. Kurdish nationalism is the political and social movement to establish a sovereign nation in the areas of northern Iraq, north-western Iran, eastern and south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria, where an estimated 35 million Kurds reside. However, members of other nations, such as the Romani, are spread across the globe and may not necessarily seek to establish a sovereign state.

> **Nation** are groups of people claiming common bonds based on culture, language and history. Some nations have their own state, such as the Japanese, while some may want to establish their own state, such as the Tibetans or Kurds.

Nation-state

A **nation-state** is a political or social grouping with recognised sovereignty that also has common bonds based on culture, language and history. This means that nation-states possess all the elements of statehood (permanent population, recognised sovereignty and defined territory) in addition to having a population that is mostly culturally homogeneous. Some examples of nation-states where more than 85 per cent of the population is made up of a single ethnic group are Albania, Eswatini, Japan, Mongolia and North Korea.

> A **nation-state** is a political-social grouping in which people within territorial boundaries with recognised sovereignty have common bonds based on culture, language and history.

Activity 3.1.1 – Review questions

1. What are the key elements required for statehood?

2. Define 'nation'.

3. Explain the difference between a state and a nation-state.

4. Copy the outline of the Venn diagram below into your workbook and add key points for each section, as well as examples for each category.

State Nation
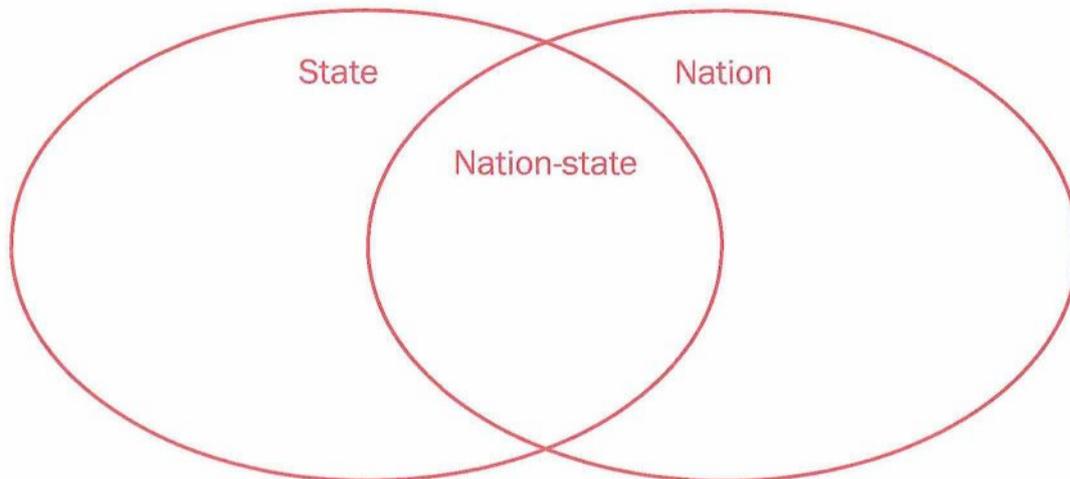
Nation-state

5. Complete the table below, allocating the following options to the correct column: South Korea, France, Vietnam, Tibet, Switzerland, Catalonia, South Sudan, Estonia, Australia, China, Egypt.

Nation	Nation-state	State

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a crucial element of the global political system. It is the basic organising principle upon which the concept of the state is built. Sovereignty gives states the ability to exercise power within the borders of their territory. Sovereignty allows states to join organisations such as the UN, ensuring international recognition and a respected place in the international community.

States face a number of challenges in maintaining their sovereign rights. Regional groupings, contested borders and issues that require multilateral resolution are three challenges that will be examined in more detail below. However, there are other challenges to state sovereignty in the twenty-first century.

Activity 3.1.2 – Review questions

1. Define 'sovereignty'.
2. Why should states work together to address third-agenda issues?

Challenges to state sovereignty – regional groupings

Regional groupings challenge sovereignty through delegation of power to a higher authority. Individual states can opt to collectively transfer power upwards to supranational organisations. The European Union (EU) is an example of regional integration, with 27 member states having transferred decision-making powers in the areas of trade, agriculture and fisheries. Nineteen of the member states also share a common currency, the euro.

Member states of the EU are not permitted to pass local laws that contradict EU law, and the EU Court of Justice (CJEU) has the role of ensuring that states and EU institutions interpret, apply and abide by EU law. In July 2021, the CJEU ruled that a chamber established by Poland in 2017 with the power to discipline judges violated EU law. The CJEU stated that the chamber lacked 'independence and impartiality'. Member states are still 'masters of the treaties', ensuring that states must agree before the EU can attain any additional powers, but the members have transferred more sovereignty to the EU than to any other non-sovereign regional organisation elsewhere.

EU refugee policy

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the movement of people, both legal and illegal. Migration has reduced as states have closed borders and scaled back programs to accept refugees. In 2020, there were 33 per cent fewer applications for asylum in the EU than during the same period in 2019. This can be considered an escalation of a trend which saw 634,700 applications for asylum in 2018, which was significantly fewer than the more than one million applications in 2015–2016.

Activity 3.1.3 – Research

1. Research the reasons for people seeking refugee status in the EU. How has this changed from 2015–2016 to now?
2. Next, research the responses of a few EU member states to the movement of people. Record which states have willingly accepted refugees and which have turned refugees away. Choose one state and identify the reasons for the state's approach to people movement.
3. Since December 2020, many EU states have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. Can you find evidence that any EU states are providing vaccinations to refugees? What reasons might states give for withholding vaccines from refugees?

Challenges to state sovereignty – contested borders

Internal groups within the borders of a state can challenge state sovereignty by seeking independence, which often leads to conflict within the state. Decades of civil war led to the secession of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011. An estimated 2.5 million people died in the fighting or as a result of displacement, famine or disease during the two civil wars. South Sudan now has sovereignty from Sudan, but the region of Abyei, which is located on the border between Sudan and South Sudan, is still disputed territory. This remains a challenge to the sovereignty of both states despite a strengthening in the relationship between the two in recent times.

* Brexit

In June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU. Commonly referred to as Brexit ('British exit'), the referendum resulted in a 51.9 per cent vote in favour of the exit. The UK became the first state to leave the EU on the 31 January 2020. However, many experts argue that the referendum provided a decision but not a plan for how the UK would navigate **geopolitics** post-Brexit.

Investigate the arguments both in favour of and opposing Brexit. Discuss with your classmates whether the Brexit vote indicates that the EU is a success. Has Brexit altered the UK's sovereignty? What have been the effects on immigration? Will Britain benefit from the trade deal negotiated with Australia in mid-2021? And what do you think will happen in the years to come – will Brexit be hailed as a success?

Similarly, sovereignty can be challenged externally, by one state invading the territory of another. Although it appears to be less common in the twenty-first century, there continue to be such conflicts between states. As part of the ongoing Syrian civil war, for instance, the Turkish military conducted a cross-border armed intervention ('Operation Spring Shield') in early 2020 – this was in response to air strikes from Syrian and Russian forces that had resulted in the deaths of 34 Turkish soldiers. Contested borders are one of the greatest challenges to state sovereignty. Ongoing conflict either within or between states can result in the loss of land, changes in population and the loss of resources for the affected state.

> **Geopolitics** is the study of how political power is affected by geographical arrangements such as boundaries, coalitions, networks and natural resources.

Challenges to state sovereignty – issues that require multilateral resolution

When states cannot resolve an issue alone, they are likely to seek assistance from other states and organisations. Similarly, the evolution of regional groupings and IGOs has meant that states can meet in these **multilateral** forums to discuss issues and their possible solutions. One such example is the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in collaboration with six major powers – China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – to ensure Iran's compliance with its 2015 commitment to a peaceful nuclear program.

> **Multilateralism** is the system of coordinating relations between three or more states, usually in pursuit of objectives in particular areas.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a 159-page agreement endorsed by UNSC resolution 2231. Under the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), only five signatory states – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – are permitted to possess nuclear weapons, thus prompting action on Iran's nuclear program. In this example, it is not the state, Iran, seeking assistance but the international community choosing to contain the actions of a state through multilateralism.

Agreement was reached in July 2014 after 20 months of careful negotiations. The IAEA announced in September 2017 that Iran's stock of uranium was still being used for peaceful purposes, although Tehran warned that, should the deal fall through, the nuclear program could be ramped up in only five days. In 2018, the Trump administration pulled out of the deal; Tehran subsequently brought forward plans to manufacture enriched uranium metal, a material used in the core of nuclear weapons. At the time of writing, both Iran and the United States have indicated a willingness to return to the original deal, revealing the challenges involved in addressing issues that require multilateral resolution.

✱ Did you know?

Israel, India, Pakistan and South Sudan are non-signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and thus aren't bound by the treaty. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first three named states possess nuclear weapons. Both India and Pakistan have openly admitted to possessing nuclear weapons, whereas Israel maintains a **policy of deliberate ambiguity** on nuclear weapons.

Activity 3.1.4 - Review questions

1. Explain how regional groupings act as a challenge to state sovereignty.
2. Analyse the ways that contested borders challenge state sovereignty.
3. Discuss why states seek multilateral resolutions to issues.
4. With a partner, discuss which challenges pose the greatest threat to the sovereignty of states. Can you rank the challenges from least to most? Do states benefit from any of the challenges?

Intergovernmental organisations

Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) are global actors that facilitate universal action. Remaining independent from states, IGOs establish and facilitate relations between states by enabling discussions that follow established processes and protocols. Each IGO maintains a legal standing on the world stage, sustaining a capacity for action, and therefore each has certain rights and obligations to its members.

The UN retains its position as the premier IGO, commanding extensive social recognition. The responses of states to actions by the UN, such as the publication of unfavourable reports, or their desire to gain membership of certain committees indicate that the UN has the capacity to hinder or advance the interests of its members. Certainly, IGOs challenge state sovereignty through their ability to impact on **global governance** and enable all members to contribute to diplomacy.

IGOs are made up of member states, as well as the physical buildings, conferences and schedules of meetings that each administers. Most IGOs include a plenary body where all members are represented and have the opportunity to participate. The purpose of a plenary body is to contribute to international diplomacy by discussing the work of the organisation.

The power of each IGO is different and states grant authority to an IGO by becoming members and following the protocols of the organisation. However, states can limit the power of an IGO if they choose to treat it as a resource rather than a solution. If powerful states see no advantage in allowing an IGO to act, the IGO can be rendered powerless. Ultimately, IGOs can still be considered powerful global actors, as states react to and are influenced differently by IGOs' actions than those of individual states.

> An **Intergovernmental organisation (IGO)**
> IGO is an organisation composed primarily of states. They are established by a treaty, a founding charter for the organisation and, thus, subject to international law. Examples include the UN and the IMF.

> **Global governance** refers to institutions, rules, norms and legal arrangements that seek to facilitate cooperation and manage relations between states. Governance is carried out by both governmental organisations such as the UN and NGOs such as the Amnesty International.

IGO	Plenary body
United Nations (UN)	General Assembly
International Criminal Court (ICC)	Assembly of State Parties
World Trade Organization (WTO)	General Council
International Labour Organization (ILO)	International Labour Conference

Activity 3.1.5 – Review questions

1. Explain why states seek membership of IGOs.

2. How can IGOs threaten the power of the state?

3. Why is it important that IGOs have a plenary body?

The United Nations

'Our most serious shortcoming – and here I refer to the entire international community – is our inability to prevent crises. The United Nations was born from war. Today we must be here for peace.'

—António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2017)

In the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations was formed with the hope for a just and peaceful global community. More than 75 years on, the UN's mandate has extended to incorporate sustainable development, specialised agencies, the protection of human rights and the protection of the environment. The UN welcomed South Sudan as the 193rd member state in 2011. The UN now counts almost all sovereign states as members, and is charged with providing the world's premier forum for multilateral dialogue and negotiations.

The UN is made up of six organs (main bodies):

- the General Assembly
- the Security Council
- the Economic and Social Council
- the International Court of Justice
- the Secretariat
- the Trusteeship Council.

Upon joining the UN, member states agree to accept the Charter of the United Nations – the international treaty that outlines the principles of the organisation and the established six organs. It is an inter-state treaty, allowing the UN to have power over states only and not individuals, firms or other groups (see Figure 3.1.2 to find out how treaties are made).
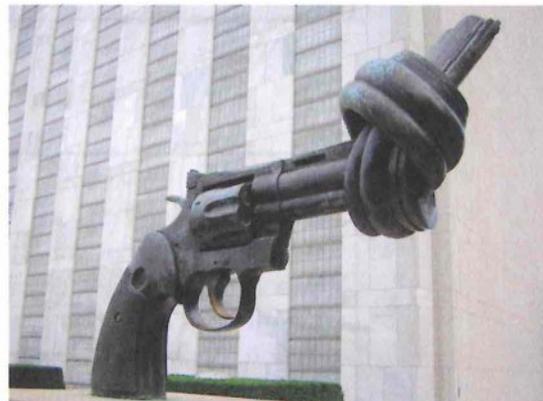
The Non-Violence sculpture at the United Nations headquarters in New York City by artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd. Photo: Didier Moïse

Figure 3.1.2 – How treaties are made

Agreement

A treaty is an agreement between states that establishes an international law. A treaty can also be referred to as a convention, protocol or covenant. Treaties can be bilateral or multilateral. Declarations can later lead to the negotiation of a treaty or convention (such as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child leading to the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Ratification

Ratification of international treaties does not involve a loss of sovereignty for states. Treaties may define the scope of a state's actions. However, a state's decision to ratify a treaty is a judgment that any limitations are outweighed by the benefits of a widely supported international law. States also retain the right to remove themselves from treaty obligations.

Committee

Some treaties involve the establishment of a committee (such as the United Nations Human Rights Committee), responsible for monitoring state parties' obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The assessments these committees make are advisory.

Signatories

In order to become a party to a treaty, states need to first become a signatory. Once the text for a certain treaty is complete, it becomes open for signature for a specified period. Becoming a signatory indicates that the signatory state wishes to continue the treaty-making process. The signatory state should refrain from acts against the purpose of the treaty. The signatory state can then proceed to ratification, acceptance and approval.

Article 2 of the UN Charter

Two important clauses in Article 2 of the Charter determine the boundaries of the UN. The first states that all members have equal sovereign rights and the second states that the UN will not intervene in matters that fall within the domestic jurisdiction of any member state. This limits the UN, as all members must always be treated equally regardless of their power. Likewise, the UN has no authority over affairs of the state and therefore can only act internationally or with the explicit permission of a state.

Once states become members of the UN, they must agree to refrain from using force to settle disputes with other states. Member states must aspire to uphold universal human rights and must support the decisions of the UN Security Council. Since ratification of the Charter in 1945, the UN has become the foundation for international law among states, and the authority and scope of the organisation has meant that its decisions both influence and hold a certain moral weight on the world stage.

✳ Did you know?

The UN has six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. These languages are the first or second language spoken of 2.8 billion people on the planet (less than half of the world population), and are official languages in almost two-thirds of United Nations member states (over 120 states)

The aims of the UN are as defined in Chapter I of the Charter, as follows:

1. To maintain international peace and security;

2. To develop friendly relations between nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;

3. To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature, promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and

4. To be a centre for coordinating the actions of nations in the attainment of these aims.

✳ Political point

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is currently not a member of the UN. However, some states have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Investigate where loyalties lie in this ongoing debate over this state's sovereignty.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly is made up of six main committees and various other boards and working groups. All UN member states are represented in the General Assembly, which considers any matter within the scope of the UN Charter. Every year in September, all members come together in the General Assembly Hall in New York City for the annual General Assembly session, which lasts until December.

With universal representation, states deliberate and debate issues of international concern, from climate change and poverty to armed conflict. Seated in alphabetical order, each member has **one vote** and General Assembly resolutions are passed

according to two criteria. A two-thirds majority vote is required for decisions on important matters, such as the admission of new members, issues relating to peace and security, or budgetary concerns. A simple majority is required for other issues.

The General Assembly reconvenes as needed throughout the year if emergencies arise or special sessions are required.

Check out the General Assembly in action at: media.un.org/en/search/categories/meetings-events/general-assembly

When a resolution is supported in the General Assembly, it sends an important message to the international arena and reflects the opinion of states around the globe. It also highlights the moral authority that the UN wields. However, General Assembly resolutions are non-binding and therefore cannot force states to act, ultimately meaning the organ has little power.

Observers can also contribute to the recommendations and open-ended discussions that occur within the General Assembly. The Holy See and the State of Palestine participate and speak in the General Assembly as observer states but have no vote. Similarly, international organisations and entities without statehood or sovereignty are invited to observe and participate in debate.

Flag of the United Nations

Political Point

States can vote in one of three ways: yes, no or abstain. An abstention is a formal decline to vote in favour of or against a matter. Procedural votes only allow for a 'yay' or a 'nay'.

Discuss with your classmates how all three votes (yes, no and abstain) indicate a strong stance on a topic. Keep in mind that either a two-thirds majority or a simple majority is needed for different issues to pass.

Activity 3.1.6 – YouTube research

The United Nations has appointed many celebrities to UN ambassadorial roles. Their fame helps draw attention to important issues, prompting people around the world to get involved. These ambassadors are invited to address the General Assembly. Recent examples include South Korean band BTS, climate activist Greta Thunberg and actor Jason Momoa.

Use YouTube to search for a video of a celebrity ambassador addressing the UN. If you get stuck, try one of the following:

- Leonardo DiCaprio addressing the Climate Summit in 2014
- Emma Watson at the HeForShe campaign launch in 2014
- Meghan Markle speaking at the UN Women Conference in 2015.

What impact do you think such speeches have on the members of the General Assembly?

The Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has the authoritative position as the body with decision-making power in the UN. It is charged with the important role of maintaining international peace and security. This organ consists of 15 members, which each have one vote. There are five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – and 10 non-permanent members.

The permanent five ('P5'), which were seen as the major powers at the time the UN was founded, have veto power over all UNSC decisions. This privilege gives any or all P5 members the ability to prevent any UNSC resolution from being passed.

The 10 non-permanent members rotate every two years and a majority of nine yes votes out of 15 is required for a resolution to pass. An abstention by a P5 member is not considered a veto, but too many abstentions can prevent a vote from being carried. In continuous operation, member states of the UNSC are required to have representatives at the UN headquarters in New York at all times.

When there is a threat to international peace and security, the UNSC first acts under Chapter VI of the UN Charter and considers peaceful solutions such as negotiation, mediation or judicial settlement. Peacekeeping missions may be established if a ceasefire is needed. Where necessary, the UNSC can act under Chapter VII of the Charter with respect to acts of aggression and can try to enforce decisions with economic sanctions or an arms embargo. Ultimately, although rarely employed, the UNSC can call on its members to use collective military action to resolve the threat. States may loan their military resources to the UN (as the UNSC has no military force of its own), and Article 43 of the Charter details that states should set aside military resources for the Council's use. Decisions made by the UNSC are binding on all of its members, constituting a direct threat to the sovereignty of states.

Activity 3.1.7 - Ready to research?

Between 2018 and 2020, the veto power was exercised 14 times: seven times by Russia, five times by China and twice by the United States.

1. Choose one of these states and research:
   - What were the resolutions being discussed when your chosen state vetoed?
   - Did any other states veto the same resolutions?
   - Do you think the veto power is enabling the Security Council to uphold its aims?

2. Locate a UNSC resolution, such as Resolution 2347, for the protection of heritage: www.undocs.org/S/RES/2347(2017)

   The first part of the resolution is called the preamble and the numbered points are operative clauses. What do you notice about the length, the language and how the resolution ends?

3. The Security Council has subsidiary organs. Using the following link, read about the subsidiary organs and then explain to a partner which organ you think has the most important role: www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/subsidiary-organs-branch

The Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) consists of 54 members and coordinates the economic and social work of the UN. ECOSOC recommends international action on economic, social and environmental issues as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals. It promotes universal respect for human rights through policy review and dialogue, hosts meetings and forums to discuss sustainable development, and coordinates the activities of various UN programs and specialised agencies. Since the foundation of the UN, contemporary issues such as climate change, terrorism and the spread of diseases such as Ebola and HIV/AIDS have led to the creation of new programs and funds, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

ECOSOC falls under the authority of the General Assembly and oversees the family of organisations established to further the cultural, educational, health and humanitarian matters for the world. ECOSOC consults with NGOs but does not have management powers over specialised agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It can only issue recommendations and receive reports. Decisions are carried by a simple majority, with each member having one vote. The majority of the UN budget is handled by ECOSOC.

The International Court of Justice

Based at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the judicial organ of the UN and handles disputes between states in accordance with international law. Decisions are made by 15 judges who are elected by the General Assembly and the UNSC. While states are not obliged to partake in proceedings, if a state does choose to participate, it is required to comply once a ruling is handed down. The ICJ gives advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by UN organs and specialised agencies.

Peace Palace by Night: Photo: Lybil BER 2009

The Secretariat

The Secretariat, consisting of tens of thousands of employees, carries out the administrative work of the UN. Located in cities such as New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the Secretariat is responsible for conducting investigations and preparing reports, translating and providing services for meetings of all UN organs. Staff take an oath of loyalty to the UN and are not allowed to receive instructions from member state governments.

Appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council, the Secretary-General provides overall administrative guidance to the Secretariat and is empowered under Article 99 of the Charter to bring situations that threaten the maintenance of international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council. The Secretary-General is not only a diplomat and an advocate but an important symbol of UN principles and a spokesperson for the world's most vulnerable. The current Secretary-General is António Guterres of Portugal, who took office on 1 January 2017, becoming the ninth 'chief administrative officer' of the UN. He was re-elected for a second term in June 2021, saying that he was 'humbled and energised' by the support of the world.

The Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council was established to supervise 11 trust territories and to prepare these territories for self-governance. By 1994, all trust territories had become independent and the Council terminated its operations, no longer meeting annually. Currently, the Trusteeship Council, made up of the P5, has amended its rules, allowing it to meet only when necessary. New roles for the Council have been proposed, such as serving as a forum for Indigenous peoples.

Fig 3.1.3 – The UN System and its organs
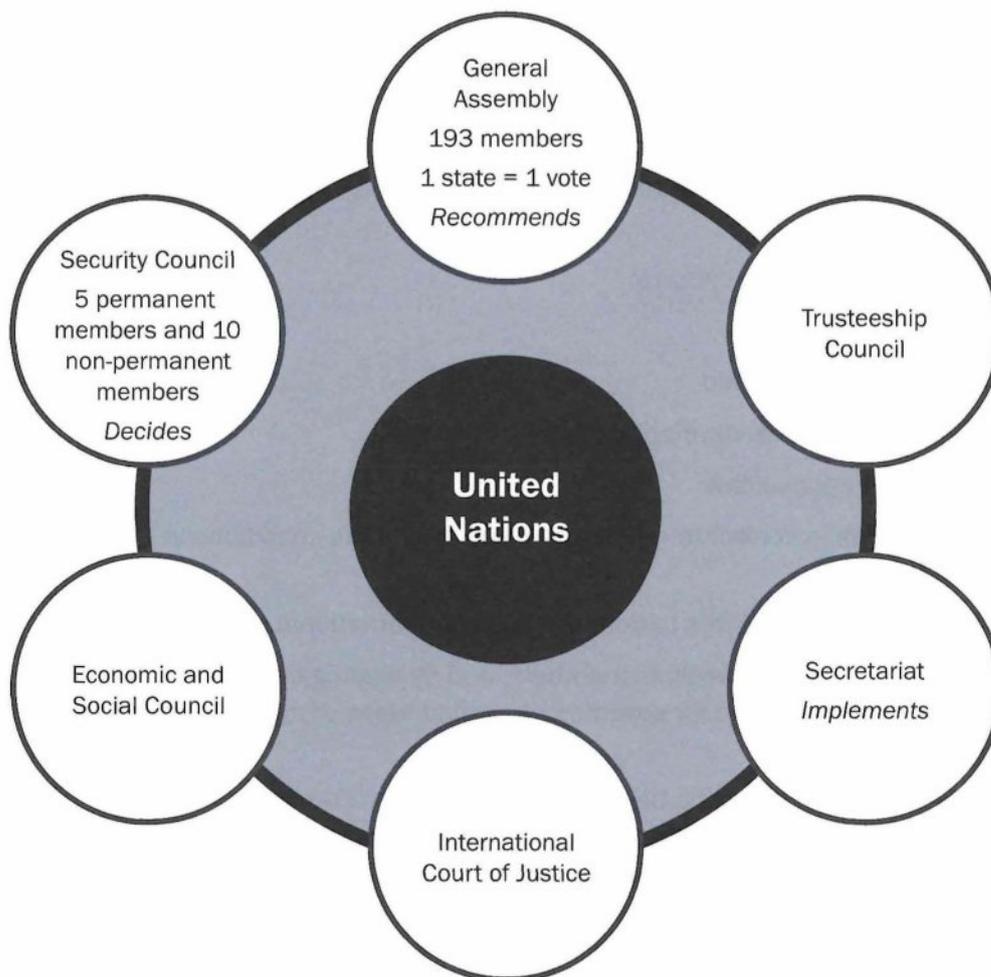
✳ **Did you know?**

The United Nations is just one part of a much larger UN system. Each of the specialised agencies, programs and other entities of the UN has its own budget, leadership and headquarters. Regional and local offices for these agencies are located all around the world. It is essential for the operation of the UN and the other entities of the UN system that the agencies cooperate in order to achieve the aims of the UN as detailed in the UN Charter.

Activity 3.1.8 – Class debate

Your teacher will divide the class to work in pairs or groups of three.

* Rank the six organs of the UN according to power, from the most powerful to the least. Note down reasons for your decision beside each one.

* Debate with your classmates the order of the six organs in terms of their relative power.

* For each organ, consider one way in which it could become more powerful. Discuss this with your partner/group and then as a class.

What does this activity tell you about the power of the UN as a whole? What are the reasons for any limitations on the power of the UN? Do you think it would improve global peace and security if the UN was more powerful?

The role of the UN

Over the past 75 years, the role of the UN has changed to reflect changes in international society and the increase in the number and power of global actors other than sovereign states.

Currently, the role of the UN is to:

* protect human rights

* deliver humanitarian aid

* promote sustainable development

* uphold international law

* assist parties in conflict to make peace and create the conditions to allow peace to hold

* provide a forum for states to debate issues of international concern.

By enabling dialogue between its members, and by hosting negotiations, the UN has become a mechanism for governments to find areas of agreement and solve problems together.

Ultimately, participation in the UN offers member states status in the global political arena. Membership of the UN gives legitimacy to **state autonomy**, and offers states with minimal power a voice and a vote in General Assembly debates. The economic and social development work that the UN undertakes is invaluable to both states and individuals and shows that the organisation has been able to adapt as the world's needs have changed.

> **State autonomy** refers to the capacity of national governments to make a difference in an increasingly global world where global challenges, such as climate change, require transnational coordination at odds with traditional state sovereignty.

The UN Environment Annual Report published in March 2017 presented a number of notable achievements, with the second foreword to the report by Executive Director Erik Solheim stating that 'people must always, always, be front and centre' in the UN's work to protect the planet.

The UN and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has required significant contributions from most of the UN's network of agencies and programs. The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank are just a few of the agencies that have been constantly in the headlines since

the coronavirus outbreak began. In July 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that humanitarian needs were outpacing the ability of the UN to meet them, 'turbocharged by the COVID-19 pandemic.' Certainly, the UN has come under criticism for its lack of a coordinated response – a difficult challenge for an organisation that has grown to have such a broad array of agencies, all with individual directives.

Activity 3.1.9 - Research

1. The UN's response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be divided into formal resolutions and the operations of specialised agencies.

   - Identify one formal resolution (either UNGA or UNSC) and note down the following:

     - the date it was passed

     - the resolution number

     - a few dot points about the purpose of the resolution

     - relevant debates or controversies (if any).

   - Research three or four operations delivered by specialised UN agencies and note down the following:

     - the date the operation started and ended (or continuing)

     - which agency was involved

     - the cost (if relevant)

     - any controversies (if relevant).

2. Develop a list of additional criticisms of the UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. In times of crisis, the UN normally appeals to its members for additional funding. Explain why states may be reluctant to provide additional funds to the UN during a pandemic.

Figure 3.1.4 – The COVID-19 pandemic

'Rest in Peace' posters of Dr Li Wenliang, who warned authorities about the coronavirus outbreak, seen at Hosier Lane in Melbourne, Australia. Photo: Aldli Wahid on Unsplash

Calls for reform to the UN

The UN is continually scrutinised, with frequent calls for its reform. In his swearing-in speech at the General Assembly in 2017, Secretary-General António Guterres said that, 'the United Nations needs to be nimble, efficient, and effective. It must focus more on delivery and less on process; more on people and less on bureaucracy.'

There is an ongoing concern that alongside protecting the rights of states, it is necessary to protect the rights of individuals in today's world. Indeed, millions of individuals are stateless, with access to neither protection nor control over the impacts of politics on their lives. Individuals' rights are currently the responsibility of the state and the UN has not obtained agreement from members on principles of individuals' rights.

Despite this, in 2012, then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reminded UN members of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) – a UN commitment endorsed by member states in 2005 to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The R2P is built upon three pillars:

- each state has the responsibility to protect its own population (pillar I)
- the international community has the responsibility to assist states in protecting their populations (pillar II)
- the international community has the responsibility to protect when a state is failing to protect its population (pillar III).

The adoption of the R2P principle came with much anticipation of a future free of the gravest crimes. At the time of adoption, the R2P was hailed as the greatest evolution to the concept of sovereignty since the Peace of Westphalia. But even the UN admits that the world is far from achieving the objective that was envisioned. Conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Myanmar in the past decade have not prevented violations of many of the most basic rights of people in these countries. In reference to the Syrian civil war, Ban Ki-moon stated that 'the responsibility to protect is a concept whose time has come. For too many millions of victims, it should have come much earlier' (UN News Centre, 2012). Certainly, the lack of action by the UN Security Council in relation to the Syrian civil war has damaged the credibility of the UN and weakened the R2P concept.

Criticisms of the United Nations

The UN, as the leading intergovernmental organisation, draws much criticism. Now more than 75 years old, the organisation has become large and bureaucratic and is only as powerful as its member states allow it to be. The leading criticisms with an impact on the power of the IGO include the following:

Funding

The UN relies on the voluntary contributions of member states for the entirety of its budget, which leaves the organisation under-resourced. In 2020, the United States was the largest contributor, donating 22 per cent of the core budget (the maximum allowed share) and 28 per cent of the peacekeeping budget. Despite this large contribution, however, the US has also often fallen behind in its payments, posing a risk to the continuation of some UN programs and agencies . In April 2021, the Biden administration announced a $300 million down payment of the $1.1 billion owed towards peacekeeping (accumulating since 2017).

Budget reform is supported by a number of states and the UN Secretary-General. Each state's contribution to the budget is reviewed every three years. At the time of writing, China, Japan and Germany ranked as the second, third and fourth highest contributors to the UN budget.

Security Council reform

The UN Security Council (UNSC) has the authority to respond to any action deemed to be a threat to international peace and security. However, the Council's ability to take action is reliant on the voluntary contributions of military resources by member states. The veto power held by the permanent five states can render this organ ineffective; critics argue that this doesn't correspond with the real status of these states today, especially given that membership is nearly four times larger than when the UN was formed. In 1945 the five permanent members accounted for 50 per cent of the world's population. In 2021, they represented just 26 per cent (of which two-thirds is contributed by China alone).

The current UNSC does not reflect a state's military supremacy or economic power or the world's geographic balance. Questions regarding the representation of developing states, whether the EU should be a member, and the representation of Muslim states are all current hot topics. In recent years, issues such as membership categories, the veto power, regional representations, the size of the Council and working methods have all been discussed more openly. The leaders of India, Brazil, Japan and Germany are calling for urgent reform of the UNSC and for permanent seats of their own. Many states also support representation of African states on the Council. The UNSC is often accused of a lack of transparency, with member states acting primarily in alignment with their own national interests before acting in the interests of the UNSC.

The General Assembly

The resolutions debated in the General Assembly are non-binding, and little action occurs once a matter has passed. In 2016, reforms were adopted to strengthen the authority of the organ, but substantial changes are continuously deferred until the next session. This delays the changes necessary to bring the General Assembly fully into the twenty-first century.

The International Court of Justice

States can decide whether or not to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), with only 74 states having accepted ICJ jurisdiction as of 2021. The UK is the only UNSC P5 member to have recognised the compulsory jurisdiction, effective from 31 December 2014. States can withdraw at any time, further weakening the organ's authority. International pressure as a result of decisions by the ICJ, or even the General Assembly, is often not enough to force states into abiding by international law when there are few actual consequences. Sovereignty remains the ultimate priority for states.

Activity 3.1.10 – Criticisms of the UN

1. Further criticisms of the UN include the following:

   * poor administrative practices

   * inefficiency due to the overlap of the myriad bodies and agencies that make up the organisation

   * a lack of neutrality

   * no standing army

   * corruption and an absence of accountability

   * states acting outside of UN mandates

   * lack of a central vision

   * the appalling human rights records of some member states.

   Choose two of the criticisms above and complete some additional research. Firstly, research background information about the criticism. Next, look for examples of current opinions on the topic. These opinions could be in the form of a quote or examples of recent actions (or inactions) by the UN. Write up your findings in a table like the one below:

UN criticism	Background information	Current opinions
e.g. Lack of neutrality		

2. In pairs or small groups, use a Venn diagram to examine whether all the problems with the UN can be blamed on states. Allocate each criticism of the UN to an area within the diagram. How many can be placed in the centre, meaning that both states and the organisation are responsible for the problem?

Venn diagram labelled "States" and "United Nations"
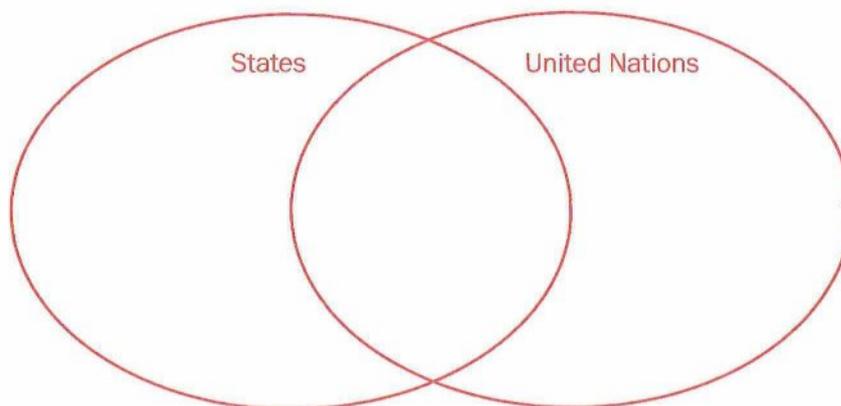
3. Go to the Committee on Contributions page for the UN General Assembly:
   www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/

   * Locate the most recent 'honour roll' using the column on the right-hand side of the screen. Which states are up-to-date with their UN budget contributions? What do you notice about this list?

   * What impact do you think this has on the functioning of the UN? Which states will be most affected by the delay in the UN receiving funds?

UNSC debate activity

In this activity, you will research and debate some of issues currently facing the international community. As a class, choose two or three current world issues to focus on. There are many examples, including:

- the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on extreme poverty
- the ongoing conflict in Syria
- the ongoing conflict in Yemen
- progress on the Sustainable Development Goals
- the Tigray War in Ethiopia
- reform of the Security Council.

Once topics have been chosen, your teacher will word each topic as a question for you to focus your research on.

Your teacher will divide the class into pairs and allocate you one member state of the Security Council. Research your state's stance on the issues your class is focusing on. You will also need to research the following information about your state:

- type of government
- head of government
- capital city
- ideology
- neighbours
- allies
- region
- population
- main religion
- size of economy.

Once you have completed your research, your teacher will facilitate a formal class debate with the following procedural rules. Move the desks into a horseshoe or U-shape.

- Each topic will be debated separately.
- Each state will be required to give a brief (no longer than one minute) statement of their stance on each topic.
- Speakers should stand as they are presenting, and both team members should either present their country's stance, propose a way to improve the issue or ask questions.
- After each speaker, other states can ask questions (there will only be time for one or two questions per speaker).
- No cross-floor debate is allowed; questions will be asked, an answer will be provided and both speakers will then sit down.

You should be prepared to make your stance clear, linking this to the overall aims and role of the UN. You should also be prepared to ask and answer some questions regarding the stance of various states.

After all states have contributed to a topic, the class should vote (as representatives of your states) on the topic. Acceptable stances for voting are yes, no or abstain. A two-thirds majority is required for a motion to be successful. Remember, it is challenging to pass resolutions in the UNSC, so if a majority with no veto votes occurs, you should clap to celebrate!

After the debate, answer the following questions:

1. How does the UNSC exert power in the global arena?

2. What are the limitations of the current rules of the UNSC?

3. Consider the state that you represented in the class debate. Analyse whether state sovereignty was a larger factor than global peace and security in forming and communicating your stance.

Review questions

1. Describe the aims of the UN.

2. Explain the role of the UN.

3. What are the weaknesses of the UNGA?

4. Assess the extent to which the UNSC challenges the power of states.

Extension question

1. At the San Francisco Conference, prior to the formation of the UN, there were disagreements as to whether security should be the responsibility of the world as a whole or whether regional organisations should take on this role. Similarly, concerns were raised over whether or not the UN would diminish state sovereignty.

- Do you think state sovereignty will continue to be the guiding factor in state actions in the next 50 years? Why or why not?

- If UNSC resolutions could be passed consistently to enable UN action in all major conflicts, do you think the world would move closer to peace? Why or why not?

- How can multilateralism ensure that the security of the world's most vulnerable is upheld?

Summary – United Nations wrap-up

The UN has the largest scope of authority among IGOs and discusses the broadest reach of international concerns with the membership of practically the entire global community. Although most of its decisions are not binding, the organisation still manages to make a significant impact through the use of resources and an indirect, yet constant, political presence. Despite the strongest states maintaining the ability to enable or restrict the UN from wielding its power, the collective values of the leading IGO are ever-present and the ultimate goal of the organisation, to maintain international peace and security, are invaluable to all global citizens.

United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Photo: Mathias P.R. on Unsplash

How to write a Global Politics essay

The skills to write a Global Politics essay are developed with every essay you write during the year. Follow the steps below to plan your first few essays, remembering to seek regular feedback from your teacher. Try to attempt a range of different questions over the year.

1. You should always plan your essay. When you're working with a time limit, keep this plan brief but make sure it's still completed. Use the planning sheet when you're first learning how to plan a Global Politics essay, but remember that in SACs and the exam your plan will be less detailed – probably a series of dot points.

2. The purpose of the essay plan is to collect and order your thoughts. It will help you structure your essay and identify the key knowledge topics you need to address. When you're planning, consider the topic and decide on your contention (stance). Decide how many body paragraphs you will write; generally three is a good goal to aim for. You may start with only two body paragraphs for your first essay and work up to three as your skills improve.

3. Now, develop the introduction in your plan by writing down your contention and the main ideas for your body paragraphs. This will allow you to signpost your ideas and order (or rank) them. You should discuss your points in order of importance, with your most important point first.

4. Next, develop your body paragraphs. Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence. When you are doing detailed essay planning, write out each topic sentence in full. Next, write down the main explanations or arguments you will use, as well as the evidence you will need for analysis within each paragraph. List any specific language from the study design you will incorporate . Ensure you finish with a linking sentence that sums up your paragraph, reiterating your major point and supporting your overall contention.

5. Once you have planned your body paragraphs, think about your conclusion. The conclusion should be succinct (only a couple of sentences at most) and sum up your major points, finishing with a sentence that convinces the reader of your knowledge on the topic.

6. Now you are ready to write your essay. Referring to your essay plan as needed, aim to write at a steady pace so that you have enough time to complete all paragraphs, including the conclusion. More practice will enable you to write more quickly through the year.

7. Once you have finished, go back and edit your work. Proofread it carefully and fix up any mistakes. Notes in the margins or at the end of paragraphs are fine if you have handwritten your essay. Make sure these extra sections are indicated clearly so the reader knows where they fit.

Essay planning proforma

Essay topic	
Introduction Contention: Signposting (body paragraph topics):	Key terms to incorporate
Body paragraph 1 Topic sentence: Key points/explanations: Evidence: Link:	Key knowledge/ Key terms
Body paragraph 2 Topic sentence: Key points/explanations: Evidence: Link:	Key knowledge/ Key terms
Body paragraph 3 Topic sentence: Key points/explanations: Evidence: Link:	Key knowledge/ Key terms
Conclusion	

✕ Activity 3.1.11 – Essay comprehension

Read the following essay and complete the questions below.

Essay question: Discuss the power of the United Nations.

The United Nations (UN) maintains the position as the leading intergovernmental organisation, which brings member states together to discuss common challenges and tackle international crises. Although the UN possesses great potential power, it generally fails to exert this power due to the self-interests of its members. The Security Council, the UN's most powerful organ, has the capacity to mobilise the military resources of its members, however, it has rarely done so. Similarly, the General Assembly, although in charge of the UN budget, is almost powerless due to the non-binding nature of resolutions discussed in this forum.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most powerful organ of the UN but ultimately it is prevented from taking action by the veto power of the permanent five (P5) states. Consisting of only 15 members, the UNSC is charged with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Through calling upon its members to loan military resources to the UN for specific operations, the UNSC has the power to act when there is a breach or threat in the global political arena, deploying military forces and using all necessary means to uphold peace. In November 2020, the UNSC, through resolution 2552, approved the continuation of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The almost 14,000-strong peacekeeping force reduced the presence of armed groups, bringing more secure conditions to the state. The UNSC representative of the Russian Federation commented that 'peacekeeping forces play a central role in the global peace architecture,' demonstrating that when member states work together, the aims of the UN can be achieved. However, between 2018 and 2020, in relation to resolutions on the Syrian civil war, both China and Russia used their veto power nine times to prevent action. Resolutions relating to the use of chemical weapons, humanitarian access and military offensives were prevented from being adopted due to the actions of just two states from the 193-member-strong UN. Although the UNSC has extensive power explicitly written into the UN Charter, it rarely mobilises this power due to states maintaining their right to sovereignty, most commonly seen through the veto of the P5.

Certainly, the power of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) stems from its role as the largest global forum for international diplomacy, but the non-binding nature of resolutions renders this organ powerless to make meaningful change. All 193 member states are represented in the Assembly, each receiving one vote, and Article 10 authorises the UNGA to discuss 'any questions or any matters' of concern to the UN. The UNGA has important authority over matters of revenue and spending, except for peacekeeping missions, and this is decided by a two-thirds majority vote. The UNGA plays an important symbolic role on the world stage and majority decisions such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015, can set new standards for the international community. However, the UNGA's power is broad but shallow. Resolutions, although carrying the weight of global opinion, are not legally binding and can't force any state to act. Despite the organ passing resolution 72/191 in December 2017, which condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria and demanded an end to all abuses of international human rights law, no powerful action occurred to ensure the safeguarding of human rights. The UNGA reflects and shapes the opinions of the global community of states without having the follow-through or power required to make active progress, lessening the power of the UN as a whole.

Review questions

1. Consider the essay's introduction and answer the following questions:

   * What is the contention for the essay?

   * Identify the signposting of the topics for the body paragraphs.

   * How does the introduction indicate that the author is knowledgeable about the essay topic?

2. Using a highlighter, highlight all the specific Global Politics language and terms used throughout the essay.

3. In a different colour, highlight the topic and linking sentences used in the body paragraphs.

4. In a third colour, highlight each specific piece of evidence or example used in the essay.

5. Write a third body paragraph for the essay. You could structure this around another organ of the UN or perhaps cover more than one in a single paragraph. Ensure you plan your paragraph first by considering the topic sentence, evidence and explanations and your link. Consider what needs to be added to the introduction if this paragraph were part of the essay.

6. Write an alternative conclusion for the essay. How could this essay be further improved? Do you have different evidence that could support or refute some of the arguments presented?

The International Monetary Fund

'At times of elevated uncertainty in the global economy... the IMF can address the needs of its entire membership, if and when they arise.'

—Christine Lagarde, former IMF Managing Director)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an intergovernmental organisation created to ensure the stability of the international monetary system. Founded in the late 1940s as part of the Bretton Woods agreement (named after the township in New Hampshire in which the agreement was finalised in 1944), the organisation is a major global actor in the framework for global economic cooperation, directing global financial relations and monitoring exchange rates. Its headquarters are in Washington, D.C. In 2012 the IMF's mandate was updated to include all macroeconomic and financial issues that affect global economic stability. The current managing director, who is head of the staff and chairperson of the executive board, is Dr Kristalina Georgieva. She has led the IMF since late 2019.

Activity 3.1.12 – Ready to research?

1. The two newest members of the IMF (as at July 2021) are Nauru, which joined in 2016, and the Principality of Andorra, which became a member in late 2020. Why did these states join the organisation?

2. Liechtenstein, Monaco and North Korea are not members of the IMF. What reasons do these states give for not seeking IMF membership?

'Fast facts'

Using the IMF website, www.imf.org, locate the Fast Facts section within 'About the IMF: The IMF at a Glance' section, and add some fast facts to your notes.

The IMF monitors the world economy, providing its member states with policy advice and loans as needed to manage economic growth and trade relations. IMF loans are short- to medium-term and are funded by the contributions of its members. The IMF works alongside the World Bank (another intergovernmental organisation created at the Bretton Woods conference), which assists with long-term economic development and poverty reduction.

With 190 member states in 2021, the IMF has nearly full global membership. Through international monetary cooperation, it strives to promote high levels of employment and reduce poverty around the world.

The original aims of the IMF were to:

- promote international monetary cooperation and exchange-rate stability
- facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade
- assist in the establishment of a multilateral system of payments
- make resources available (with adequate safeguards) to members experiencing balance-of-payments difficulties.

The IMF acts as a 'lender of last resort'. The organisation considers economic trends, providing policy advice to governments and central banks in the areas of tax, expenditure and budget preparation. The staff of the IMF track national, regional and global markets, record statistics and produce forecasts and analytical reports. Training and technical assistance are also offered to states to influence the management of their economies, with the IMF providing expertise in legislative frameworks.

Quotas

Once a state is a member of the IMF, it pays the organisation a quota subscription. The size of the quota is based broadly on the state's position in the global economy. These quota subscriptions are the IMF's main source of finance; if required, the organisation can also borrow money to fulfil its members' needs.

The decision-making at the IMF, unlike at the UN, is linked to the relative position of states in the world economy and the organisation is governed by and accountable to its members. The quota system was most recently reviewed in February 2020 (at the 15th General Review of Quotas) and members' quotas remained unchanged.

In 2021, over 52 per cent of the total voting power sat with just 10 states according to ranking, and the United States retains veto power, with over 16 per cent. Japan and China follow, with around 6 per cent each.

The IMF is defined as a specialised agency within the UN Charter and the two organisations have an agreement of reciprocal representation at regular meetings and collaborate on certain issues.

Functions of the IMF

In order to ensure the stability of the international monetary system, the IMF has three main functions: keeping track of the global economy and its members, lending to states, and giving advice to members, as shown in Figure 3.1.5.

The IMF draws its power from the conditions it attaches to loans. States in need of IMF loans are required to undertake policy reform. Funds can be withheld if these conditions are not met.

Figure 3.1.5 – The IMF's three main functions

Surveillance	Lending	Capacity development
Monitors the economic and financial policy of members at a global and state level	Provides loans to members with actual or potential balance of payment problems	Provides technical assistance and training, tailored to individual states and specific institutions
Highlights risks to stability	Enables states to rebuild reserves, stabilise and build towards strong economic growth	Provides assistance to states to achieve their growth and development objectives
Advises on policy adjustments needed to sustain economic growth and stability	Does not loan for specific projects	Helps states to compile and communicate financial data, fostering transparency and accountability

Some of the conditions require states to:

- cut expenditure, also referred to as austerity measures
- remove barriers to market entry or restrictions on competition (deregulation)
- privatise (sell) public assets
- extract and export natural resources
- refocus funds and not enter into any new loans
- fight corruption
- reform tax collection systems.

The loan conditions imposed by the IMF, often referred to as the Washington Consensus, are designed to ensure that the borrower will repay the loan and allow the IMF to control the manner in which a state addresses its balance-of-payments problems. It also means that states can only use funds for the purpose for which they were lent. Interest is applied to loans (which are typically between one to three years in duration), but interest is not charged for emergency finance. Despite a pledge to provide its full lending capacity of US$1 trillion in emergency loans at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, by March 2021, the IMF had spent only $100 billion, targeting just a few states. Emergency finance is provided as a one-off payment directly to a government central account, which limits the IMF's ability to oversee the use of funds.

The IMF commands great economic power, which is a direct threat to the **economic sovereignty** of states. In April 2021, Ecuador approved a law increasing the independence of its central bank – a move required to access a US$6.5 billion loan from the IMF. Similarly, to receive a US $5 billion loan in 2020, Ukraine was required to lift a ban on the sale of farmland and approve a new banking law.

Economic sovereignty is the capacity and willingness of a state to control its economy and related policies and the flow of goods and services without intervention.

Table 3.1.1– Criticisms of the IMF – Argentina

Criticisms of the IMF	Examples from Argentina
Harsh lending conditions Many argue that the enforcement of serious spending cuts required by conditional loans negatively affect the social structure of borrowing states. The interest rates that accompany IMF loans are often criticised for being too high.	The IMF provided $50 billion to Argentina in mid-2018, later supplying an addition $7 billion in September. The loan has an interest rate of between 1.96% to 4.96% attached, depending on how much Argentina uses.
All policies enforced at once When all IMF policies are implemented at the same time, rapid privatisation can occur, leading to increased unemployment. This also affects the social structure of a state, as government salaries and pensions are reduced. The austerity measures the IMF requires for loan funds to be released are heavily criticised for their adverse impacts on the poorest segments of society. Austerity measures do not always bring about the economic stability expected.	Austerity measures, such as high taxes and reduced government spending, were introduced by Argentina as part of its 2018 loan agreement with the IMF. Other measures included: • raising export taxes on grains (temporarily) • cutting the number of government ministries • capping the salaries of public servants • cutting health and education programs.
Backlash from the public Citizens in borrowing states often accuse the IMF of being secretive about the extent of loan conditions. This lack of transparency and lack of consultation can result in severe backlash from the residents in the borrowing state, fuelling protests and strikes. This further impacts on the stability of the economy.	Protests and strikes against austerity measures and other IMF loan conditions have occurred regularly in Argentina. Many demonstrations occurred during 2018–19 with unions, small business owners and activists taking to the streets. During union strikes, banks, transport and health services were suspended. In October 2018, protests turned violent, with the police using rubber bullets, tear gas and a water cannon on protestors armed with rocks, sticks and trash. On 30 May 2019, various labour unions held a 24-hour strike, with flights and transportation services suspended and hospitals running emergency services only. A maritime union strike in June 2019 suspended all activity at Argentina's main grain terminals.
Policies universally imposed The Washington Consensus, universally imposed by the IMF on borrowing states, is a one-size-fits-all approach. This shows little regard for the distinct characteristics of states, leading to accusations of the IMF being 'out of touch'.	The IMF imposed the same policy requirements in Argentina as in the other states it has provided bailout loans. This included emergency measures such as reducing the number of government ministries by half. US$10 billion was cut from the health, education, science, transportation, public works and culture departments. Following tax reforms, taxes on certain goods increased. Public sector jobs were cut, as were government employees' salaries. With 27 per cent of the population listed as living below the poverty line in October 2018 and unemployment at almost 10 per cent, the initial government policy changes saw inflation soar and the economy contract. Teachers in Argentina were not paid when they went on strike, reducing their incomes by up to 3.2 per cent. This amounted to an annual earnings loss of over US$2 billion.
States with IMF programs have increased income inequalities Rising unemployment and privatisation can exacerbate the divide between rich and poor. It can lead to increased and extended periods of poverty for much of a state's population.	Concerns have been raised over the surcharges that the IMF uses to ensure states don't become too reliant on IMF financing. These surcharges form a significant part of IMF revenue, amounting to US$1 billion in 2020. In May 2021, Argentina's President, Alberto Fernández, called for the IMF to suspend surcharges during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, 25.4% of households in Argentina were living under the poverty line and 35.4% of the general population was living in poverty. Argentina's economy shrank for the third straight year in 2020.

The IMF's power is threatened by numerous criticisms of the organisation, many of which can be seen in the relationship between Argentina and the IMF.

Argentina has participated in 21 IMF loan arrangements since becoming a member in 1956. After clearing its debts in 2006, the state became the recipient of the largest loan in IMF history in 2018 when it received almost $57 billion. In June 2021, Argentina still owed $45 billion to the IMF (about as much as the IMF's next five largest state debtors combined), with repayments projected to recommence from March 2022.

Activity 3.1.13 – Review questions

1. Outline one aim of the IMF.
2. Using examples, explain the role of the IMF.
3. With reference to the Argentina examples given in Table 3.1, explain how the IMF can challenge the sovereignty of states.
4. Compare the power of the IMF and that of the UN. (6 marks)

Extension questions

Consider the following extract from the statement by Kristalina Georgieva on her selection as IMF Managing Director in September 2019.

It is a huge responsibility to be at the helm of the IMF at a time when global economic growth continues to disappoint, trade tensions persist, and debt is at historically high levels. As I noted in my statement to the Executive Board, our immediate priority is to help countries minimise the risk of crises and be ready to cope with downturns. Yet, we should not lose sight of our long-term objective – to support sound monetary, fiscal and structural policies to build stronger economies and improve people's lives. This means also dealing with issues like inequalities, climate risks and rapid technological change ... Working with my team, my goal is to further strengthen the Fund by making it even more forward-looking and attentive to the needs of our members. (IMF Press Release No. 19/352, 2019)

5. What does this statement indicate about how Kristalina Georgieva intends to lead the IMF?
6. Research changes the IMF has made since Kristalina Georgieva's appointment. Do any of these suggest a 'softening' of the IMF's traditionally hardline approach to loans for states?

The International Criminal Court

'(...) the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole must not go unpunished (...)'

– *Preamble to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most heinous crimes of international concern. The Court is based on a multilateral treaty, the Rome Statute, which was created in 1998. The treaty took effect in 2002, upon ratification by 60 states, which officially established the Court. Based in The Hague, the ICC is unique in being formed by a treaty and not by the UN, which it cooperates with but remains independent from. The ICC only tries those individuals accused of the most serious crimes, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

Activity 3.1.14 – Go further

Using the following link, add a definition to your notes for each of the four crimes that the ICC has jurisdiction over: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

www.icc-cpi.int/about/how-the-court-works

The ICC has jurisdiction in the territory of state parties and in other states if crimes are committed by nationals of state parties. However, these provisions do not apply if the UNSC refers a case to the ICC (of a state party or a non-state party) or if a non-state declares that it accepts the jurisdiction of the Court. The ICC is not permitted to investigate genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity that occurred prior to July 2002. The Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression activated on 17 July 2018.

The ICC is a court of last resort. It does not replace national jurisdictions but instead it intends to complement the judicial systems of states. The ICC will only investigate and prosecute when a state is unable or unwilling to do so genuinely. To fulfil its mandate to end impunity for the perpetrators of the most atrocious crimes, the ICC relies on cooperation from states to make arrests, transfer persons to the ICC detention centre in The Hague, freeze suspects' assets and enforce sentences. Two out of three judges must agree for a conviction to be recorded.

The aims of the ICC are to:

- ensure that the worst perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes

- serve as a court of last resort that can investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes

- assist national judiciaries in investigating and prosecuting the worst perpetrators, allowing states to be the first to investigate and prosecute

- help promote international peace and security by deterring future would-be perpetrators.

Unquestionably, the role of the ICC is to deter would-be criminals and offer rehabilitation to those found guilty. The Court also establishes a historical record and gives a voice and justice to victims, who can participate in proceedings and request reparations. Participants may receive legal representation and the ICC Registry offers measures for witness protection. In upholding international law and enforcing retribution, the Court is also performing a didactic role – educating the globe on its express purpose. Therefore, the ICC not only prosecutes those guilty of the most heinous crimes, but also serves as a moral authority with an important role in defining international justice.

The ICC is made up of three bodies (see Figure 3.1.6).

The Prosecutor can initiate an investigation if state parties refer a situation to the ICC, if the UNSC requests that a matter be investigated, or if the Office of the Prosecutor receives information from reliable sources. As of July 2021:

- the ICC had 14 investigations open, including cases from Afghanistan, Burundi, Georgia and Libya

- the Court comprised 123 state parties, including all South American countries, nearly all European countries, much of Australasia and more than half the countries in Africa.

Figure 3.1.6 – The three bodies of the ICC

Assembly of state parties	The Court (four organs)	Trust fund for victims
• composed of representatives of state parties • makes decisions on various issues • elects judges • elects the prosecutor • elects the deputy prosecutors	**Presidency:** • responsible for the overall administration of the Court. • The ICC has one president and two vice presidents **Judicial Divisions:** • 18 judges who are elected by secret ballot • three divisions: pre-trial, trial, appeals **Office of the Prosecutor:** An independent organ of the court which conducts investigations and brings cases before the court **Registry:** • administrative and operational support • offers protection for witnesses • conducts outreach programs • maintains court records, etc	• provides reparations for victims and families of victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of the court

States that have ratified the Rome Statute agree to the full implementation of the treaty. States have committed to:

- provide required information to the Court
- provide technical and financial assistance to states wishing to become parties to the Statute and to implement the Statute in their national legislation
- continue to contribute to the Trust Fund for Least Developed Countries to promote the attendance of non-state parties at the sessions of the Assembly of State Parties
- ultimately continue to cooperate with the Court.

Did you know?

The ICC is led by a president. Responsible for organising the work of the judicial divisions and overseeing the administration of the court, individuals can serve in this role for a maximum of two three-year terms. The current ICC president is Piotr Hofmański from Poland, who took office in March 2021.

The ICC has the well-intentioned purpose of preventing future violations of international humanitarian law and has managed to convict and sentence a handful of criminals in recent years. However, the ICC does face many challenges. The Court is dependent on voluntary contributions from states. Accusations have mounted suggesting that the Court focuses primarily on the African continent – a claim supported by the fact that all individuals being investigated up until January 2016 were heads of state or rebel groups in various African states. The ICC also applies discretion in choosing cases, as it cannot handle all breaches of international law.

An impediment to the achievement of the Court's aims is the absence of an enforcement mechanism. Therefore, the ICC needs to rely on state parties to pressure those that are not compliant. It is hoped that international pressure and the damage to the non-compliant state's international standing will successfully motivate it to comply, although this does not appear to have been the case to date.

✳ P5 and the ICC

Ultimately, the actions of states continue to threaten the power of the ICC. Of the P5 states, only two, France and the UK, have signed and ratified the treaty. This severely undermines the authority of the Court and threatens its future success.

China believes the Court impinges upon the sovereignty of states because the Court can undermine the authority of a state's legal system, and because its war crimes jurisdiction covers internal as well as international conflicts. In July 2020, two Uyghur activist groups filed a complaint with the ICC and called for an investigation into People's Republic of China (PRC) officials for the crime of genocide. However, in December 2020, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the Court confirmed that it would not be proceeding with an investigation, citing a lack of jurisdiction.

Russia, having never ratified the Rome Statute, withdrew from signatory status in November 2016, accusing the ICC of being expensive and ineffective. The US has formally withdrawn its intention to ratify, citing issues with due process and an incompatibility with the US Constitution. In early 2021, however, President Biden did lift sanctions and visa restrictions on officials of the ICC, reversing an earlier foreign policy move instituted by the Trump administration.

Likewise, states can choose not to comply with ICC demands. Arrest warrants are in place for three Sudanese individuals relating to the conflict in Darfur, but the Court's jurisdiction is not recognised by the Sudanese state. In recent years, signatory states have withdrawn from the Rome Statute, including Burundi in 2017 and the Philippines in 2019. Both Gambia and South Africa indicated a desire to leave the Court in 2016, but later withdrew their requests in 2017. This recurrent theme of dissatisfaction undermines the power and influence of the ICC.

To date, major Asian powers, including India and Indonesia, have declined to ratify the Statute, which would be crucial to the Court's long-term success. Many criticise the Court for being too far removed from victims to be able to provide redress. Despite the ICC striving to observe the highest standards of fairness and due process, the deferral of cases for 12 months at a time may also damage the chances of situations moving towards peace and reconciliation.

The young IGO exerts its power: the ICC's first success

On December 2014, the first successful ICC conviction and sentencing was upheld after an appeals process. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was convicted and sentenced to 14 years jail in 2012. Accused of heinous human rights violations, including ethnic massacres and forcibly conscripting child soldiers, in 2006 Lubanga was the first person arrested under an ICC warrant. The Congolese government offered full support to the Court, arresting the accused and transferring him into ICC custody. Lubanga was released on 15 March 2020, having served his sentence in the DRC.

In March 2014, Germain Katanga (also of the DRC) became the second person found guilty by the ICC, in a 2–1 decision. Katanga was convicted on five counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment. In response to the sentencing, one Congolese activist said, 'For those who lost their possessions, their mothers, their homes, this judgment provides some relief. Today people here see some satisfaction. In the end, everyone must answer for his actions' (Crawshaw, 2014).

However, Phil Clark, a London-based expert on the ICC, remarked, 'The ICC has been doing its investigations on the cheap,' in reference to the budgetary constraints of the court (Ridgwell, 2014). Clark explained that the ICC had relied on only a small group of investigators which resulted in Katanga being found guilty of supplying guns but not directing the use of them in one massacre that resulted in at least 200 deaths. One of the judges also expressed an opinion at odds with the outcome due to Katanga being convicted as an accessory rather than the perpetrator.

Activity 3.1.15 – Ready to research

Complete the following table for Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, who was found guilty at the ICC in 2016. A good place to start your research is the case information sheet on the ICC website www.icc-cpi.int/CaseInformationSheets/Al-MahdiEng.pdf

Once complete, this table will provide you with evidence to incorporate into your responses:

ICC history: Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi	
Key dates	
Investigation opened	
Arrest warrant issued	
Al Mahdi transferred to the ICC	
Trial began	
Verdict and sentencing	
Reparations Order	
Case details	
Type of crime (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, crime of aggression)	
Date crime was committed	
Who referred the crime to the ICC?	
Which state transferred Al Mahdi to the ICC?	
Victim plea (guilty or not guilty)	
Sentence	
Result of Reparations Order	

Activity 3.1.16 – Review questions

1. Outline two aims of the ICC.

2. Describe the role of the ICC.

3. Assess the extent to which the ICC has achieved its aims.

4. Evaluate the extent to which the ICC has challenged the sovereignty of states.

5. Using the information you added to the table in Activity 3.15, answer the following questions.

   a. Considering the date of the original crime and the date of the sentencing, analyse whether the ICC provides a timely completion of cases.

   b. Do you think the outcome in the case deters future perpetrators of the same crime? Why or why not?

   c. What impact does the increasing number of finalised cases mean for the ICC?

Extension questions

6. How does a commitment to international law through the ICC strengthen multilateral diplomacy?

7. Can the ICC achieve its goals without the support of all UN members?

Non-state actors

The increase in the number and influence of non-state actors has accelerated in recent times. Non-state actors (NSAs) are organisations that have sufficient power to have political influence but transcend state boundaries because they don't belong to any one state (see Figure 3.1.7).

Figure 3.1.7 – Non-state actors
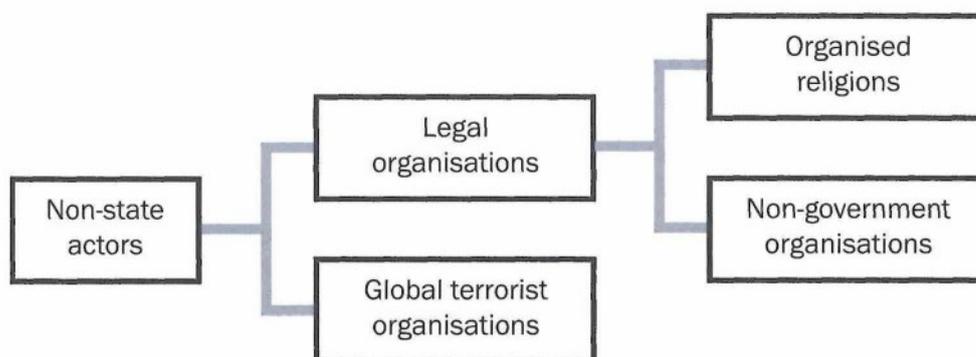
The aims of NSAs vary greatly but they all seek political change or pursue political objectives. A major reason for the rapid increase in NSAs is globalisation, which is the growing interconnection and interdependence of people and states around the world, with free transfer of capital, goods and services across state borders. This movement has diminished the traditional divide between national and international affairs. Global communications infrastructure allows ideas, cultures and information to spread more easily, while the integration of the world economy has shown that no state economy can fully shield itself from the influence of global financial markets. This global information flow enables NSAs to spread their message quickly and therefore organise and mobilise their supporters more effectively.

In the study of Global Politics, non-state actors are divided into two categories: legal organisations and global terrorist movements. Legal organisations, in turn, include non-government organisations (NGOs) and organised religions.

Legal organisations

Non-government organisations (NGOs) are not-for-profit entities that operate independently of any government and whose purpose is to address a social or political issue (or issues). There are tens of thousands international NGOs. The UN works and coordinates with a number of these, and ensures by way of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) statute that each NGO it partners with adheres to the following principles:

1. It supports the aims and work of the UN.
2. It is a representative body with a headquarters and democratic policymaking procedure.
3. It must be non-profit.
4. It cannot use or advocate violence.
5. It must respect the 'non-interference' norm of the UN.
6. It must not be established by an intergovernmental agreement.

NGOs can be further divided into groups, such as human rights organisations (which provide disaster relief or medical services, promote peace and human rights, or focus on children's rights) and environmental organisations (which work to promote, preserve and sustainably develop the environment). Other groups seek change for causes such as disarmament, education and health care.

Organised religions have belief systems with official doctrines, leadership structures and common practices, and can command significant influence in the global political arena.

All legal non-state actors have universal aspirations, meaning that they strive for their work and objectives to have a global impact.

Global greatness

A prominent NGO that fights for human rights is Amnesty International, a worldwide movement of people whose mission it is to uphold internationally recognised human rights for all. Amnesty has campaigned for the basic welfare of children, LGBTIQA+ rights, women's rights, disability rights, freedom of the press and abolition of the death penalty. Check out www.amnesty.org for more information.

NGOs typically have volunteer members. In the twenty-first century, individuals may join NGOs to have influence on the world stage. By joining an NGO, individuals can collectively lobby and influence governments and international organisations (much like smaller states joining the UN to make an impact) when their individual voices would otherwise have gone unnoticed. The effect of public opinion varies depending on the issue and the type of government, but there is increasingly research that shows the impact it can have on foreign policy decisions. Most legal non-state actors pursue objectives that are respected and beneficial, generating little controversy and opposition.

※ **Facts about NGOs worldwide**

- 80 per cent of global citizens agree that NGOs make it easy to be involved in positive social change.

- 8 per cent of employees in Australia are employed in NGOs (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission).

- 92 per cent of global NGOs had a website and 72% had a Twitter profile in 2015.

Source: www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/jul/24/did-you-know-these-ngofacts

Global terrorist movements

Global terrorist movements are non-state actors that engage in politically motivated violence to achieve their aims. Like legal non-state actors, global terrorist movements can interact with states and their populations, intergovernmental organisations and other institutions.

Global terrorist movements differ from other non-state institutions in that their aim and methods are considered destructive. Although states are typically considered the only global actors with the authority to use physical force, global terrorist movements also wield the **utility of violence** and have shown the capacity to plan attacks using both conventional and unconventional weapons and methods. Another major difference between legal non-state actors and global terrorist movements is their level of support. While legal non-state actors have widespread support in communities, terrorist movements tend to have very limited support.

> **Utility of violence** describes violence that is used as a means of achieving one's political objectives, traditionally a state power.

Globalisation has facilitated **terrorism** by:

> **Terrorism** is the threatened or actual use of violence to achieve political objectives.

- the 24/7 news cycle, which allows terrorists to spread their message and to appeal to a global audience; terrorists thrive on gaining publicity for their actions, whether positive or negative, and a terrorist group would struggle to achieve its aims in the twenty-first century without publicity

- increased free trade and decreased manufacturing costs, which has allowed for the easier distribution and sale of small arms globally

- the increased spread of information and ideas online; terrorist groups can communicate easily across the globe and can access information on building weapons

- expansion of air travel and global transit networks, have facilitated the movement of terrorist actors and provided access to a wider range of targets.

⤬ **Activity 3.1.17 – NSA brainstorm and research**

With a partner, brainstorm a list of NSAs that you are familiar with (this can include legal and non-legal organisations). Choose three NSAs from your list and answer the following questions about each one.

1. What is one aim of this NSA?

2. Find a recent example of this NSA attempting to fulfil this aim (it may or may not have been successful).

3. Have any controversies been associated with this NSA recently? If so, make note of them.

The impact of non-state actors

Legal organisations have played a major role in promoting and enabling global citizenship. They allow individuals to have a voice and provide collective forums for raising issues on a global scale. Around 80,000 demonstrators gathered on the streets of Hungary in April 2017 to protest draft legislation submitted to parliament regarding the classification of NGOs. The government suggested that the legislation aimed to increase transparency, while NGOs claimed it would silence critical voices.

NGOs and organised religions provide funds to ensure that people have their basic human rights upheld and advocate for those who don't have the means or ability to do so for themselves. Campaigning groups have played a role in international dialogue and negotiations, often setting the agenda. Global terrorist movements, by contrast, plan and carry out attacks to further their cause.

The power of non-state actors has threatened state sovereignty. The increasing number of international legal organisations and the threat of global terrorist movements challenge traditional ideas of sovereignty. Non-state actors pursue their own agenda rather than the agenda of a state, advocating for their political, social and economic objectives above all else. Global terrorist movements can spark, or become involved in, internal and cross-border conflicts. These conflicts can involve states as well as multiple NSAs. These factors indicate that there may be a need for international law to evolve beyond its original focus on states.

Case study: Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an NGO that works internationally to provide medical assistance to people affected by conflict or disasters, as well as to those who are unable to access health care. MSF, commonly known in English as Doctors Without Borders, was founded in France in 1971 and has grown to have a global team of almost 65,000 people from 160 different states, making it one of the largest NGOs in the world. MSF is mostly made up of doctors and healthcare workers, but it is also open to other professions that help the NGO achieve its aims. MSF often has staff working to provide emergency medical aid for long periods in extreme conditions, such as in war zones or during natural disasters.

The aims of MSF, as detailed in its charter, are:

- to provide 'assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict'; and

- to observe 'neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance'.

  https://www.msf.org/msf-charter

Members of the organisation agree to maintain complete independence from political, economic and religious institutions, as well understanding the risks of the missions they carry out. MSF promotes its principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality in everything it does. In 2019, MSF had 35,000 personnel active in 70 states across the globe, demonstrating its reach and power, with it achieved with a budget of over €1.6 billion (made up of mostly private donations). The organisation also has consultative status with ECOSOC, the highest status provided to NGOs, allowing MSF to participate in the work of the UN.

MSF has had a positive involvement in a number of major world crises in recent years. MSF has responded to almost every Ebola outbreak since the 1990s, including outbreaks in Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2021. MSF isolates patients; decontaminates ambulances, health facilities and homes; and supports health facilities to treat patients with other illnesses and administer vaccines. MSF has also responded to large-scale measles outbreaks in many African states, using boats

to find villages and provide vaccines. Between January 2018 and October 2019, more than 46,000 patients were treated and more than 1.4 million children were vaccinated by MSF teams in such states as Mali, Nigeria and Chad.

MSF has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in 40 different states, providing trauma nurses, oxygen supplies, mental health support, basic sanitation and much more. A briefing paper published by the organisation in May 2021 highlighted the issue of oxygen supply infrastructure being neglected for many years and called for more concentrators, a regulated price for oxygen and reliable supply chains to alleviate the issues being felt by the world's most vulnerable populations.

However, MSF has been unable to maintain an unblemished record of success. In 2020, 1000 current and former members of staff accused the NGO of being 'institutionally racist' and run by a 'privileged white minority'. Since then, there have been consistent complaints received from staff about the 'Euro-centric' management and calls for greater equality among the international staff. MSF also suffers from bureaucratic inequities and a lack of equal opportunity for staff. In 2018, following an increasing number of sexual abuse claims, MSF dismissed 19 staff. The NGO also attracted criticism for its efforts during the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests. MSF considered the state medical assistance adequate but local celebrities including actors and singers called MSF's efforts insufficient and stated they would no longer donate to the organisation.

Case study questions

Using evidence from the case study, answer the following questions.

1. Outline the aims of MSF.
2. Explain the role of MSF in the world today.
3. Assess the extent to which MSF has achieved one of its aims.

Go further

4. Can you find more examples of MSF's work globally?
5. Do any global actors criticise MSF's work?
6. Consider the short-answer question and the suggested response below and answer the questions that follow.

Q. Evaluate the power of one non-state actor. (5 marks)

A. Non-state actors seek political change. The non-government organisation (NGO) Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an independent international medical humanitarian organisation made up of tens of thousands of health professionals, logistical and administrative staff. MSF aims to provide assistance to those affected by natural disasters and crises such as war, epidemics or a lack of access to health care. In 2019, MSF conducted medical activities in 72 states, treating over 2.6 million cases of malaria and 47,000 cases of cholera. In Cameroon, the NGO provided humanitarian assistance to those displaced due to the violence between government forces and separatist groups. The sheer size and reach of MSF operations demonstrate the organisation's power and its ability to achieve its aims. However, MSF has struggled to achieve its aim of maintaining neutrality and impartiality, with workers and management in Liberia being accused of bribing sex workers and young girls with medicine. Furthermore, Christos Christou, MSF's international president, reacted to a letter penned by 1000 current and former staff members stating, 'it's about rethinking the humanitarian model ... distributing the decision-making power and also the resources', acknowledging that the organisation has a way to come if it is to be truly equitable and impartial. In 2019, Hong Kong residents voiced their dissatisfaction with the organisation, having donated HK$518 million to the NGO in 2018. Many believed that they deserved more support in their hour of need, showing that MSF has yet to secure the consistent favour of states and the power that stems from unwavering public opinion.

a. Identify three strengths of the above response.

b. Highlight, or note down, the use of specific evidence in the above response.

c. How can the above response be further improved?

d. Using a different non-state actor, write your own response to the statement: 'Evaluate the power of one non-state actor'.

e. Consider your own response and identify the following:

   i. strengths

   ii. weaknesses

   iii. use of evidence

   iv. use of Global Politics terminology.

Case study: Islamic State

Islamic State (IS) bases its ideology on a belief in violent jihad. The group has also been referred to as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). On 29 June 2014, the group proclaimed itself to be a worldwide caliphate and renamed itself 'Islamic State'. At its peak in May 2015, it had control over territory occupied by ten million people in Iraq and Syria, as well as limited territorial control in Libya and Nigeria. The group also operates or has affiliates in other parts of the world and has been active in Nigeria, Afghanistan and the Philippines.

The UN has designated IS as a terrorist group and holds it responsible for human rights abuses and war crimes. Amnesty International has reported ethnic cleansing being perpetrated by the group on an 'historic scale'. The group has been designated as a terrorist organisation by the UN, the EU, the UK, the US, India, Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Syria and other governments. Over 60 countries have directly or indirectly waged war against IS.

The aims of IS include:

- Devotion: a commitment to purify the world by killing vast numbers of people deemed 'enemies' of the caliphate.

- Territory: since at least 2004, a significant goal of the group has been the foundation of a Sunni Islamic state (caliphate).

- The Apocalypse: IS is different from other jihadist movements in believing that it will be a central player in God's script, destined to win the final battle.

IS's actions have included war crimes, persecution of minority groups, sexual violence and slavery, beheadings, recruitment of child soldiers and the use of chemical weapons. This behaviour has been condemned by all types of global actors across the world and a strong military response began in mid-2014. States, intergovernmental organisations and non-state actors joined the global coalition to counter IS. By July 2017, IS had lost control of the city of Mosul and by December of that year, controlled just 2 per cent of the territory it held in 2015.

In addition to controlling up to 100,000 square kilometres of land at its peak in 2014–2015, IS's one indicator of its global power has stemmed from its use of social media. The group has thousands of Twitter and Facebook accounts that are manned 24/7, their hashtags appearing on feeds and news stories. This investment in the IS 'brand' creates a destabilising momentum felt around the globe through terrorist incidents, making it harder for the world to ignore the **propaganda**.

Case study questions

1. Describe one aim of Islamic State.
2. Outline the role of Islamic State.
3. To what extent does Islamic State challenge state sovereignty?
4. Evaluate the statement: Islamic State holds no power in the global political arena.
5. Evaluate the power of two non-state actors.

Extension questions

6. Explain the rise in the number and influence of non-state actors.
7. To what extent have non-state actors shifted power away from states and intergovernmental organisations?

Transnational corporations

A **transnational corporation** (TNC) conducts business and investment in more than one state and has branches outside its home country. TNCs are among the world's biggest economic organisations and create management structures which ensure that each branch or subsidiary implements common strategies and policies. The number of TNCs has risen rapidly over the past 30 years due to globalisation and improvements in technology and communications, which allow businesses and other organisations to operate on a global scale.

> A **transnational corporation** is a company whose operations and investments extend beyond the boundaries of the state in which it is registered and can also be referred to as a multinational.

The central aim of all TNCs is to maximise profit for their investors. Public corporations (which **trade** shares on the stock exchange) generate dividends for shareholders. Private companies, which do not trade shares, distribute profits to their owners. Through increased market share, TNCs can expand their profits and offer their investors larger rewards.

> **Trade** refers to the exchange of goods, services, labour and capital.

The UN has described TNCs as 'the productive core of the globalising world economy' and TNCs are able to plan, control and implement business activities across the world. In 2021, a number TNCs were worth more than the GDP of many states, as shown in Table 3.1.2.

The role of TNCs is to provide goods and services to consumers across the globe. TNCs employ significant numbers of employees in both developed and developing states. Through importing and exporting, TNCs command almost 80 per cent of world trade and contribute considerably to global research and development.

Table 3.1.2 – Nominal GDP per annum (country) or market capitalisation (the total value of shares in the company)

Position	Country/company	GDP/market cap (USD)
1.	United States of America	$21,433,200,000,000
2.	China	$14,342,900,000,000
3.	Japan	$5,081,770,000,000
4.	Germany	$3,861,120,000,000
5.	India	$2,868,930,000,000
6.	United Kingdom	$2,829,110,000,000
7.	France	$2,715,520,000,000
8.	Apple	$2,296,000,000,000
9.	Italy	$2,003,580,000,000
10.	Saudi Aramco	$1,990,000,000,000
11.	Brazil	$1,839,760,000,000
12.	Microsoft	$1,827,000,000,000
13.	Canada	$1,736,430,000,000
14.	Russia	$1,699,880,000,000
15.	Amazon	$1,688,000,000,000
16.	South Korea	$1,646,740,000,000
17.	Alphabet (Google)	$1,411,000,000,000
18.	Australia	$1,396,570,000,000
19.	Spain	$1,393,490,000,000
20.	Mexico	$1,268,870,000,000
21.	Indonesia	$1,119,190,000,000
22.	Tencent	$909,510,000,000
23.	Netherlands	$907,051,000,000
24.	Tesla	$807,820,000,000
25.	Saudi Arabia	$792,967,000,000
26.	Facebook	$763,460,000,000
27.	Turkey	$761,425,000,000
28.	Alibaba	$730,440,000,000
29.	Switzerland	$703,082,000,000
30.	Poland	$595,858,000,000

Source: mackeeper.com/blog/tech-giants-as-countries/

The power of TNCs has risen in tandem with the increase in the number of influential companies globally. In 2000, there were approximately 38,000 TNCs; by 2010 this number had increased to more than 100,000. The authority of TNCs is demonstrated by the sheer economic power they command. In 2021, **Fortune 500** ranked Apple as the world's most profitable company, recording a profit of more than US$57 billion. Walmart had 2.3 million employees worldwide. (fortune.com/company/walmart/fortune500/)

TNCs tend to dominate industries where markets are concentrated in the hands of relatively few companies, which increases their power. In 2013 three companies accounted for more than 40 per cent of global coffee sales, five accounted for 75 per cent of the world banana trade and the largest six traders accounted for about two-thirds of the world sugar trade, according to the Fairtrade Foundation.

Certainly, the largest TNCs have operations in many states around the globe. Royal Dutch Shell is one of the oil and gas 'supermajors' and the fifth largest company by 2021 revenue figures, according to the Fortune 500. It operates in more than 70 states, produces 3.7 million barrels of oil per day and has 80,000 employees worldwide.

Do TNCs drive progress and innovation?

Through **foreign direct investment** (FDI), TNCs produce goods and services in developed and developing states. They can act as modernisers of the world economy, promote new technologies and introduce innovations across state borders. Through a constant pursuit of cost efficiencies, TNCs can produce goods more cheaply, passing on these benefits to consumers.

> **Foreign direct investment** is when the investor in business or production in a state has its headquarters in another state

The internationalisation of research and development (R&D) has clear flow-on effects in the states where TNCs operate, providing a training ground for technical skills and improved development options for local staff. The car manufacturing industry in Thailand, which includes some of the world's largest car makers such as Toyota, Honda and China's Great Wall Motor, accounts for 10 per cent of Thailand's GDP and 10 per cent of its manufacturing jobs.

TNCs also promote efficiency and growth of the world economy, linking isolated and developing countries to the world's dominant economies. This economic integration enables TNCs to pass on their knowledge in business operations and organisational structures to corporations in various states, improving standards and encouraging **free enterprise**. TNCs are known to provide loans to developing states, while foreign direct investment creates jobs and can raise wages. When workers have more disposable income, there is a positive effect on the local economy.

> **Free enterprise** is an economic system in which private business operates in competition and relatively free of state control.

Case study: FedEx and the race to zero carbon emissions

The delivery giant FedEx, placed at number 45 in the 2021 Fortune 500 list, announced in March 2021 that it was committed to becoming carbon-neutral by 2040. Companies must rely on renewable fuels or offset the burning of fossil fuels in order to claim carbon neutrality. The company is investing US$2 billion to start converting its fleet of over 180,000 vehicles to electricity, as well as pledging US$100 million to the Yale Center for Natural Carbon Capture. Having fallen short of its 2008 goal to reduce aircraft emissions by 20 per cent by the end of 2020, FedEx confirmed that the company was taking action to reduce carbon emissions through research and inspiring others to act more sustainably.

However, despite FedEx's plan to have only electric vehicles on the road by 2040, only half of new vehicles purchased will be electric by 2025, and many older vehicles will remain on the road for several years to come. The growth in FedEx's operations in the past few years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has meant that its greenhouse gas emissions have increased in the short term. Should the company achieve its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2040, this will reduce the annual carbon emissions of the United States by less than 0.3 per cent.

Case study review questions

1. What does FedEx have to gain from investing in the reduction of carbon emissions?
2. Research two or three other large TNCs that have committed to reducing carbon emissions in the next decade. What reasons do these companies give for reducing their carbon footprint?
3. How else could FedEx use its economic power to contribute positively in the global political arena?

Why are TNCs accused of exploiting host states?

There is no guarantee that states will prosper from the presence of TNCs, and the benefits of improved technology and innovative practices are not wide-reaching. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported data in April 2021 revealing that global FDI flows fell 38 per cent in 2020, the lowest level since 2005. The UN World Investment Report 2021, published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Developed (UNCTAD) communicated concerns with these levels. UN Secretary-General António Guterres is quoted as saying in the report that 'international investment flows are vital for sustainable development in the poorer regions of the world'.

TNCs tend to pay low wages where possible, seeking a low-cost labour force in a global 'race to the bottom'. Both Pizza Hut and Costco were named by the UK government for underpaying workers in 2020. Starbucks has been accused of paying baristas different hourly rates based on their skin colour. A report from China Labor Watch in 2018 found that Foxconn, a manufacturer of Amazon products, underpaid workers in China in 2018; its factories also lacked sufficient onsite medical support for injured workers and had no clear evacuation plans or labelled fire exits.

TNCs may discourage local enterprise in host states by offering lower prices and taking up space in the market that may have previously been held by local businesses. TNCs may also acquire smaller competitors, benefitting from **economies of scale**. Ultimately, many TNCs launch factories in other states in order to minimise the costs of production and lay off workers in their home state.

> **Economies of scale** are the cost advantages that enterprises obtain due to size, output, or scale of operation.

TNCs rarely act in the best interests of host states. They use developing states to evade taxation requirements and take advantage of weak law enforcement and tax legislation. In many cases, TNCs have been accused of overexploiting the natural resources of a state. Experts have also indicated that the next few years will see a wave of lawsuits against state governments from companies challenging environmental protection laws. Italy could have to pay millions to UK oil company Rockhopper Exploration after banning drilling near its coast.

TNCs wield **political power** to influence states and are known to have directly employed government officials, participated in policymaking and bribed political parties or governments with financial contributions. In 2021 a former Glencore oil trader was found guilty of bribing government officials in Nigeria in return for lucrative oil contracts. Similarly, Vitol, the world's largest independent oil trader, paid US$135 million to the US Department of Justice in 2020 after admitting to bribery schemes in Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico. Yet TNCs often maintain the upper hand in their relationship

> **Political power** is the ability of a person or group to determine the policy of a government to serve their individual or group interest.

with states, as the ultimate threat of abandoning production in the state represents powerful leverage.

TNC operations also routinely expose individuals to health and safety risks and ecological dangers. Disasters such as the collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory in Bangladesh in 2013, which led to more than 1100 fatalities, brought attention to the failure of TNCs to ensure their workers have safe working conditions. Rana Plaza manufactured garments for Walmart, which made a profit in 2013 of almost US$16 billion, while Bangladeshi workers were receiving a salary of less than US$70 per month. Many experts agree that the gap between high income and low and middle-income economies is widening due to the influence of TNCs (Balch, 2015).

Can TNCs be considered more powerful than states?

Some suggest that many TNCs now have powers equivalent to those of sovereign states. While TNCs do not have defined territory or military power, their power has grown significantly in the twenty-first century and no intergovernmental organisation regulates their actions. TNCs encourage free trade, as they work to lessen government restrictions and increase their capacity for making profit.

Global Policy Forum quotes economists Herman Daly and Robert Goodland as stating that 'the deregulation of trade aims to erase national boundaries…' and that 'the policy-making strength of the nation is thereby weakened and the relative power of TNCs is increased' (Greer & Singh, 2000, https://archive.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/221-transnational-corporations/47068-a-brief-history-of-transnational-corporations.html).

Although it can be difficult, states do have the capacity to control TNCs through legislation and jurisdiction of their courts. Governments may exert control by acting collectively. Consumer pressures can increase the need for TNCs to implement effective **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) measures and work with NGOs to address popular concerns.

> **Corporate social responsibility (CSR)** is the obligation a business has over and above its legal responsibilities to the wellbeing of employees, customers, shareholders and the community, as well as the environment.

Additionally, there is increased pressure for TNCs to submit to social and environmental auditing. As states, NGOs and the UN collaborate more effectively and allow TNCs to be voluntary partners in global initiatives, improvements in human rights, labour safeguards, anti-corruption measures and, potentially, environmental protections may result.

✳ Focus: The fashion industry and forced labour

Numerous human rights groups have claimed that many of the world's largest fashion brands and retailers have used forced labour in the Xinjiang region of China. Up to 82 leading global clothing brands have been accused of sourcing cotton and yarn from the region, which means that one in every five cotton garments sold across the world may be linked to systemic human rights violations. An estimated 1.8 million Uyghur people work in state-sponsored factories, farms and camps supplying 87 per cent of China's cotton production. The Coalition to End Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region stated in early 2021 that 'right now, there is near certainty that any brand sourcing apparel, textiles, yarn or cotton from the Uyghur Region is profiting from human rights violations' as reported by BBC in March 2021.

🔴 www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56535822).

China is the largest cotton producer in the world, accounting for 21 per cent of global cotton production. In December 2020, the Trump administration imposed sanctions on products made from Xinjiang cotton and major international brands responded. H&M, Gap, Nike and IKEA stopped purchasing cotton from the region. However, China is the largest apparel market in the world, accounting for 24 per cent of sales, and boycotts of brands were encouraged on Chinese social media. Foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, 'Chinese people ... do not accept the fact that foreign companies earn money from them on one hand and smear China on the other.' In a contest for state sovereignty, the apparel industry and associated TNCs find themselves stuck between the United States' demands for more ethical supply chains on one side and the China's calls for political neutrality on the other.

Certainly, TNCs have attempted to please all parties. Spanish retailer Zara removed a statement from its website which indicated that it did not purchase supplies from Xinjiang. Hugo Boss posted a comment asserting that 'Xinjiang cotton is the best in the world,' despite declaring on its website that it did not buy goods directly from Xinjiang.

In January 2021, two shipments of shirts produced by Japanese giant Uniqlo were seized by US authorities at the port in Los Angeles. Although Uniqlo cotton is sourced from the United States, Australia and Brazil, US Customs looked into details like the omission of fabric composition details on invoices and the absence of precise dates and factory locations on certificates, showing the extraordinary level of proof required that companies are not involved with Xinjiang cotton. Coming years will show the impacts of states forcing TNCs to choose a side in the battle over human rights and access to the world's largest markets.

Focus activity questions

1. How much impact do you think the US-led ban on Xinjiang cotton will have on the bottom line of leading apparel TNCs?

2. What do you think will be the outcome for Chinese garment manufacturers looking to expand globally?

3. Does this example indicate that states are always more powerful than TNCs? Why or why not?

Activity 3.1.18 – Review questions

1. Explain the main aim of TNCs.

2. Outline the role of TNCs.

3. How can TNCs challenge the power of states?

4. Evaluate the power of one TNC.

Extension questions

5. Is an international body required to regulate TNCs?

6. Can TNCs become the most powerful global actors?

7. Using two examples, compare the power of NSAs and TNCs.

Revision questions

1. Discuss three challenges to state sovereignty in the twenty-first century.

2. 'Contested borders pose the greatest challenge to state sovereignty.' Discuss.

3. Why is sovereignty still an important aspect of global politics today?

4. Using an example, explain what is a meant by a 'failed state'.

5. Assess the extent to which intergovernmental organisations challenge state sovereignty.

6. Compare the aims of two non-state actors.

7. 'Non-state actors are very powerful in the global political arena.' Discuss.

8. 'Non-state actors play an essential role in achieving peace and security.' Discuss.

9. Evaluate whether TNCs challenge the sovereignty of states.

Practice essay questions

10. Evaluate the power of IGOs in the global political arena of the twenty-first century.

11. Discuss why the state continues to hold the position as the main global actor.

12. 'The United Nations is the premier IGO.' Discuss.

13. Evaluate the challenges to sovereignty that states face today.

14. 'Non-state actors are needed to ensure global peace and security.' Discuss.

15. 'TNCs threaten the power of the state.' Discuss.

16. Discuss the power of the UN and the IMF.

17. Evaluate the extent to which global actors are able to challenge the sovereignty of states.

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Glossary of terms

Corporate social responsibility the obligations a business has over and above its legal responsibilities to the wellbeing of employees and customers, shareholders and the community, as well as the environment

Economies of scale the cost advantages that enterprises obtain due to size, output, or scale of operation

Foreign direct investment (FDI) a direct investment into production or business in a state by a company with headquarters in another state, which occurs either by buying a company in the target state or by expanding operations of an existing business in that state

Fortune 500 an annual list of the 500 largest US industrial corporations, as measured by gross income

Free enterprise an economic system in which private business operates in competition and largely free of state control

Global actor an actor at the international level that has a certain level of global power and influence

Global governance institutions, rules, norms and legal arrangements that seek to facilitate cooperation and manage relations between states. Governance is carried out by both governmental organisations such as the United Nations and non-governmental organisations.

Globalisation the acceleration and intensification of exchanges of goods, services, labour and capital, which promote global interdependence. It has been facilitated by rapid changes in communication and technology.

Intergovernmental organisation (IGO) an organisation composed primarily of states. They are established by a treaty, a founding charter for the organisation, and are subject to international law. Examples include the UN, IMF and ICC.

International relations the study of relationships and interactions between states

Islamic State (IS) an Islamic militant jihadist group designated as a terrorist organisation by multiple global actors. The group is also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Da'esh'.

Jihad an Arabic term for struggle. It has a range of usages comparable to the English word 'crusade', including that of holy war (or at least a war in defence of the Muslim community).

Multilateralism a system of coordinating relations between three or more global actors, usually in pursuit of specific objectives

Nation refers to groups of people claiming common bonds based on culture, language and history. Some nations have their own state, such as the Japanese, while others want their own state, such as the Tibetans and the Kurds

Nation-state political or social grouping in which people within territorial boundaries, with recognised sovereignty, have common bonds based on culture, language and history.

Non-state actor an organisation that has significant political influence without being associated with only one state. This can refer to global actors including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), global terrorist movements and organised religions

One vote the UN's 'one state, one vote' power structure potentially allows states comprising just 5 per cent of the world population to pass a resolution by a two-thirds vote

Peace of Westphalia a result of treaties that ended the Thirty Years War, establishing equality between states and granting monarchs the rights to maintain standing armies and levy taxes

Political power the use of a state's internal political machinery to exert influence over the actions of others. For example, legislation, executive orders, white papers

Propaganda opinionated or misleading information used to promote a political cause or point of view

Sovereign debt crisis occurs when a state has high government debt, an increased probability of default and illiquidity. Often the crisis will have clear warning signs and last for a significant amount of time; states may suffer the collapse of financial institutions

Sovereignty legitimate or widely recognised ability to exercise effective control of a territory within recognised borders. This is the primary organising principle of global politics, providing states with the authority to represent their territorial entity within the international community. State sovereignty can be challenged internally (for example, secessionist groups) or externally (for example, one state invades another)

State traditionally the central actor in global politics. States possess a permanent population, defined territory and recognised sovereignty. States are not necessarily culturally homogeneous, for example Australia

State autonomy a concept that broadly refers to the capacity of national governments to make a difference in an increasingly global world where global challenges, such as climate change, require transnational coordination at odds with traditional state sovereignty

Terrorism the threatened or actual use of violence to achieve political objectives

Trade the exchange of goods, services, labour and capital

Transnational corporation (TNC) a company whose operations and investments extend beyond the boundaries of the state in which it is registered; also referred to as a multinational

Utility of violence violence used as a means of achieving one's political objectives, traditionally a state power
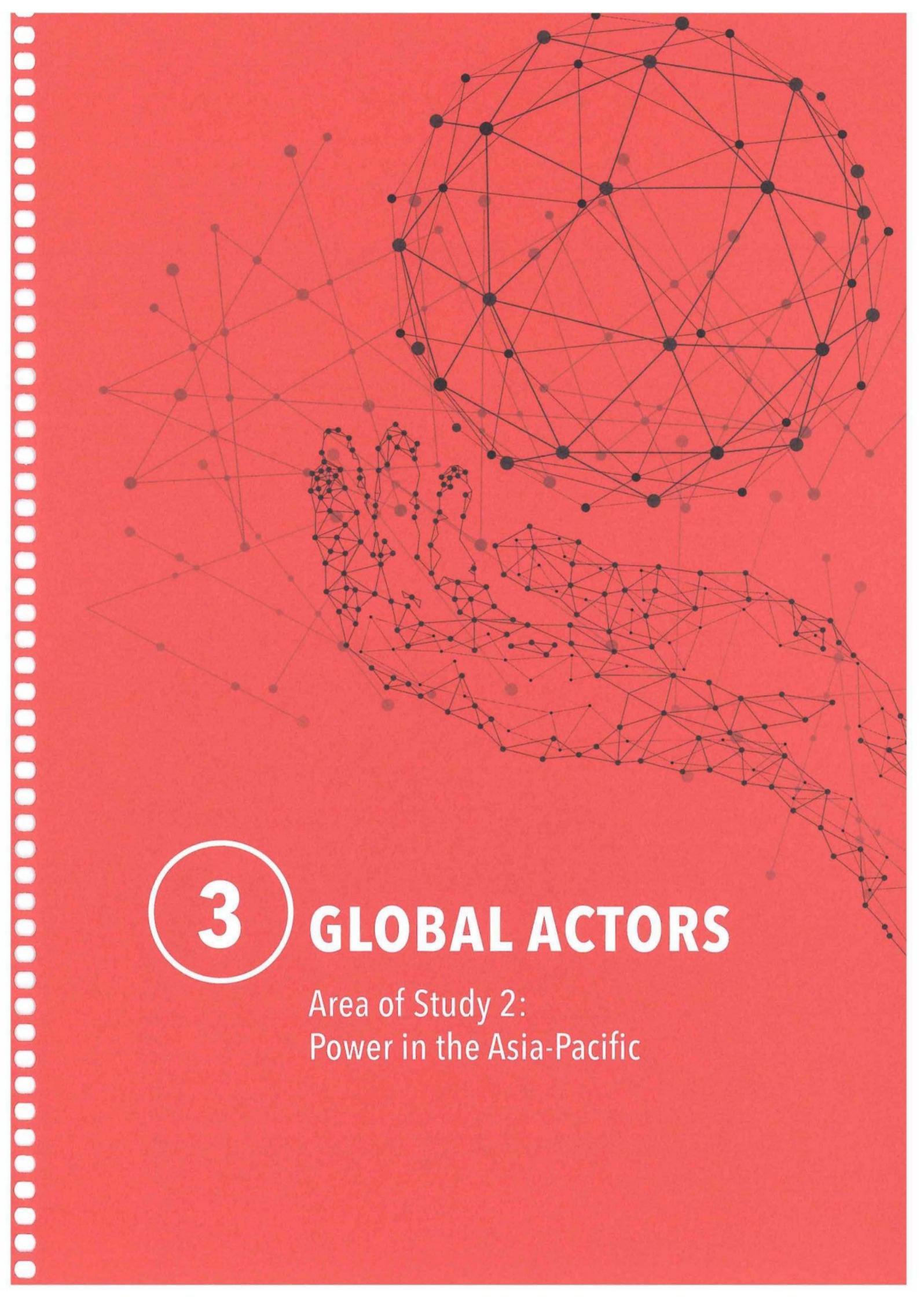
3 GLOBAL ACTORS

Area of Study 2:
Power in the Asia-Pacific

Area of Study 2: Power in the Asia-Pacific

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the use of various types of power by a specific Asia-Pacific state in pursuit of its national interests. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- the key terms: sovereignty, national interests, power, security, idealism, pragmatism

- in relation to ONE of the following Asia-Pacific states: Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, United States of America:

    - the factors that shape the following national interests: national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships, international standing

    - differing interpretations of national interests

    - types of power: hard, soft, military, economic, political, diplomatic, cultural

    - the main foreign policy instruments used to try to achieve national interests: diplomacy, trade, aid, military

    - the effectiveness of the state in achieving its national interests.

Key skills

- define and explain key global politics terms and use them in the appropriate context

- use a variety of source material to analyse types of power

- analyse differing interpretations of national interests

- evaluate the relative importance and effectiveness of different types of power and foreign policy instruments in achieving a specific Asia-Pacific state's national interests

- evaluate the success of a specific Asia-Pacific state in achieving its national interests

- use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments.

3 Global Actors

Area of Study 2: Power in the Asia-Pacific

Power in the Asia-Pacific

This chapter will help students understand Unit 3's Area of Study 2: Power in the Asia-Pacific. The chapter is divided into three learning focus areas:

- pre-learning considerations related to this area of study
- two central concepts – power and national interests
- key knowledge and skills for this area of study in relation to China.

Pre-learning considerations

At the heart of this area of study are five big-picture questions to reflect on:

1. What is power?
2. Why do different ideas about national interests exist?
3. How is power exercised by an Asia-Pacific state?
4. What is the most effective type of power for a state to use to pursue its national interests?
5. How effective is the state in achieving its national interests?

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority says this area of study focuses on 'the way in which a specific Asia-Pacific state uses its power to pursue its national interests, and ... the factors that have shaped that state's national interests in the last 10 years' (VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023, p. 31).

For this area of study, you are required to investigate one of the following Asia-Pacific states:

- Australia
- China
- Indonesia
- Japan
- United States of America.

Table 3.2.1: Formal names of Asia-Pacific states

Option	Short name	Formal name
1	Australia	The Commonwealth of Australia
2	China	The People's Republic of China
3	Indonesia	The Republic of Indonesia
4	Japan	Japan
5	United States of America	The United States of America

Source: United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), UNGEGN List of Country Names, August 2017.

Visualising the flow of this area of study

You can organise this area of study into five bite-size chunks:

1. key terms
2. factors that shape your selected state's national interests
3. differing interpretations of your selected state's national interests
4. types of power or foreign policy instruments used by your selected state to pursue its national interests
5. whether you think your selected state has achieved its national interests.

✳ **Can students study the chosen Asia-Pacific state's pursuit of its national interests in a global context?**

Yes, the various types of power and the main foreign policy instruments used by an Asia-Pacific state can be global when examining the national interests of national security, economic prosperity and international standing. However, the national interest of regional relationships is an exception. The types of power and the main foreign policy instruments of the national interest of regional relationships must apply only to the Asia-Pacific region as stated on page 32 of the AGP study design 2018–2023.

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, VCE Australian and Global Politics, 2018–2023 Frequently Asked Questions, *pp. 2–3.*

A key concepts primer

The concept of power as it relates to the study of global politics

Power is arguably the central concept in the study of global politics. In short, it refers to the ability of an actor to influence others to affect outcomes in their favour and achieve desired results.

> **Power** the ability of one global actor to influence the actions of another global actor. Power can be exercised in a range of ways.

In this area of study, the following types of power need to be explored:

1. military power
2. economic power
3. political power
4. diplomatic power
5. cultural power.

Also explored are a set of foreign policy instruments:

1. diplomacy
2. trade
3. aid
4. military.

Figure 3.2.1 – The key knowledge and skills for power in the Asia-Pacific

Over-arching 'big picture' idea

In this Area of Study students **examine** the way in which a specific Asia-Pacific state uses its power to pursue its national interests and **explore** the factors that have shaped that state's national interests in the last 10 years. For this area of study, students study **ONE** of the following states in the Asia-Pacific: Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan or United States of America.

Chunk 2 – Factors shaping the specific national Interests pursued by your selected Asia-Pacific state

Key knowledge:

The factors that shape the following national interests: *national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships, international standing*

Chunk 1

Key terms:

sovereignty, national interests, power, security, idealism and *pragmatism*

Key Skill:

define and *explain* key global politics terms and use them in the appropriate context

Chunk 5 – Evaluating your selected Asia-Pacific state's overall success in achieving the specific national interests it has sought to pursue and advance

Key knowledge:

the effectiveness of the state in achieving its national interests

Key skill:

evaluate the success of a specific Asia-Pacific state in achieving its national interests

Big idea:

How effective is the state in achieving its national interests?

Chunk 3 – Differing Interpretations surrounding the specific national interests pursued by your selected Asia-Pacific state

Key knowledge:

differing interpretations of national interests

Key skill:

analyse differing interpretations of national interests

Big idea:

Why do different ideas about national interests exist?

Chunk 4a – Types of power wielded/ deployed by your selected Asia-Pacific state in pursuit of its specific national interests

Key knowledge:

types of power: hard, soft, military, economic, political, diplomatic, cultural

Key skill:

use a variety of source material to *analyse* types of power

Big idea:

How is power exercised by an Asia-Pacific state?

Chunk 4b – Foreign policy instruments utilised by you selected Asia-Pacific state in pursuit of its specific national interests

Key knowledge:

the main foreign policy instruments used to try to achieve national interests: *diplomacy, trade, aid, military*

Key skill:

evaluate the relative importance and effectiveness of different types of power and foreign policy instruments in achieving a specific Asia-Pacific state's national interests

Big idea:

What is the most effective type of power for a state to use to pursue its national interests?

These different types of power are used by states to pursue their national interests both domestically and internationally, states use foreign policy instruments to influence other actors when they advance their national interests abroad. Together, types of power and instruments are tools states use in an attempt to achieve national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing. The tools are exercised in two main ways: hard power and soft power.

Photo: Clay Junell

Hard power versus soft power

Joseph Nye, former Dean of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, is a leading voice in the study of global politics, particularly on power. He coined the term 'soft power' (see the quote below).

* Key quote – soft power

'Power is simply the ability to affect others to get the outcomes you want, and you can do it in three ways. You can do it with threats of coercion, 'sticks', you can do it with payments, 'carrots', or you can do it by getting others to want what you want. And that ability to get others to want what you want, to get the outcomes you want without coercion or payment, is what I call soft power ... Indeed, if you can learn to use more soft power, you can save a lot on carrots and sticks.

'Traditionally, the way people thought about power was primarily in terms of military power ... But we need a new narrative if we're to understand power in the twenty-first century. It's not just prevailing at war, though war still persists. It's not whose army wins; it's also whose story wins. And we have to think much more in terms of narratives and whose narrative is going to be effective.'

Extract from a TED Talk by Joseph Nye, 'Global Power Shifts', TEDGlobal 2010, TED, July 2010.

Nye makes two further points regarding the distinguishing features of soft power. He suggests that soft power is associated with a degree of voluntarism on the part of the actor being persuaded, and that soft power is ultimately in the eye of the beholder (see the quotes below).

✳ Key quotes – soft power

'When I introduced the concept of soft power in 1990, I wrote that it is characterised by voluntarism and indirection, while hard power rests on threats and inducements. If someone aims a gun at you, demands your money, and takes your wallet, what you think and want is irrelevant. That is hard power. If he persuades you to give him your money, he has changed what you think and want. That is soft power.'

Extract from 'China's Soft and Sharp Power' by Joseph Nye in The Strategist, *a commentary and analysis site for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 8 January 2018.*

'Attraction rests in the eye of beholder and can be generated by impressions of kindness, competence, or charisma ... To a greater degree than with hard power, soft power depends on the minds of the target audiences. A given cultural resource such as a Hollywood film may produce attraction in Brazil at the same time it produces repulsion in Saudi Arabia.'

Extract from 'Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept' by Joseph Nye in the Journal of Political Power, *2021, p. 6.*

National interests

The concept of **national interests** is also central to this area of study. 'National interests' refers to the goals and objectives that a state seeks to pursue, advance and successfully achieve in order to serve its own ends and agenda. These goals can have an inward domestic focus, an outward foreign focus, or both.

> **National interests** The national interests of a state are pursued to ensure the survival and potential growth of that state. States implement policies and types of power to achieve their national interests and maintain state sovereignty.

In the study of global politics, the aims of the state are expressed as four national interest pursuits:

1. national security

2. economic prosperity

3. regional relationships

4. international standing.

To reiterate, states wield and deploy various types of power and use a range of foreign policy instruments to pursue these national interests.

Chief among these 'big four' national interests is the pursuit of national security. This is because it is through the fulfilment of this interest that a state's own survival is guaranteed. The logic here is that any of the objectives a state might harbour beyond survival are irrelevant if the state is unable to ensure its own sustained existence first. Therefore, not only are the interests of economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing subordinate to national security, they should also ideally serve to reinforce a state's national security.

POWER

'Refers to the ability of one global actor to influence the actions of another global actor. Power can be exercised in a range of types.'
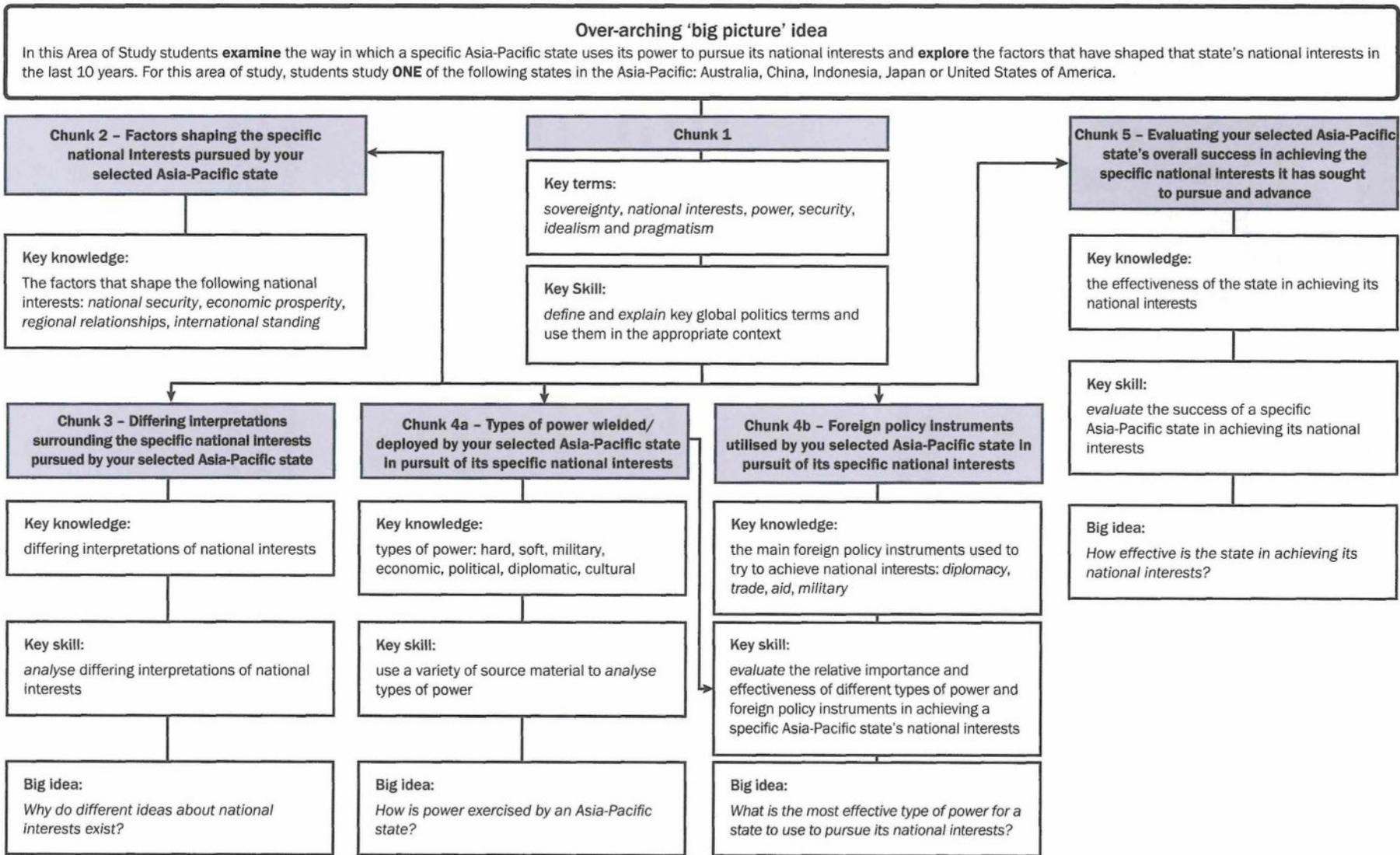– *The VCAA Advice for Teachers – Australian and Global Politics, Units 3 and 4 Global Politics Glossary, as at July 2021*

HARD POWER

- **In a nutshell:** Force and intimidation
- **Purpose:** To coerce and compel
- **Mantra:** 'Do as I say, or else!'
- **Approach:**
  - 'Carrots' = payments (rewards, inducements)
  - 'Sticks' = punishments (threats of, or actual use of violence)
- **Methods:** Direct and overt
- **Power dynamic:**
  - Zero-sum game
  - Actor A's gain = Actor B's loss
  - 'Winner takes all'
- **Nature:** Hard power is an obvious exercise of power. It implies a lack of free will on behalf of the weaker actor, which is compelled to fulfil the will of the stronger actor.

SMART POWER

- **In a nutshell:** The ability to mix hard and soft power into an effective common strategy
- **Mantra:** 'Using all the tools in our foreign policy toolbox.' —*Hillary Clinton*

SHARP POWER (an off-shoot of hard power)

- **In a nutshell:** Deliberate and coordinated efforts to shape/distort/disrupt public opinion and influence the views of other actors
- **Approach:** 'Weaponising' information, disinformation campaigns, censorship, pressure tactics to bully and force self-censoring
- **Nature:** Implies efforts by an authoritarian regime to compel the behaviour of its own citizens by controlling the flow of information, limiting free expression and manipulating opinion abroad by spreading confusion and distorting/disrupting political discourse particularly within democracies

SOFT POWER

- **In a nutshell:** Appeal and attraction
- **Approach:** To persuade and co-opt
- **Mantra:** 'Want what I want!'
- **Approach:**
  - The allure of culture and values to produce an appealing narrative
  - The promotion of a 'winning story' that convinces others to 'buy in'
- **Methods:** Subtle and sophisticated
- **Power dynamic:**
  - Positive-sum game
  - Actor A's gain = Actor B's gain too
  - 'Win-win'
- **Nature:** Soft power is more subjective and is ultimately understood 'in the eye of the beholder'. It also implies a degree of 'voluntarism' on behalf of the actors being 'won over' and persuaded.

Figure 3.2.2 – The exercise of hard, soft, smart and sharp power

However, national interests are very hard to balance. While a state might articulate a coordinated and complementary grand strategy in pursuit of all its national interests, the state often has the harsh reality of having to negotiate trade-offs. This means a state's policy action, in the name of advancing one national interest, might have to be prioritised over (or come at the expense of) advancing another national interest.

National security

National security refers to a state's ability to defend its sovereignty, particularly by guarding its national citizens against internal and external threats.

Traditionally, national security has been understood quite narrowly as a state's ability to uphold its territorial integrity, by ensuring the defence of its physical borders across land, sea and air, usually with its military. However, due to globalisation, this is no longer the case. Rather, the concept of national security is becoming increasingly broad to include political, economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions, as well as humanitarian and human security issues.

Consider the following quote that summarises the work of Barry Buzan, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics on sectors of security.

> **National security** the national interest of a state to ensure it maintains sovereignty. Traditionally, this term refers to the protection of a state's borders from intruders but it has evolved to include other forms of security, such as resource and environmental security, that are necessary for a state to maintain sovereignty.

✳ Key quote – sectors of security

'*Military security* concerns the interplay of states' offensive and defensive capabilities and their perceptions of others' military intentions.

Political security concerns the need to uphold the organizational stability of states, their systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Threats may include other states seeking to interfere in a country's internal affairs.

Economic security concerns ensuring sustained access to the resources, finance, and markets on which the state's welfare and power is based.

Social security concerns the need to sustain traditional patterns of language, culture, and religious and national identity and custom. Threats may include genocidal attempts to eradicate ethnic or cultural identities.

Environmental security concerns the need to maintain the local and planetary biosphere on which all other human enterprises depend.'

Extract from Christopher Browning's International Security: A Very Short Introduction, *Oxford University Press, 2013.*

Economic prosperity

Economic prosperity refers to a state's ability to successfully develop and grow its national economy while also maintaining strategic and competitive advantages within an increasingly interconnected global capitalist economy.

Economic prosperity allows a state to fulfil its end of the social contract by meeting some of the needs of its citizens, particularly those characterised by the core social values of

> **Economic prosperity** the national interest of economic prosperity is important to a state as it indicates whether a state can weather international economic instability as well as protect and build the wealth and welfare of its citizens. If a state is economically prosperous, it encourages other states to develop relationships with it and bolsters state sovereignty.

security, freedom and welfare. By generating wealth and material gains for its national citizens to enjoy, the state can meet its citizens' needs.

Economic prosperity is also critical for national security, as it allows states to either produce or purchase military hardware and weapons systems to bolster their defence capabilities.

Examples of successful economic prosperity include:

- sustaining continued economic growth
- securing new export markets for national goods and services while also ensuring national citizens have access to affordable imports
- facilitating and negotiating the entry of genuine win-win foreign direct investment into the country to fund domestic projects or provide employment for national citizens
- maximising revenue from either the acquisition or sale of lucrative natural resources and other geo-strategic assets that fall within a state's sovereignty
- maintaining effective government economic policies that successfully
  - monitor and respond to global economic uncertainty and volatility
  - facilitate or create employment opportunities
  - manage income inequality
  - police and tackle corruption and other illicit economic activity
  - strike the right balance on various economic issues.

Note that it is increasingly understood that sustaining continued economic growth needs to factor in environmental considerations, especially by limiting the negative impacts of climate change by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and transitioning to more renewable energy sources.

A government needs to strike the right balance in its economic policies by considering issues like taxation, public expenditure and investment in social services, while also producing a balanced (or surplus) budget, encouraging a productive labour force, and supporting innovation and investment in research and development to produce the technologies of the future. What the actual right balance should be when it comes to these issues is often contested based on competing political ideologies or the demographic needs of a society, such as prioritising an ageing population.

Regional relationships

Regional relationships are the way in which a state interacts, be it positively or negatively, with its geographic neighbours.

Examples of regional relationships include:

- *cultural links* – regional neighbours cooperate based on shared value systems, historical ties, strong people-to-people connections, and bonds that promote a unity of purpose and foster alliances
- *reciprocity* – regional neighbours share common interests and invest in forging productive partnerships (usually linked to mutually beneficial trade)
- *strategic rivalry* – regional neighbours compete for regional dominance (can lead to strained relations, increased tensions and even the outbreak of hostilities).

Regional relationships positive regional relationships are an important national interest to a state, as they ensure its neighbours will not behave in a hostile manner and thus threaten state sovereignty. Alliances with other like-minded neighbours may help the success of other national interests. However, a state may consider other national interests more important than positive regional relationships if they better achieve the aims of a state.

International standing

A state's **international standing** refers to its reputation among the broader international community. It also refers to the national brand a state promotes through its actions on the global stage and via the transfer of its culture, values, beliefs and ideals to the rest of the world, in the hope that the state can then leverage this favourable reputation to achieve its aims.

Compare the following examples of international standing include:

- a responsible global citizen is recognised for supporting multilateral efforts, contributing to global governance initiatives, upholding the established norms of the international community and complying with international law

- a pariah state is considered an outcast of the international community so it faces varying degrees of pressure, usually in the form of international condemnation, diplomatic isolation, economic sanctions (such as trade embargoes) and sometimes direct military intervention by coalitions of other states.

International standing influences the power a state has in global politics. Other national interests have an impact on international standing, as do a state's role and recognition in intergovernmental organisations and as a proponent of international law. If a state has a poor international standing, this may threaten its sovereignty.

Figure 3.2.3 – The four core national interests pursued by states

'National interests are used by states to describe, support and inform domestic and foreign policy actions. Students learn that although states vary markedly, they hare a common interest in maintaining their sovereignty and national security.'
—*VCCA VCE Australian and Global Politics 2018–2023 Study Design 'blurb', p. 32*

'The national interests of a state are pursued to ensure the survival and potential growth of that state. States implement policies and types of powe to achieve their national interests and maintain state sovereignty.'
—*VCCA Advice for Teachers - Australian and Global Politics, Units 3 and 4 Global Politics Glossary, as at July 2021*

NATIONAL SECURITY
- Defend sovereignty
- Protect citizens

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
- Advance economic development
- Improve the living standards of citizens
- Invest in national security through the development/purchase of military hardware and defence weapons systems

REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
Sustain useful, productive, mutually beneficial interstate relations with geographic neighbours

INTERNATIONAL STANDING
Promote a positive global image across the wider international community

Activity 3.2.1 – Exam-style short-answer questions

Check your understanding

Test your key knowledge by attempting the questions below.

You should aim to craft clear and comprehensive responses that address the specific demands of each question by drawing on detailed, relevant and accurate information.

Pay attention to the marks allocated for each question, as well as the task word, also known as a command term or instructional verb.

1. Outline two considerations associated with each of the main national interest pursuits: national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing. (8 marks)

2. Explain how the terms 'power' and 'national interests' relate to each other in the study of global politics. (6 marks)

Key knowledge and skills

Key knowledge and skills will be outlined in relation to China.

Introduction to contemporary China: A multidimensional state

'China is a sleeping lion, and when she awakes, the world will shake.'

—attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte, French military and political leader

When examining China in the context of Global Politics it is important to note that terms like 'China' and 'the Chinese' imply a homogeneous ('sameness') quality that does not truly reflect just how varied the country or its people really are.

Granted, it is possible to locate China on a political map of the world, and there are indeed Chinese people, just as there is Chinese cuisine, art, literature and music.

However, much like those traditional wooden Russian dolls that fit one inside the other in decreasing size, there are many 'Chinas' within China.

For example, until 25 October 1971, when the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 2758, recognising the People's Republic of China (PRC) as 'the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations', it was actually the island of Taiwan, known as the Republic of China, that was internationally recognised as the 'real China'.

Consider that out of China's 1.4 billion people, there are two ethnic minorities in particular, Muslim Uyghurs and Buddhist Tibetans, that comprise 1.4 per cent of China's population. This may not seem significant, but by virtue of China's population size, this equates to 18 to 20 million people. Many of these people are likely to identify as victims of PRC colonial oppression. This means that there are two groups within China (that when combined number twice the population of Sweden) where many of their members do not necessarily feel or see themselves as Chinese.

Below is an outline of some of the main dimensions that characterise modern-day China. As you read this section, also consider how you might draw on aspects of the following information to address the VCE Study Design's key knowledge point regarding factors that shape national interests.

Vast geography

Size

China is the third largest country. At 9.597 million square kilometres it covers 6.3 per cent of the world's landmass.

Boundaries and frontiers

China shares international borders with 14 sovereign states, reaching into Central Asia, North-East Asia, South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific.

Contested territory

China is involved in a series of bitter and ongoing contested border disputes with India, Japan and various South-East Asian states. It is also confronting separatist claims in the so-called 'autonomous regions' of Xinjiang and Tibet, and is engaged in a diplomatic stand-off with the island of Taiwan.

Diverse demographics

Population and ethnic groups

China is the world's most populous country, with an estimated population in July 2021 of 1,397,897,720. Within that mass of 1.4 billion people, China officially recognises 56 ethnic groups, of which the Han Chinese are the majority at 91.6 per cent, followed by the Zhuang at 1.3 per cent, and then many others, including Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongol, Korean and Kazakh, which when combined comprise the remaining 7.1 per cent.

Urbanisation

The majority of people in China live in what is traditionally considered the historic heartland of eastern and central China. As of 2020, 61.4 per cent of China's population lived in urban areas, with six Chinese cities classed as megacities (with populations of over 10 million). The largest of these is Shanghai, with 26 million people, and China's capital, Beijing, with 20 million people; each has a similar population to the size of Australia.

Ageing

According to Yun Jiang and Adam Ni, for the China Story Project's *China Neican* newsletter, 2021, 'China has a rapidly ageing population. By 2025, one-fifth of the population will be over 60. By 2050, China's dependency ratio is projected to reach 70 per cent. Chinese and international experts have been warning about a demographic time bomb in China for decades — that China will grow old before it grows rich and powerful.' A dependency ratio is the number of people aged under 15 and over 65 divided by the total working population. It represents the segment of a population that is either too young or too old to work and therefore has to be provided for and looked after by the working-age members of a population.

China as a civilisation-state

Exceptionalism, longevity, historical continuity and contributions to humanity

China's name for itself is Zhongguo. It translates to Middle Kingdom or Central State, which arguably can be read as an expression of Han Chinese exceptionalism, implying China is the centre of civilisation and the world.
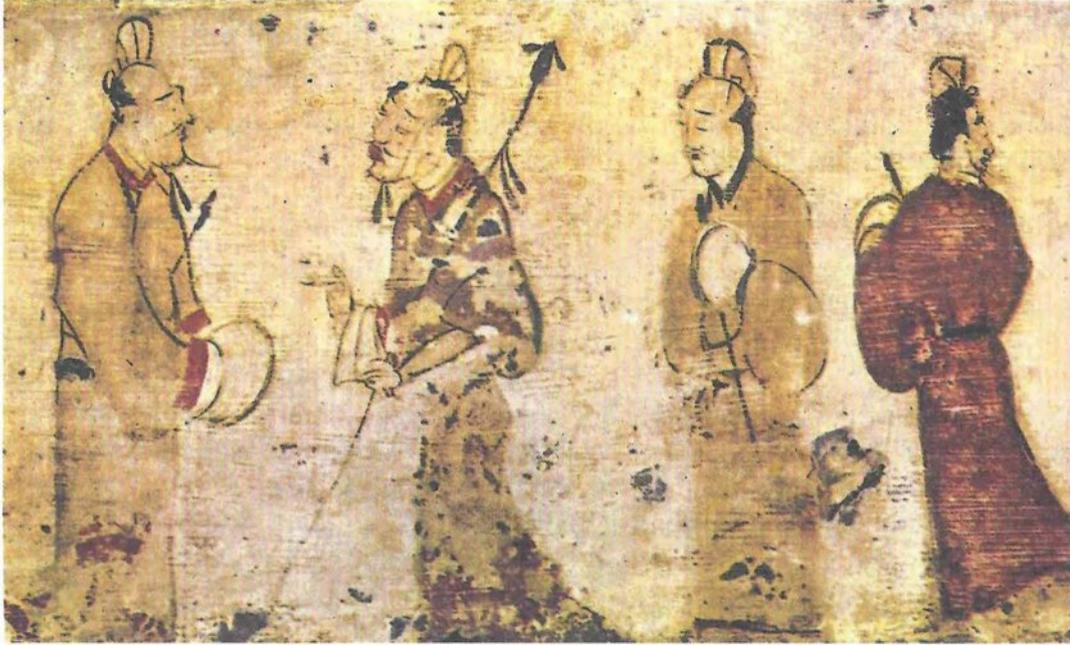
'Gentleman in conversation' a Chinese painting dated to the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD)

It is not hard to see where this sentiment might stem from. At 4000 to 5000 years old, China is one of the longest continuous civilisations on earth. The beginnings of the China we know today stretch back to 221 BCE and the Qin dynasty (pronounced as 'chin' in English, and where the name 'China' comes from). The Qin dynasty was a time when China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi, organised a fragmented land into a unified state, reflecting significant aspects of China's modern-day geography.

As a result of this millennia-old culture, China has a rich history to draw on, including the legacy of 'the four great inventions'. This translated Han Chinese phrase acknowledges China as the civilisation that produced four of the most consequential innovations to influence humanity: the compass, gunpowder, papermaking and printing.

A hybrid entity

Some academics, such as Martin Jacques, who was a senior fellow at the University of Cambridge, suggest that China's sense of history is better understood as a civilisation-state, rather than a conventional nation-state. See the following quote for an example of this approach.

* Key quote – civilisational states

'But today we are witnessing ... the rise of the civilisational state, which claims to represent not merely a nation or territory but an exceptional civilisation. In China and Russia the ruling classes reject Western liberalism ... They define their countries as distinctive civilisations with their own unique cultural values and political institutions. The ascent of civilisational states is not just changing the global balance of power. It is also transforming post–Cold War geopolitics away from liberal universalism towards cultural exceptionalism.'

Extract from 'China, Russia and the Return of the Civilisation State' by Adrian Pabst, Professor of Politics at the University of Kent, New Statesman, 8 May 2019.

The dynamics of a one-party state

The Chinese Communist Party

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the world's largest political party, with 90 million members. China is a one-party state, where the CCP has monopolised political control over China's citizens while at the same time permitting them varying degrees of individual economic freedom. This system has come to be known as 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'.

A man stands in front of a convoy of tanks in the Avenue of Eternal Peace in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in this June 5, 1989 file photo. Associated Press/Jeff Widener

The CCP was founded in 1921 and rose to power throughout the 1930s and World War II, eventually taking over mainland China after a civil war from 1946 to 1949; under the party's then leader, Mao Zedong, the area was officially declared to be the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. The CCP has been in power ever since. In that time it has retained complete control over the Chinese military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The devastating effect of this was witnessed during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, where on the orders of then CCP leader Deng Xiaoping, the PLA brutally quashed a citizen-led demonstration movement, mainly made up of students and ordinary workers.

✳ Key quotes – The CCP

'The party exercises overall leadership over all areas of endeavour in every part of the country.'

Extract from Xi Jinping's 'New Era' speech, delivered at the 19th party congress in 2017.

'The People's Republic of China is a socialist state governed by a people's democratic dictatorship that is led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants.'

'The socialist system is the fundamental system of the People's Republic of China. Leadership by the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is prohibited for any organization or individual to damage the socialist system.'

Article 1 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

CCP collective leadership versus 'strong-man rule'

Just as China itself – the country and its population – is not homogeneous, the CCP is not a monolithic entity. Within the CCP, members have various ideological beliefs, policy priorities, socio-economic backgrounds and alliances.

Mao Zedong's reign was characterised by a major concentration of personal power. His elevated status and radical policies led to economic ruin, the death of millions, and unnecessary violence and suffering. After Mao's death in 1976 the CCP began a process of collective leadership, whereby power was shared among the different factions or intra-party groups. (The CCP's two main factions are the Princelings and the Populists.) This led to a sort of 'one party, two coalitions' system – in effect, an experiment in a power-sharing dictatorship. In this system each faction serves as an internal opposition party to the other.

Under Xi Jinping, China's paramount leader at the time this textbook was published, there has been an intense push to unify the party under his direct (and ongoing) authority. This suggests the CCP is returning to the type of individual strong-man rule associated with the Mao era.
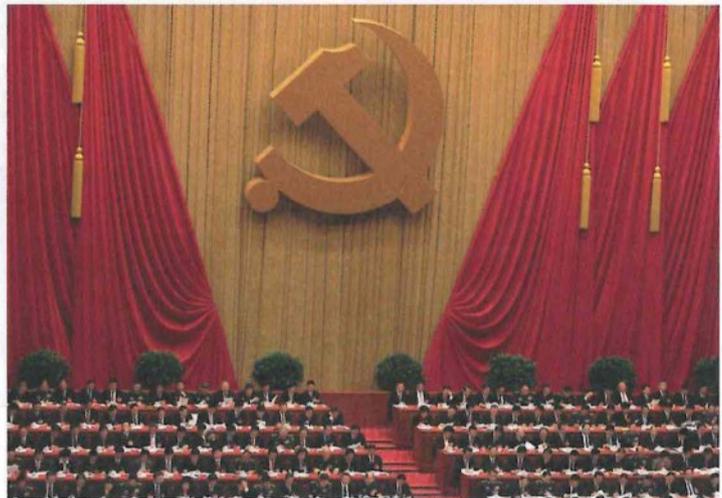
The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China

Xi Jinping: Chairman of everything

Xi is arguably the world's most powerful politician. Occupying three significant positions of prominence within Chinese politics, he is simultaneously head of the party (CCP), the state (PRC) and the military (PLA):

- *General Secretary of the CCP* – Xi is the 'party boss' of the largest political organisation on earth and the leader of one of the most sophisticated authoritarian regimes in history.

- *President of the PRC* – Xi is head of state of the world's most populous country and oversees the world's second largest economy; the UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has forecast that China could overtake the United States as the leading economy as early as 2028.

- Chairman of the Central Military Commission – Xi is commander-in-chief of the Chinese military, which is the largest standing force in the world, with 2.19 million active military personnel; it is also equipped with a nuclear arsenal.

As head of the party, state and military, Xi is one of the most consequential leaders in contemporary politics. His personal motivations and the intended and unintended impacts of his decisions and actions bear huge causal weight that not only shapes the course of China's national interests but also affects billions of individual lives, both within China and around the world.

Xi's consolidation of power

The CCP's 19th party congress was held from 18 to 25 October in 2017. Alongside China's annual sitting of its parliament, known as the 'National People's Congress', which was held from 5 to 20 March 2018, the congress marked major inflection points for the CCP as a party, for the PRC as a country and for Xi personally as a leader. Specifically, these occasions allowed Xi to expand and strengthen his grip on political power within China. This was achieved in two major ways:

Xi Jinping, the current leader of the Communist Party of China

1. At the 19th Party Congress, the CCP, via the 2300 party delegates attending the congress, unanimously voted to add Xi Jinping's name to the CCP's constitution as well as enshrining his personal political philosophy, Xi Jinping Thought. These moves further enhanced Xi's leadership status and prestige, elevating him alongside the PRC founding fathers: Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. These are the only other two CCP leaders to be personally named in the CCP's constitution.

2. At the National People's Congress (largely regarded as a rubber-stamp parliament for the CCP), a near-unanimous vote was cast to make a change to the PRC's constitution, ending presidential term limits. By removing the two-term limit, Xi was effectually made president for life.

Xi's power also stems from an ongoing anti-corruption campaign, which has been criticised as a convenient cover for Xi to eliminate potential political rivals who could challenge his leadership.

Furthermore, there is a growing cult of personality around Xi Jinping, involving propaganda that exalts and glorifies him as a leading patriot, father figure and man of the people.

Internal divisions

While CCP propaganda and many of Xi's own speeches present an image of national unity and social cohesion, in reality China is a fractured society. The following are some of China's main fault lines.

Ethnic tensions

Tensions exist between China's Han majority and ethnic minorities, particularly those groups associated with separatist claims, such as the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and the people of Tibet.

Political strife

There is conflict between the increasingly authoritarian CCP and pro-democracy forces, particularly in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong.

The status of Taiwan

There is a growing desire for independence within Taiwan, which the CCP considers to be a rogue or renegade province. Many Taiwanese see their island as a legitimate sovereign state, with a rightful claim to be known as the real China. Its pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party has had consecutive electoral victories in 2016 and 2020.

Economic grievances

Income inequality is increasing, particularly between urban and rural populations. According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, the PRC's Gini index was 0.47 in 2019. This is a measure of inequality that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 equals perfect equality and 1 equals complete inequality within a society. Measures above 0.40 are considered potentially destabilising.

In 2020, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang acknowledged that 600 million people have a monthly income of only 1000 yuan ($154), which for many could not even cover rent. That year, China (including Hong Kong and Macau) also had 698 billionaires, with a combined net worth of $2.5 trillion dollars – equivalent to the GDP of Canada, Brazil or Italy. China is the third largest market for luxury brands, with $52 billion in sales in 2020.

The CCP is also experiencing a legitimacy crisis due to a culture of corruption within the party.

Environmental issues and climate change

There is growing dissatisfaction over China's environmental degradation and impacts from climate change. There have been protests in major cities. In 2013, 712 abrupt environmental incidents took place, up 31 per cent from 2012, while citizen petitions related to environmental issues rose from 1.05 million in 2011 to 1.77 million in 2015.

One of the most high-profile examples of citizen dissatisfaction occurred in March 2015, with the release of *Under the Dome*, produced by Chai Jing, a former Chinese state television reporter. This documentary investigating pollution and air quality went viral, with 100 million views in 48 hours and 280 million posts on China's social media platform Sino Weibo. Just over a week after its release, *Under the Dome* was censored by authorities and removed from video sites, as was an interview with Chai on the website of central news organisation *People's Daily*. Chinese media were prohibited from reporting on the film.

Increased religious persecution

China has witnessed a growing underground Christian movement, which is particularly active in China's rural areas. As of 2020, there were possibly up to 116 million Christians in mainland China (compared to 90 million members of the CCP). The media reported that a CCP crackdown on Christianity led to churches being desecrated and closed down, as well as pastors (church leaders) being jailed. There was also evidence of an anti-Muslim crackdown in Xinjiang targeting Uyghurs and other minorities: mosques were put under surveillance, desecrated and demolished, religious headscarves and beards were banned, and Uyghur public servants were discouraged from fasting during Ramadan (an Islamic holy month).

The curse of geography

American encirclement

To the north, south and west, China shares land borders with other states, not all of them friendly. Arguably, almost all of them are suspicious and anxious of China. To the east, China has to contend with the US Pacific fleet. There is a US military presence in neighbouring Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Guam, Thailand and Singapore, and Australia hosts a rotation of 2000 US marines in Darwin. The United States also sells arms to Taiwan.

The Malacca Strait dilemma

One of China's most significant geographical vulnerabilities is its heavy reliance on imported goods passing through the narrow Malacca Strait, which is between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. In 2016, for example, almost 80 per cent of China's oil imports passed through the South China Sea via the Malacca Strait (CSIS, 2021). China needs energy security for its economic prosperity – the CCP's own legitimacy and thus regime security relies on it – and this is dependent on the Malacca Strait remaining an open maritime route. China is aware that in the event of a conflict, particularly with the United States, it would likely lose access to the Malacca Strait as a sea line of communication. China would not be able to access critical imports, which would lead to major economic consequences and then political ramifications for the CCP's ability to retain political control.

Xi Jinping's flagship policy, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is one attempt to resolve this. In effect, the BRI is a development policy, based on cross-border infrastructure projects that aim to connect China with Eurasia, Central Asia, South-East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe through two interconnecting trade routes, an overland 'belt' and a maritime 'road'. One of the strategic hubs for the BRI is the Port of Gwadar in Pakistan, which is part of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), itself a critical section of the BRI. In fact, the port of Gwadar is a junction point where the belt and the road of the BRI meet. Ultimately, CPEC offers China an alternative import route (in effect, a way to bypass the Malacca Strait), through Gwadar Port and overland through Pakistan and into China via Xinjiang.

It's important to understand that the Malacca Strait dilemma is fundamental to China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, and its determination to advance the BRI and maintain control over Xinjiang at all costs.

China as a peer competitor of the United States

Cold War 2.0

Tensions between the United States and China are increasingly framed as a new Cold War. Although this analogy is not truly accurate, a high-stakes split is emerging between these two actors, with very real flashpoints that could strain relations and exacerbate tensions. Examples of issues include:

- tit-for-tat criticisms regarding the origins and handling of the COVID-19 global pandemic
- East China Sea and South China Sea disputes
- Taiwan and North Korea
- the BRI
- accusations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang
- the race for technological supremacy
- allegations of hacking sensitive security and economic information.

Any talk of conflict between the United States and China always occurs in the shadow of a possible nuclear war, with both the United States and China equipped with nuclear arsenals that have first-strike and second-strike capabilities.

Yet common ground does exist, namely, bilateral trade and cooperative action to address climate change. In theory these 'common ground' considerations can serve as handbrakes to avoid a future slide into war.

Nevertheless, there appears to be more assertive rhetoric from the United States against what it perceives as its China challenge. This was clear under the Trump administration in particular, but also during the first year of the Biden administration.

For the first time, China is in a position to push back against US dominance. Consider the following quotes.

✳ Key quotes – China and the United States

'Interstate strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in US national security.

'China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea.'

Extract from the synopsis of the US National Defense Strategy, 2018.

'We're in a competition with China and other countries to win the twenty-first century.' (In later off-the-cuff remarks, Biden described Chinese President Xi Jinping as 'deadly earnest on [China] becoming the most significant, consequential nation in the world': https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/29/biden-calls-for-us-to-become-more-competitive-against-china.html)

Extract from US President Joe Biden's first address to a joint session of Congress, 28 April 28 2021.

'Yang Jiechi is a name that's not likely to be all that familiar to Australians. It should be.

'He is the man who crafts China's image to the world. Yang is a former foreign minister and now one of Xi Jinping's inner circle, as Director of China's Foreign Affairs Leading Group.

'Here's an insight into how he thinks. In 2010 he issued a warning to other Asian nations: 'China is a big country and you are small countries. That is a fact.'

'This is a long way from the motto of former China leader, Deng Xiaoping: 'Hide your capacities, bide your time.' The era of hide and bide is over.

'China is by some measures the world's biggest economy. It has the world's largest standing army. China is the world's leading manufacturer and exporter. It is the only nation that can plausibly challenge American global dominance.

'This has some fearing Thucydides' trap. What is that? It is a lesson from the Peloponnesian War, when the Ancient Greek historian Thucydides said the fear of the rise of Athens made war with Sparta inevitable. Since then it has become shorthand for how a rising power threatens an existing order.'

Extract adapted from 'China's Era of "Hide and Bide" is over' by Stan Grant, ABC Online, 30 January 2018.

Key terms

Words are never 'only words'; they matter because they define the contours of what we can do.

—*Slavoj Žižek, Slovenian philosopher*

Note that the definitions for the VCE Study Design's key terms for this area of study are available in the Units 3 and 4 Global Politics Glossary. See the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Glossary page for Units 3 and 4, under 'Advice for teachers – Australian and Global Politics'.

🔴 https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/advice-for-teachers/Pages/Units3and4GlobalPoliticsGlossary.aspx.

Advice for tackling key terms

The Study Design states: 'define and explain key global politics terms and use them in the appropriate context' *(VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023, p. 32)*.

It is imperative that you go beyond memorising the definition of each key term. Instead, see key terms as the big-picture concepts that underpin and inform the key knowledge points for this area of study.

What follows is an explanation of each key term as it relates to the context of contemporary China. Consider how you might draw on aspects of this information to address the Study Design's key knowledge points regarding factors that shape national interests.

Key term: Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the 'legitimate or widely recognised ability to exercise effective control of a territory within recognised borders. This is the primary organising principle of global politics, providing states with the authority to represent their territorial entity within the international community. State sovereignty can be challenged internally (for example, secessionist groups) or externally (for example, one state invades another)' (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 'Advice for Teachers – Australian and Global Politics: Units 3 and 4 Global Politics', VCCA's main website).

In *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* sovereignty is defined as the 'principle that within its territorial boundaries the state is the supreme political authority, and that outside those boundaries the state recognizes no higher political authority' (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 8th ed., 2020).

For China, the concept of sovereignty is absolute: it cannot be affected by globalisation or interference by other global actors for humanitarian reasons or human rights. Instead, China maintains that because states have supreme and exclusive control over a defined territory, their domestic realm is their business alone. Hence, whatever a state decides to do within its own borders, to its own citizens, should not be questioned by outsiders. China believes there are never any grounds for states to intervene in the domestic affairs of another state and especially not with the use of force.

Compare China's rigid notion of sovereignty with more flexible interpretations. In the European Union (EU), for example, member-states delegate their sovereignty upwards to a larger supranational entity that at times, at least in theory, sits above individual states. Also note the EU's harmonisation efforts to integrate the borders, customs unions, passports and currencies of its members into a single system.

Consider the expressions of China's absolutist interpretation of sovereignty in the following quote.

✳ Key quote – The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

1. mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. mutual non-aggression
3. mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs
4. equality and cooperation for mutual benefit
5. peaceful coexistence

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, as stated in the Sino-Indian Agreement 1954.

Even though the Five Principles were devised in 1954, they remain an important part of China's foreign policy, particularly informing its record in the UN Security Council of voting against any UN- or Western-led sanctions or interventions. According to Andrew Nathan, professor of Chinese political science at Columbia University, 'the core idea behind the five principles as interpreted by China today is sovereignty – that one state has no right to interfere in the internal affairs of another state' (*Asia for Educators*, Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University, 2022).

Consider this quote in relation to the following quote from Xi Jinping.

✳ Key quote – China's sovereignty

'The Chinese people love peace. We will never seek aggression or expansion, but we have the confidence to defeat all invasions. We will never allow any people, organization or political party to split any part of Chinese territory out of the country at any time, in any form. No one should expect us to swallow the bitter fruit that is harmful to our sovereignty, security or development interests.'

Extract from Xi Jinping's speech celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of the PLA in 2017.

China also finds itself in territorial and maritime border disputes that challenge its sovereignty.

Separatists

Some of China's ethnic minorities see Chinese rule over their homelands as a form of colonialism, calling instead for the creation of independent states. Most notably, sections of the Uyghur Muslim community see the province of Xinjiang as East Turkestan; likewise some Tibetans advocate for a free and independent (Buddhist) Tibet.

East China Sea and South China Sea

China and Japan disagree over which country has sovereignty over a string of islands in the East China Sea, which China recognises as the Diaoyutai Islands and Japan recognises as the Senkaku Islands. In 2013, China unilaterally declared an 'air defence identification zone' over the islands.

China also asserts a historical claim of sovereignty over a majority of the South China Sea and its islands, reefs, shoals and atolls, based on an obscure 1940s map, known as the 'nine-dash line'. Its claims have been asserted through militarisation efforts in the region.

Rival claimants such as Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam base much of their sovereignty claims, in particular their 'exclusive economic zone' maritime rights, on the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea – an agreement China itself ratified in 1996.

On 12 July 2016, an international tribunal known as the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague dismissed China's South China Sea claim, as part of a case brought by the Philippines in 2013. As at the time of writing, the United States and its allies continue to challenge China's claim by entering the disputed waters to conduct freedom-of-navigation patrols.

China–India Himalayan Border

China accuses India of occupying territory it sees as South Tibet, which India instead recognises and administers as the state of Arunachal Pradesh. India accuses China of occupying Indian territory in an area known as Aksai Chin, which China administers.

During 2020 and 2021, tensions escalated across the 'line of actual control', the official name for the border between China and India, which is over 4000 kilometres long. Beginning in May 2020, both sides amassed forces in the Ladakh area. A skirmish in the Galwan Valley in June 2020, fought with clubs and sticks (after a 1996 agreement prohibited the use of guns and explosives near the border) resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers.

Taiwan

China's One China Principle (not to be confused with the One China Policy) views the island of Taiwan as an inalienable part of the CCP-ruled PRC. While China seeks to actively contain and oppose Taiwanese independence, Taiwan remains a unique entity with what is best described as de facto statehood or quasi-sovereignty. It issues its own currency and passport, and has an independent defence force that receives defence capability assistance and arms sales from the United States.

At the time of writing, Taiwan was formally recognised as the 'real China' (Republic of China) by 15 states. Other states that do not have official diplomatic relations with Taiwan have instead established de facto embassies, for example, The Australian Office in Taipei and the American Institute in Taiwan.

Cyber sovereignty

China is a vocal advocate of *Wangluo Zhuquan* ('cyber sovereignty' or 'internet sovereignty'), which is the idea that states should be able to govern and regulate the internet within their own national sovereign jurisdiction, as opposed to the original conception of the internet as an open, free realm.

China advocates this position internationally, particularly at its annual World Internet Conference (also known as the Wuzhen Summit), attracting states like Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as technology firms including Apple and Google, with the intention to discuss global internet issues and policies.

Cyber sovereignty is also used as part of CCP rhetoric to justify strict internet censorship, the collection and storage of personal data, the use of an extensive security camera surveillance network and the introduction of its 2016 Cybersecurity Law. Consider the quotes below.

* Key quotes – Cyber sovereignty

'Within Chinese territory the Internet is under the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty. The Internet sovereignty of China should be respected and protected.'

Extract from the Chinese government's 2010 white paper 'The Internet in China'.

'[China is] willing to work with the international community to respect cyberspace sovereignty and promote partnerships.'

Extract from a letter by Xi Jinping read at the China-backed World Internet Conference in 2017.

Key term: National interests

National interests 'are pursued to ensure the survival and potential growth of that state. States implement policies and types of power to achieve their national interests and maintain state sovereignty' *(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 'Advice for Teachers – Australian and Global Politics: Units 3 and 4 Global Politics', VCCA's main website).*

The Globalization of World Politics (2020) defines 'national interest' as something '[i]nvoked by realists and state leaders to signify that which is most important to the state – survival being at the top of the list' (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 8th ed., 2020).

Under Xi Jinping, China's four main national interest pursuits – national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing – are framed by three theoretical underpinnings:

1. Xi's signature slogan 'the Chinese Dream'

2. Xi's New Era concept

3. the official CCP ideology of Xi Jinping Thought.

Xi's Chinese dream

Think of Xi's Chinese Dream as a populist, hyper-nationalist 'make China great again' pitch to the 1.4 billion citizens in the PRC, including the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, the 24 million citizens of Taiwan, as well as the broader Chinese diaspora around the world. Then, consider the two quotes below.
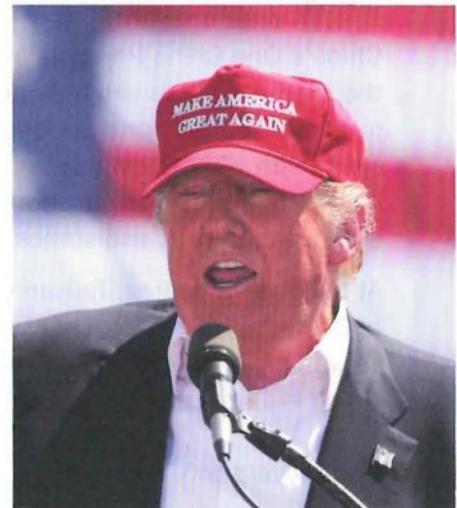
Donald Trump sporting his signature slogan. Photo: Gage Skidmore

Key quotes

'The great revival of the Chinese nation has demonstrated unprecedented bright prospects. Our responsibility is to unite and lead people of ... all ethnic groups around the country while accepting the baton of history and continuing to work for realising the great revival of the Chinese nation in order to let the Chinese nation stand more firmly and powerfully among all nations around the world and make a greater contribution to mankind.'

Extract from Xi Jinping's speech after being named General Secretary of the CCP in 2012.

'We must make persistent efforts, press ahead with indomitable will, continue to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive to achieve the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.'

Extract from Xi Jinping's first speech as China's president at the twelfth National People's Congress in 2013.

Notice the recurring ideas of revival and rejuvenation. Xi's Chinese Dream is not about China's rise to power, as much as it is a declaration of intent to return China back to power.

Unlike the individualistic American dream, the Chinese Dream is presented as a collective effort by the CCP, the PLA and the Chinese people to ensure China is once again a respected and powerful actor in world affairs. It is renewing China's supposed 'rightful place' as the Middle Kingdom.

As well as restoring the apparent natural order of things, Xi's Chinese Dream intends to exorcise the demons of the past and redeem the legacy of China's Century of Humiliation (a period from 1839 to 1949), which is explored in more detail on page 104.

Xi's New Era

Xi presented his New Era concept in a 3.5-hour speech at the CCP's 19th party congress in 2017.

> **＊ Key quote – Xi Jinping's New Era**
>
> 'The Chinese nation ... has stood up, grown rich, and become strong – and it now embraces the brilliant prospects of rejuvenation ... It will be an era that sees China moving closer to centre stage and making greater contributions to mankind.'
>
> *Extract from Xi Jinping's new era speech, delivered at the 19th National People's Congress in 2017.*

More than just patriotic rhetoric, Xi's New Era recognises China's current strategic position of power – an acknowledgement of how far China has come as a regional, and increasingly as a global, power since opening up to the world during the late 1970s. It also hints at a willingness by the CCP to advance China's role in the world with even more assertiveness.

Xi Jinping Thought

Officially, Xi Jinping Thought is known as Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era'. In short, it is a set of policies and ideas stemming from the speeches and writings of Xi, which form an official 14-point doctrine that informs Chinese policy.

Xi Jinping Thought was enshrined in the CCP constitution in 2017. It is taught in schools, universities and workplaces, and has even been made into a CCP app, which a University of Michigan study described as the 'platformization of propaganda'. The app is known as *Xuexi Qiangguo*, which translates as 'study and strengthen the nation' or 'study the powerful nation' (*'Xuexi'*, the word for 'study,' also contains the name 'Xi', making the pun 'study (Xi) strong country').

Beyond Xi's cult of personality, Xi Jinping Thought is intended to secure three political monopolies:

1. Xi controlling the CCP

2. the CCP ruling China

3. China dominating the world.

In turn, each of these aspects solidifies Xi's personal political authority as China's paramount leader.

Consider this quote by Australian journalist Chris Buckley, chief China correspondent for *The New York Times*.

Key quote – Xi Jinping Thought

'The doctrine is a blueprint for consolidating and strengthening power at three levels: the nation, the party and Mr. Xi himself ... he has vowed a 'great rejuvenation' to restore China to its ancient prominence and glory ... Xi Jinping thought promotes ... making China not only prosperous but also politically powerful ... Mr. Xi's nationalist message of China as a strong, highly respected world power resonates with many Chinese. But the promise of national glory comes with a catch: single-party rule. Xi Jinping thought promotes the supremacy of the Communist Party ... Central to the doctrine is the idea that for China to continue its global rise, and for the party to maintain its rule, a decisive leader is needed at the helm. And the man for the job is Xi.'

Extract from 'Xi Jinping Thought Explained: A New Ideology for a New Era' by Chris Buckley in The New York Times, 26 February 2018.

Key term: Power

Power is 'the ability of one global actor to influence the actions of another global actor. Power can be exercised in a range of types' *(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 'Advice for Teachers – Australian and Global Politics: Units 3 and 4 Global Politics', VCCA's main website).*

Specific types of power and foreign policy instruments that China has at its disposal will be explored later in the chapter (see pp. 110). Here you are invited to look at China's power through a summary of its results in the Lowy Institute's 2020 Asia Power report. (Note that not all countries that feature in the Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index qualify as Asia-Pacific states according to the VCE study design.)

The Lowy Institute ranks the comprehensive power of 26 countries and territories, which is determined by a weighted average across eight thematic measurements of power (see details in the definition above). China, ultimately ranked second in the index, with a comprehensive power score of 76.1, just behind the United States with a score of 81. 6.

Key quote – Power

'Power is defined as the capacity of a state to shape their external environment and to direct or influence the behaviour of other states, non-state actors and the course of international events. At its most rudimentary, power is the capacity to impose costs and confer benefits that shape the choices of other states.

Power can be measured in two ways. The Index distinguishes between resource-based determinants of power (economic capability, military capability, resilience and future resources) – in other words, what countries have – and influence-based determinants of power (economic relationships, defence networks, diplomatic influence and cultural influence) – what countries do with what they have.'

Extract from the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index: Key Findings 2020.

A summary of China's results is in the quote below.

* Key quote – China's power

'China's power has stalled and its diplomatic standing diminished. But in conditions where most countries are less powerful than a year ago, China's fast economic rebound from COVID-19 will widen the power differentials between itself and the rest of the region.

...

'China leads in four of the eight measures of power: economic capability, diplomatic influence, economic relationships and future resources. But the country delivers inconsistent results in the other measures, with stark strengths and weaknesses

...

'China now wields a larger global and regional diplomatic network than any other country. Yet its lead for diplomatic influence has narrowed in the wake of the pandemic and it is increasingly at risk of being overtaken by Japan ... Its adoption of a more strident diplomatic tone – its so-called wolf-warrior diplomacy – and threats of economic coercion against multiple countries appear to have backfired in the eyes of regional policymakers and experts.

'Beijing has enhanced its military capability by investing in weaponry that could threaten US and allied bases in the region. Political will and defence economics will be deciding factors in the military rivalry with the United States. However, a lack of trust among 11 neighbours with which China has boundary disputes or legacies of interstate conflict undermines the potential for Beijing to replace Washington as the security guarantor in the region. China's deepening defence ties with Cambodia ... and its historic alliance with North Korea – remain the exceptions to the rule.'

Extract from the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index: Key Findings 2020.

Key term: Security

Traditionally security referred 'to the protection of a state's borders from intruders and the maintenance of sovereignty, most commonly achieved through the use of military power. It has now evolved to include softer forms of security, such as access to resources and the protection of the environment' (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 'Advice for Teachers – Australian and Global Politics: Units 3 and 4 Global Politics', VCCA's main website).

The Globalization of World Politics says: 'In international relations, [security is] efforts by state[s] and other international actors to ensure the survival ... and the wellbeing of the people who live within them' (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 8th ed., 2020).

In his co-authored 2012 book with Andrew Scobell, *China's Search for Security*, Andrew Nathan, professor of Chinese political science at Columbia University, proposed that the CCP perceives four major security threats for China, which Nathan and Scobell refer to as 'four rings of security concerns'.

Opposite are extracts from a presentation given by Nathan at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs in 2013, where he elaborates on the four rings by addressing the question 'What does Beijing [i.e. the CCP] perceive to be China's largest security threats?'

✱ Key quotes – The four rings of security concerns

Security concern ring 1: Inside China's territory

'the demographic heartland of China, where most of the Chinese people live who are of the Han ethnic group, 94 percent of the Chinese population ... there is a great deal of turbulence. As society modernises, expectations rise, economic polarisation increases, and there are environmental challenges and water challenges. The [communist] ideology has lost its credibility. People are believing more and more in religion. People are demanding more from the government. So there is constant turbulence in this Han heartland that the security apparatus has to manage.

...

'Then, the second part of the first ring is the national minority areas, which include ... Tibet ... Xinjiang, where the Uyghur people ... live and where there is a lot of resistance to Chinese rule ...'

Security concern ring 2: China's surrounding countries

'most of them are really problematic for Beijing.

'None of them is really a Chinese culture society that automatically likes China. None of them feels comfortable with the rise of China. None of them trusts China. Some of them are very, very large and powerful militarily and have histories of conflict with China. Oftentimes that conflict is determined by geographic reality.

'So you think about looking around the periphery of China, and there is Russia, which is a huge country that has always been very, very suspicious of China ... Although China–Russia relations are very stable now and in many areas cooperative, they are fundamentally distrustful of each other.

'Then you have Japan, which has a bad history with China and which has its own security anxieties in which China figures as a major anxiety. So it is very difficult for China and Japan to get along. You have a country like Vietnam, which historically is very suspicious of China. There's India, and then the smaller countries around the border are also very difficult.

...

'they are all difficult, and each one presents a kind of unique management problem for Chinese security.'

Security concern ring 3: The regional systems China is connected to by virtue of its vast geography

'So each of the ... countries around China's borders is itself embedded in some complex regional system that includes other countries.

'For example, the northeast Asian regional system nowadays pivots around the troubles of the Korean Peninsula. China has a lot at stake in the way in which the Korean problem evolves. It cannot deal singly with the Korean problem ... When China wants to deal with North Korea ... it has to consider the interests and try to juggle and manage the interests there of Russia, South Korea, Japan, and the United States ...

'We divide South-East Asia into two spheres: continental South-East Asia ... and maritime South-East Asia ...

'Every issue that is important to China in this area, the United States is again a major factor: the South China Sea issue, China's relations with the Philippines, China's relations with Vietnam, with Cambodia, with Burma. Every place that they look, they find that not only are there multiple countries that are jostling, and sometimes ganging up on China, as in the case of South China Sea issues ... Not only do they have to juggle with multiple states, but in each case they also have to try to deal with American interests and American activism in all of these issues.

'The fourth regional system is that of South Asia, which includes India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The big elephant for China really is the Pakistan–India relationship. Pakistan has been, since the 1950s, a major strategic asset of China ... China found the relationship with Pakistan was helpful to try to help it bring pressure to bear on India ...

'Then there is Central Asia, where China has important interests connected to the stability of Xinjiang and connected to oil and gas supplies, but has to tread carefully lest it arouse the suspicion of Russia, which considers Central Asia to be where it is indeed, an historic zone of Russian predominance.'

Security concern ring 4: China's broader interstate relations with the international community

'[The general orientation in the fourth ring is that China] needs to be friends with any government that comes to power ... because it has to protect its economic interests in these countries.

'... China's interests in the fourth ring are predominantly economic, together with certain important diplomatic concerns that may look a little bit small to us but are large to Beijing – and those are Taiwan and Tibet.

'The Chinese foreign ministry has to make sure that all these 193 governments around the world understand the Taiwan issue, which is an issue that's hard to understand. Since Taiwan itself has a lot of economic relations with many of these governments and is continuously trying to win yardage in the diplomatic game around the world, Beijing has to make sure that all of these understaffed foreign ministries in all of these small countries really pay attention to Beijing's position on Taiwan and on the Dalai Lama [the spiritual head of Tibet]. In those places where the government is tempted to offer a visa to the Dalai Lama, Beijing has to do a lot of work to make sure that that doesn't happen ...'

Extracts from Andrew Nathan's speech at Carnegie Council about his co-authored book China's Search for Security, *2013.*

Key terms: Idealism and pragmatism

These last two key terms are explored together.

Idealism is 'a school of thought in which policy is influenced primarily by an ideological principle, as opposed to practical and pragmatic considerations', whereas pragmatism is 'a school of thought in which policy is influenced primarily by practical considerations, as opposed to a particular ideology' (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 'Advice for Teachers – Australian and Global Politics: Units 3 and 4 Global Politics', VCCA's main website).

Also, consider the following alternative definitions.

Key quotes – Idealism and pragmatism

Idealism

'In politics idealism is associated with the pursuit of abstract ideals or principles, and is contrasted with pragmatism. Some argue that politicians and parties should be guided by clear ideals and principles, rather than a pragmatic concern to follow public opinion and/or their own interests. However policies are sometimes castigated for being 'too idealistic' or 'unrealistic'.'

Pragmatism

Pragmatism in politics involves hostility to theory and ideology, and a preference for practical experience. 'What matters is what works'… Critics equate pragmatism with lack of principle, and following public opinion rather than leading it. For advocates it is about judging issues 'on their merits' rather than in accordance with preconceived ideas.'

Extracts from The Politics Companion *by Robert Leach, former principal lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.*

In effect, idealism and pragmatism are two different approaches in which states can undertake policy actions. Idealism is the school of thought that focuses on upholding and fulfilling core values and fundamental beliefs; pragmatism is a school of thought that focuses on achieving concrete outcomes and measurable end results.

These terms represent two different attitudes that ultimately guide a state's pursuit of its national interests, with idealism prioritising moral principles and pragmatism prioritising practical considerations. Consider these next quotes.

Key quotes – Idealism and pragmatism

'Principles involves the values, ideals, and beliefs that [a state] has claimed to stand for in the world …

'As for serving the goal of power, Joseph Nye … coined the term soft power to refer to the ways in which the values for which a nation stands, its cultural attractiveness, and other aspects of its reputation can have quite practical value as sources of influence. This is not just a matter of what … [state] leaders claim in their rhetoric, but of whether other governments and peoples perceive for themselves a consistency between the principles espoused and the actual policies pursued by [that state]. It also depends on how well [that state] is deemed to be living up to its ideals within its *own society* …'

Extract from American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of Choice in the Twenty-first Century *by Bruce Jentleson, Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at Duke University, Norton, 2014.*

'Our own brand of democracy has reached a point in its evolution where we expect ruthless, self-protective pragmatism from our politicians, rather than idealism; where noble sentiments are likely to be dismissed as the 'vision thing'; where winning is everything …'

Extract from Australia Reimagined: Towards a More Compassionate, Less Anxious Society *by Hugh Mackay, Macmillan Australia, 2018.*

'Trade is important, but when the moment of truth arrives, security trumps prosperity. And although values are also important, interests always trump ideals.'

Extract from 'Why we must waltz with America and China at the same time' by Tome Switzer, Sydney Morning Herald, 17 August 2019.

Table 3.2.2 describes four ideals guiding China's national security, with a focus on halting separatist threats and maintaining the security of CCP's regime. Reviewing this table, consider how you might also use elements from Xi's Chinese Dream, New Era concept and principles of Xi Jinping Thought, and the 'One China Principle' regarding Taiwan as other examples of idealism.

Table 3.2.2 – Four ideals guiding China's national security

Ideal or CCP slogan	Description
The Three Evils	Identifies the three specific targets of China's internal security or counter-terrorism strategy: terrorism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism. In effect, it implies China's zero-tolerance towards the separatist and independence claims made by ethnic minority groups.
The Five No's	In 2011 (incidentally, before Xi Jinping was appointed General Secretary of the CCP or president), Wu Bangguo, a high-ranking CCP official, gave a speech at the National People's Congress outlining the CCP's approach to ruling, declaring: 'No multi-party elections, no diversified guiding principles, no separation of powers, no federal system, no privatisation.'
The Seven Perils	Refers to seven 'subversive Western values' the CCP views as having the ability to dangerously influence Chinese society and therefore must be guarded against. The Seven Perils appeared in a classified internal CCP document, 'Document No. 9', which is attributed to Xi Jinping. The perils are the promotion of: 1. Western democracy 2. civil society 3. neoliberalism or free market capitalism 4. a free and independent press 5. acknowledging CCP corruption 6. errors 7. questioning of the CCP.
The twelve core socialist values (CSVs)	According to a 2017 article in *China Daily*, an English-language media outlet in China: 'Core socialist values comprise a set of moral principles summarised by central authorities [CCP] as prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendliness.' While some of these values may seem odd for a one-party authoritarian regime (namely, democracy and rule of law), as a package the CSVs are best understood as having three motives: 1. a campaign to promote a national character among China's citizens 2. an expectation for CCP members to lead by example 3. a soft power effort intended to appeal to both a domestic and a foreign audience.

The twelve core socialist values (CSVs) *cont.*	The first two motives can be seen as expressions of Xi's Chinese dream. The third motive is problematic and blurs the lines between idealism and pragmatism, particularly if the true intention of the public promotion of CSVs such as democracy and rule of law are intended more for foreign audiences (in order to present China as a responsible global citizen).
	However, there is also the suggestion that the CSVs of democracy and rule of law should not be read and understood in the context of what they mean in liberal democracies. Instead, they represent more nuanced CCP interpretations, in line with the party's ideal of maintaining its own regime security. Seen through this lens, democracy implies the CCP embodying the will of the people and rule of law implies CCP party control.
	An example of the CSVs in action was in 2018, when the CEO of Chinese tech start-up Bytedance (the parent company of TikTok), Zhang Yiming, issued a public apology stating: 'Our product took the wrong path and content appeared that was incommensurate with socialist core values.'
	The apology came after Chinese media regulator, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, suspended Bytedance's app Jinri Toutiao ('Today's Headlines') accusing it of being 'opposed to morality' and then took down the company's social media platform Neihan Duanzi ('Implied Jokes'), for being 'off-colour'.
	Interestingly, the latter platform had 30 million users, as well as being a space where users could watch short videos and comedy sketches and share rude jokes and memes online (themselves potentially coded criticisms of the CCP regime). A fan subculture had also developed where users had begun organising offline meet-ups – precisely the type of direct citizen participation and independent-mindedness that would threaten an authoritarian regime.

Activity 3.2.2 – Structured inquiry research task 1

The activity below is designed to assist you with investigating examples of pragmatic approaches to foreign policy.

Arguably, China has been guided by pragmatism in pursuit of some of its national interests. These examples include:

- 'Buddhist diplomacy' as an attempt at soft power to further advance the BRI

- the motivations behind China's United Nations peacekeeping contributions

- China's actions in the international human rights system.

1. Review the information at the links provided below.

2. Summarise your findings into revision notes, using your preferred summary format.

China's Buddhist diplomacy

Andrew West, ABC Radio National: Religion and Ethics Report, 'One Belt, One Road, One Buddhist Heritage', 10 March 2021 (17 minutes)
https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/religionandethicsreport/
one-belt,-one-road,-one-buddhist-heritage/13220456

Rinzin Dorjee, *The Diplomat*, 'The Dalai Lama and China's Quest for Buddhist Soft Power', 29 October 2018
https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/the-dalai-lama-and-chinas-quest-for-buddhist-soft-power

Angad Singh, Vice News, 'China is Using Buddhist Diplomacy in its Quest to Dominate Global Trade', 23 March 2019
https://www.vice.com/en/article/qvy5mv/china-is-using-buddhist-diplomacy-in-its-quest-
to-dominate-global-trade

China's UN Peacekeeping contributions

Lucy Best, Council on Foreign Relations, 'What motivates Chinese Peacekeeping?', 7 January 2020
https://www.cfr.org/blog/what-motivates-chinese-peacekeeping

Richard Gowan, Brookings, 'China's Pragmatic Approach to UN Peacekeeping', 14 September 2020
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-pragmatic-approach-to-un-peacekeeping

China and international human rights

Ted Piccone, Brookings, 'China's Long Game on Human Rights at the United Nations', September 2018
https://www.brookings.edu/research/chinas-long-game-on-human-rights-at-the-united-nations

Sophie Richardson, Human Rights Watch, 'China's Influence on the Global Human Rights System', 14 September 2020
https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/14/chinas-influence-global-human-rights-system

Ted Piccone, Brookings, 'UN Human Rights Council: As the US Returns, It Will Have to Deal with China and Its Friends', 25 February 2021
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/02/25/
un-human-rights-council-as-the-us-returns-it-will-have-to-deal-with-china-and-its-friends

What does China want?

Figures 3.2.4 to 3.2.7 show some examples of China's national interest goals as well as some of the ideas that inform them.

Figure 3.2.4 – Examples of China's pursuit of national security

'First, the ultimate aim of Chinese foreign policy, indeed of all Chinese policy, is to keep the Chinese Communist Party in power.'

—Merriden Varrall, Chinese Worldviews and China's Foreign Policy (2015)

Regime security
Safeguarding CCP
political control
Example: Covert operations (in particular, foreign interference) coordinated by the CCP's United Front Work Department (UFWD).

'China's communist leaders are seen – and see themselves – as a chosen people entrusted with authority through a chosen state, to rule over a chose civilisation, that is entering a golden age of prosperity.'

—Rowan Callick, The Party Forever: Inside China's Modern Elite (2013)

NATIONAL SECURITY
'Resolutely Safeguarding China's Sovereignty, Security and Development Interests
This is the fundamental goal of China's national defense in the new era.
China's national defense aims:
- *to deter and resist aggression;*
- *to safeguard national political security, the people's security and social stability;*
- *to oppose and contain "Taiwan Independence";*
- *to crack down on proponents of separatist movements such as "Tibet Independence" and the creation of "East Turkistan";*
- *to safeguard national sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security;*
- *to safeguard China's maritime rights and interests;*
- *to safeguard China's security interests in outer space, electromagnetic space and cyberspace;*
- *to safeguard China's overseas interests; and*
- *to support the sustainable development of the country.'*
--Extract from China's Defense White Paper: China Defense in the New Era (2019)

Internal security
halting separatist threats
Example: Repression, suppression and violence against Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang in the name of cracking down on proponents of separatist movements

External security
Preserving territorial integrity
Example: Opposing and containing Taiwanese independence; achieving complete reunification
Example: Asserting sovereignty claims and safeguarding maritime rights and other interests in the South China Sea

Overcoming China's demographic 'time bomb'

'China has a rapidly ageing population. By 2025, one-fifth of the population will be over 60. By 2050, China's dependency ratio is projected to reach 70 per cent. Chinese and international experts have been warning about a demographic time bomb in China for decades – that China will grow old before it grows rich and powerful.'

—*Yun Jian gan Adam Ni, for the* China Story Project *(China Neican Newsletter), created by the Australian Centre of China in the World at the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (March 2021)*

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

'*Resolutely Safeguarding – Developmental Interests*
This is the fundamental goal of China's national defense in the new era.
China's national defense aims:
* *to safeguard China's maritime rights and interests*
* *to safeguard China's overseas interests, and*
* *to support the sustainable development of the country.'*
—*Extract from China's Defense White Paper :* China's National Defense in the New Era *(2019)*

Two Centennial Goals
By 2021: 'to celebrate the CCP's centenary, the goal is to "build a moderately prosperous society in all respects". This essentially means making sure that China's development improves the lives of all its people, particularly those who are below or near the country's poverty line.' (Xi declared the completion of this goal at the CCP centenary)
By 2049: 'the centenary of the People's Republic of China, the goal is to "build a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious".'
—*according the New China (media outlet), sponsord by Xinhua News Ageny, the official press agency of the CCP*

Tackling corruption
Example: Successes versus challenges/limitations of Xi's on-going anti-corruption campaign

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)
Example: Successes versus challenges/limitations related to the expansion of the BRI, slated for completion in 2049.
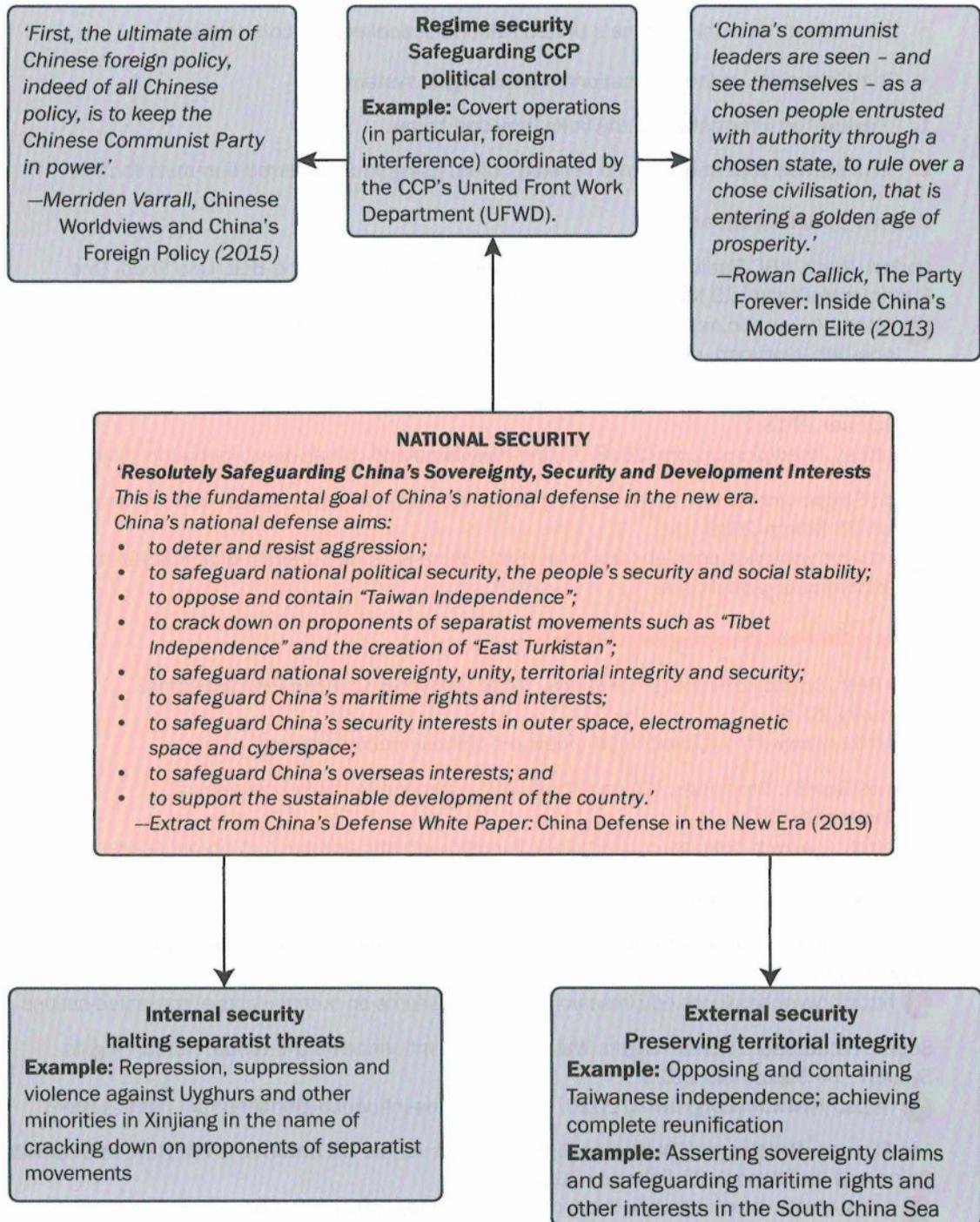
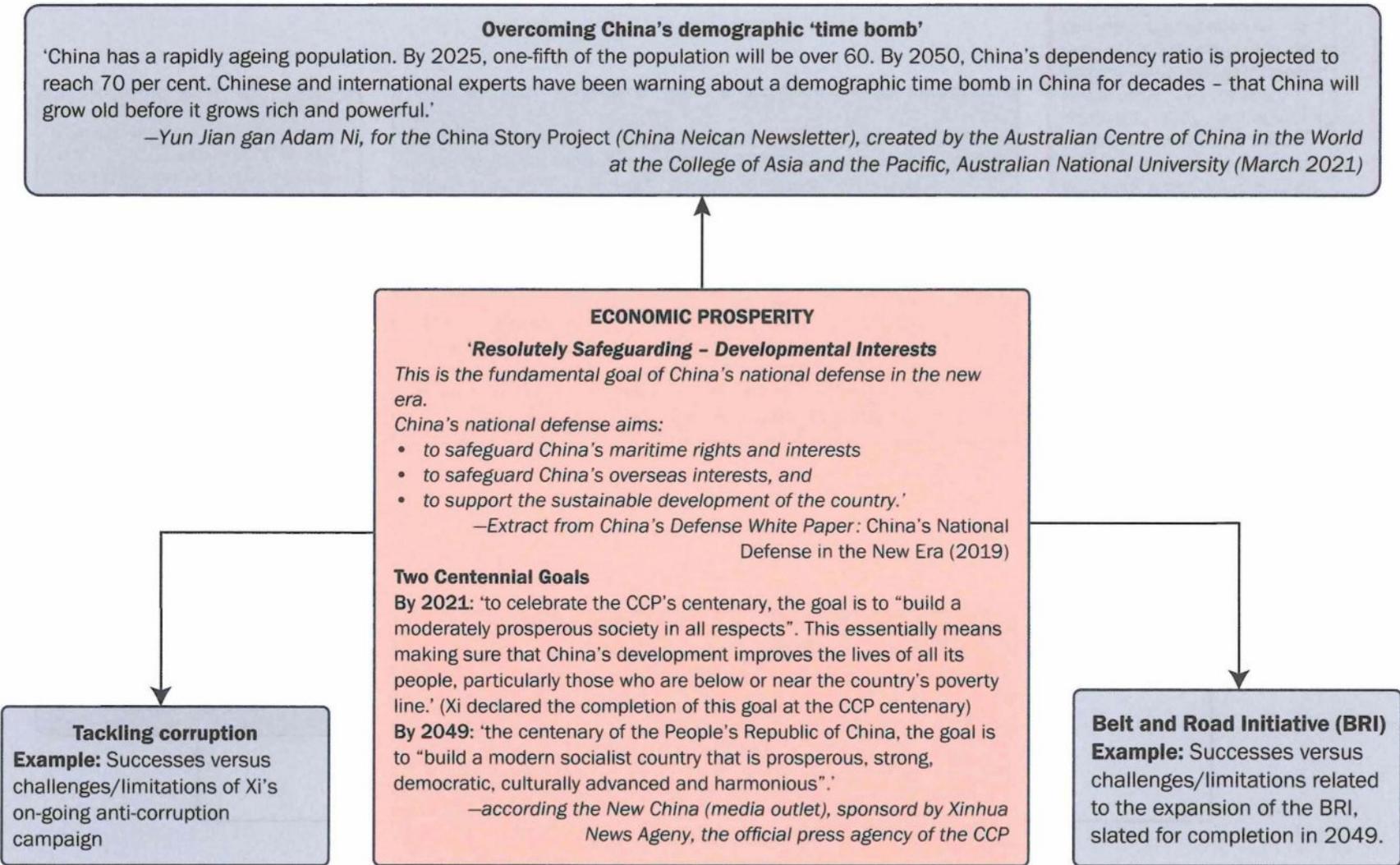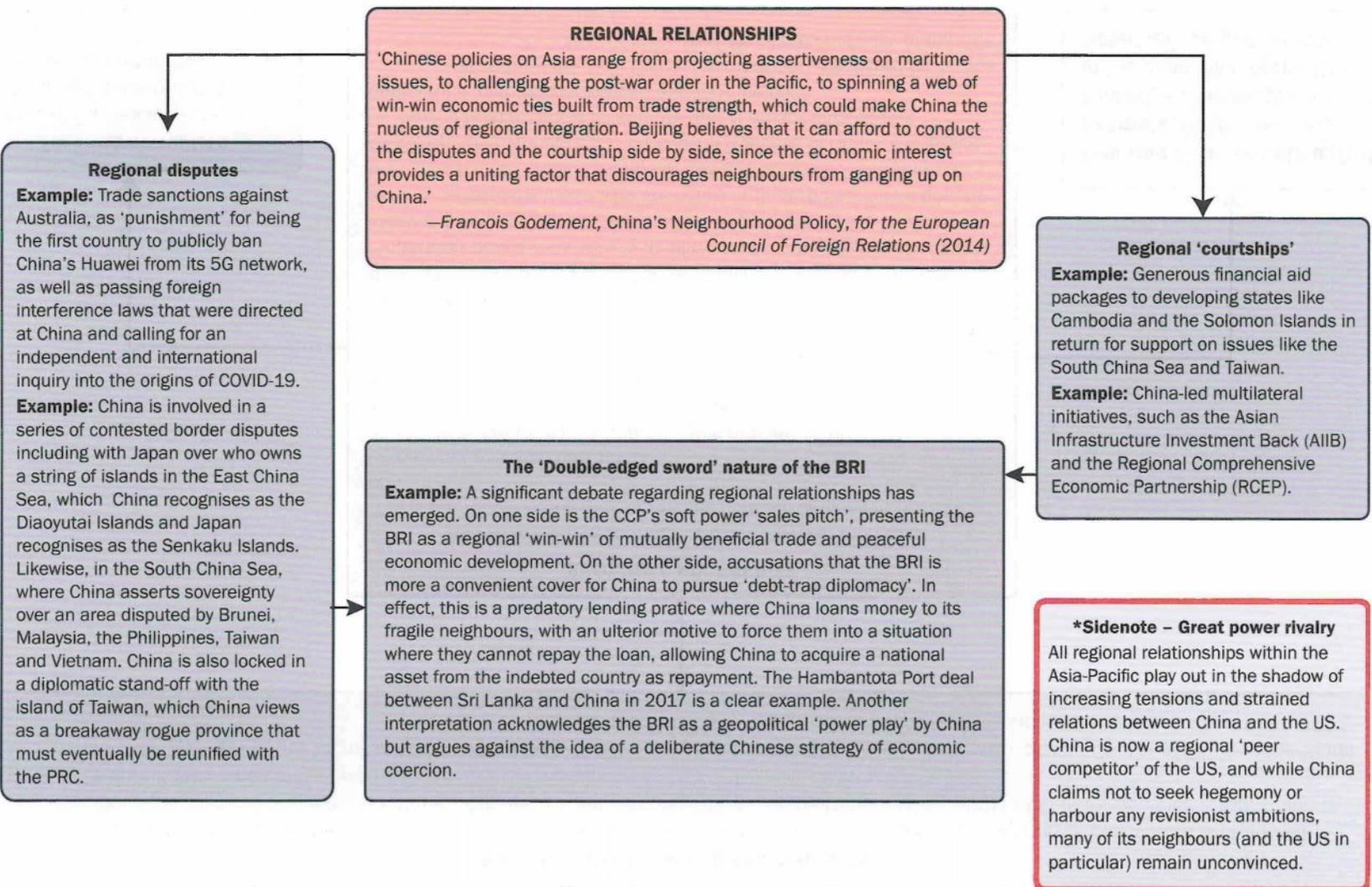*Figure 3.2.5 – Examples of China's pursuit of economic prosperity*

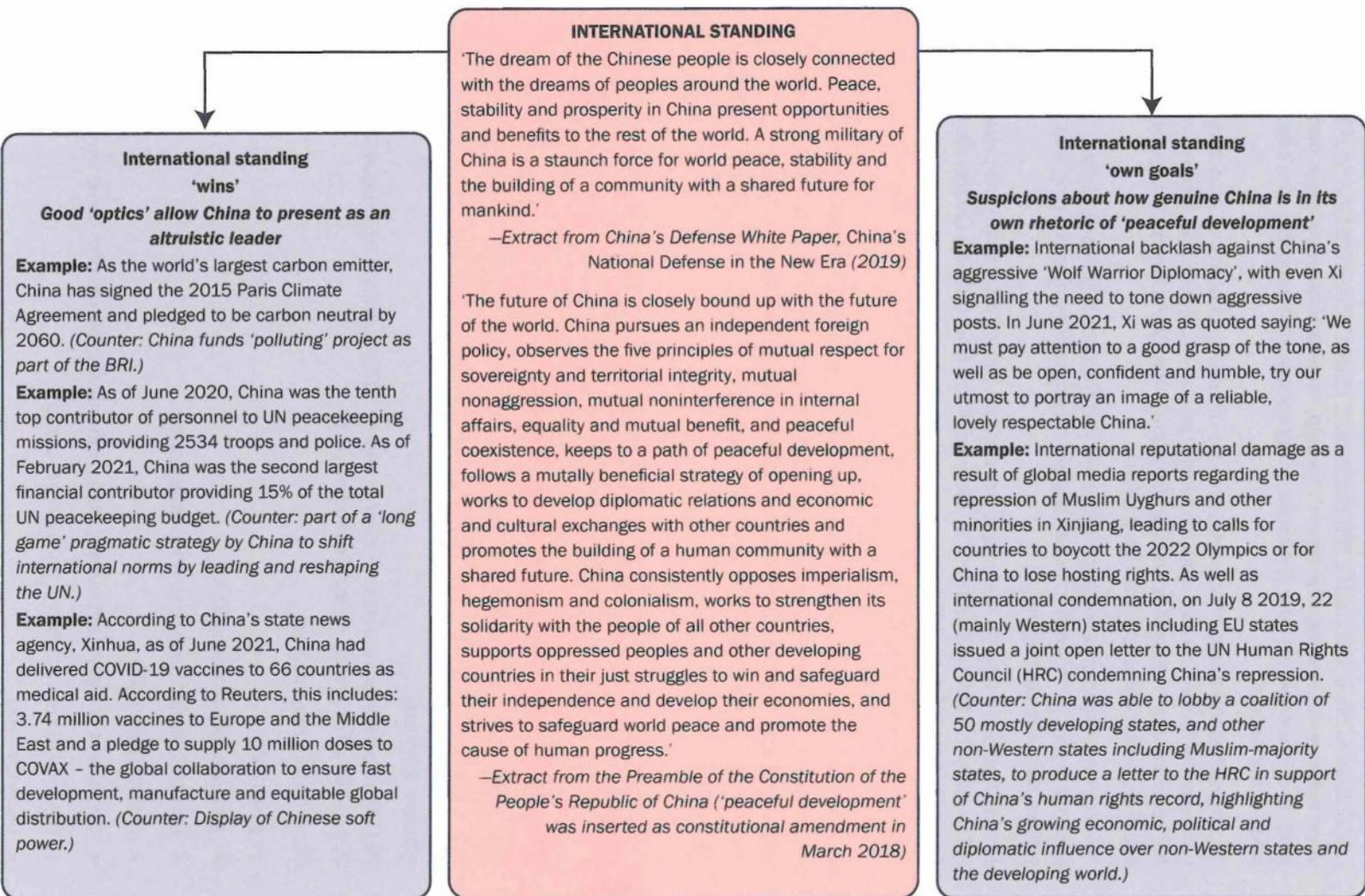## Unpacking China's pursuit of regional relationships

REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

'Chinese policies on Asia range from projecting assertiveness on maritime issues, to challenging the post-war order in the Pacific, to spinning a web of win-win economic ties built from trade strength, which could make China the nucleus of regional integration. Beijing believes that it can afford to conduct the disputes and the courtship side by side, since the economic interest provides a uniting factor that discourages neighbours from ganging up on China.'

—*Francois Godement,* China's Neighbourhood Policy, *for the European Council of Foreign Relations (2014)*

Regional disputes

Example: Trade sanctions against Australia, as 'punishment' for being the first country to publicly ban China's Huawei from its 5G network, as well as passing foreign interference laws that were directed at China and calling for an independent and international inquiry into the origins of COVID-19.

Example: China is involved in a series of contested border disputes including with Japan over who owns a string of islands in the East China Sea, which China recognises as the Diaoyutai Islands and Japan recognises as the Senkaku Islands. Likewise, in the South China Sea, where China asserts sovereignty over an area disputed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. China is also locked in a diplomatic stand-off with the island of Taiwan, which China views as a breakaway rogue province that must eventually be reunified with the PRC.

Regional 'courtships'

Example: Generous financial aid packages to developing states like Cambodia and the Solomon Islands in return for support on issues like the South China Sea and Taiwan.

Example: China-led multilateral initiatives, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Back (AIIB) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

The 'Double-edged sword' nature of the BRI

Example: A significant debate regarding regional relationships has emerged. On one side is the CCP's soft power 'sales pitch', presenting the BRI as a regional 'win-win' of mutually beneficial trade and peaceful economic development. On the other side, accusations that the BRI is more a convenient cover for China to pursue 'debt-trap diplomacy'. In effect, this is a predatory lending pratice where China loans money to its fragile neighbours, with an ulterior motive to force them into a situation where they cannot repay the loan, allowing China to acquire a national asset from the indebted country as repayment. The Hambantota Port deal between Sri Lanka and China in 2017 is a clear example. Another interpretation acknowledges the BRI as a geopolitical 'power play' by China but argues against the idea of a deliberate Chinese strategy of economic coercion.

*Sidenote – Great power rivalry

All regional relationships within the Asia-Pacific play out in the shadow of increasing tensions and strained relations between China and the US. China is now a regional 'peer competitor' of the US, and while China claims not to seek hegemony or harbour any revisionist ambitions, many of its neighbours (and the US in particular) remain unconvinced.

Figure 3.2.6 – Examples of China's pursuit of regional relationships

INTERNATIONAL STANDING

'The dream of the Chinese people is closely connected with the dreams of peoples around the world. Peace, stability and prosperity in China present opportunities and benefits to the rest of the world. A strong military of China is a staunch force for world peace, stability and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.'

—*Extract from China's Defense White Paper, China's National Defense in the New Era (2019)*

'The future of China is closely bound up with the future of the world. China pursues an independent foreign policy, observes the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, mutual noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, keeps to a path of peaceful development, follows a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up, works to develop diplomatic relations and economic and cultural exchanges with other countries and promotes the building of a human community with a shared future. China consistently opposes imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism, works to strengthen its solidarity with the people of all other countries, supports oppressed peoples and other developing countries in their just struggles to win and safeguard their independence and develop their economies, and strives to safeguard world peace and promote the cause of human progress.'

—*Extract from the Preamble of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China ('peaceful development' was inserted as constitutional amendment in March 2018)*

International standing 'wins'

Good 'optics' allow China to present as an altruistic leader

Example: As the world's largest carbon emitter, China has signed the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and pledged to be carbon neutral by 2060. *(Counter: China funds 'polluting' project as part of the BRI.)*

Example: As of June 2020, China was the tenth top contributor of personnel to UN peacekeeping missions, providing 2534 troops and police. As of February 2021, China was the second largest financial contributor providing 15% of the total UN peacekeeping budget. *(Counter: part of a 'long game' pragmatic strategy by China to shift international norms by leading and reshaping the UN.)*

Example: According to China's state news agency, Xinhua, as of June 2021, China had delivered COVID-19 vaccines to 66 countries as medical aid. According to Reuters, this includes: 3.74 million vaccines to Europe and the Middle East and a pledge to supply 10 million doses to COVAX – the global collaboration to ensure fast development, manufacture and equitable global distribution. *(Counter: Display of Chinese soft power.)*

International standing 'own goals'

Suspicions about how genuine China is in its own rhetoric of 'peaceful development'

Example: International backlash against China's aggressive 'Wolf Warrior Diplomacy', with even Xi signalling the need to tone down aggressive posts. In June 2021, Xi was as quoted saying: 'We must pay attention to a good grasp of the tone, as well as be open, confident and humble, try our utmost to portray an image of a reliable, lovely respectable China.'

Example: International reputational damage as a result of global media reports regarding the repression of Muslim Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang, leading to calls for countries to boycott the 2022 Olympics or for China to lose hosting rights. As well as international condemnation, on July 8 2019, 22 (mainly Western) states including EU states issued a joint open letter to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) condemning China's repression. *(Counter: China was able to lobby a coalition of 50 mostly developing states, and other non-Western states including Muslim-majority states, to produce a letter to the HRC in support of China's human rights record, highlighting China's growing economic, political and diplomatic influence over non-Western states and the developing world.)*

Figure 3.2.7 – Examples of China's pursuit of international standing

Factors shaping national interests

Key quote – The century of humiliation

'"What does it mean to follow a ghost?" Jacques Derrida asked. "And what if this came down to being followed by the ghost itself, always persecuted, perhaps by the very chase we are leading. The future", he said, "comes back in advance: from the past, from the back, we have the bread of apocalypse in our mouths, the bitter after taste of our history."

'Xi Jinping has the bread of apocalypse in his mouth, he is born into a country burdened by history, he too looks to the past and sees catastrophe, forever reminding his people of the "hundred years of humiliation", how China has been occupied, exploited and brutalised by foreign powers.

'The hundred years of humiliation is burned into the soul of Chinese people. China's return to power is no small measure a story of vengeance and a warning that China will not be humiliated again.'

Extract from Stan Grant's Manning Clark Lecture, 'An All Historical Fever: How History May Yet Be the Death of Us', Manning Clark Hall, Cultural Centre, Kambri Precinct, ANU, 17 June 2021.

Think about factors as the reasons, influences, motivations and drivers that inform a state's pursuit of a particular national interest objective. The VCE Study Design mentions 'cultural identity, international relationships and state security' as factors that can shape a state's national interests, but you are not limited to these factors alone.

FAQ

What are the factors that shape national interests?

The factors that shape national interests may include, but are not limited to, cultural identity, international relationships and state security. Other factors may shape the national interest which may be dependent on the Asia-Pacific nation studied and their national interests.

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, VCE Australian and Global Politics, 2018–2023 Frequently Asked Questions, p. 3.

Other factors may include:

- geography
- geopolitical considerations
- domestic political systems and institutions
- political ideologies
- the impact of significant events, ideas, individuals, groups and movements
- national values, traditions and cultural customs
- historical links.

Advice for tackling factors that shape national interests

A factor that shapes national interests really can be anything, as long as you can name, explain and justify why it is so. In other words, the factors you choose to explore need to be clearly identifiable, and logically associated and related to your selected state's national interests.

You may find organising your factors into two categories helpful. For example, you could use 'reasons why' and 'influencing how':

- *reasons why* – factors that have contributed towards your selected state pursuing its national interest goals in the first place
- *influencing how* – factors that have informed and guided how your selected state develops and executes its policy actions to pursue, advance and successfully achieve its national interest goals.

While there is no magic number regarding how many factors you should explore, as a rule of thumb, have two or three examples you can draw on for each of the four main national interests.

Examples of factors shaping China's national interests

Below are some of the factors shaping China's national interests (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- *political structure* – China as a one-party state and the authoritarian rule of the CCP regime
- *significant individual* – China's paramount (and consequential) leader, Xi Jinping
- *cultural identity* – Han Chinese exceptionalism versus China's ethnic minorities
- *societal challenge* – the CCP's legitimacy crisis due to corruption and growing income inequality
- *geography* – China's Malacca Strait dilemma
- *geo-politics* – the economic importance of the South China Sea as a geo-strategic prize
- *event 1* – challenges and opportunities for China presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic
- *event 2* – the opportunities for China between 2017 and 2020 to fill a global leadership vacuum due to the Trump administration's retreat from the world stage with its America First agenda and isolationism.

Century of humiliation as a factor

One factor in particular that has shaped China's national interests in the pursuit of national security, regional relationships and international standing is the collective national trauma of China's century of humiliation and the subsequent never-again impulse that feeds into much of China's actions.

The century of humiliation refers to a period between 1839 and 1949. It was an era that saw China fight and lose the Opium Wars against Britain, which in turn gained Hong Kong as a spoil of war. China was then carved up into competing spheres of influence by other (mainly Western) powers. It experienced the brutality of the Japanese military and colonial expansion during World War II, as well as a civil war, where the lingering issue of Taiwan still smoulders as unfinished business.

The century of humiliation is associated with China's past, present and future. It represents a period – never to be repeated – that has been ingrained in the national psyche of many Han Chinese. It was a time when violent foreigners subjected a proud civilisation to great suffering, and the indignity and shame of forceful interference that led to social upheaval, political turmoil and economic hardship.

Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say the memory of the century of humiliation permeates most, if not all, of China's policy actions. This is certainly true for China's more assertive foreign policy moves. Domestically, the CCP, particularly after the challenge posed to its regime security by the Tiananmen Square protest movement back in 1989, has used the century of humiliation as a unifying narrative and patriotic rallying cry to bind China's citizens with the CCP regime. The CCP draws legitimacy as the defender of China's honour, ensuring China will never again suffer such a humiliating fate. Consider the following quotes.

Spheres of influence in China, 1850-1914. Image: 'Facing History and Ourselves' retrieved from: www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/image/nanjing-atrocities-map-spheres-influence-1850-1914

'American troops in the relief of Peking (Beijing) in China on 14 August 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion.' United States Army Center of Military History. Retrieved from: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Siege_of_Peking,_Boxer_Rebellion.jpg

✳ Key quotes – The century of humiliation

'The Chinese people will never allow foreign forces to bully, oppress or enslave us ... Whoever nurses delusions of doing that will crack their heads and spill blood on the great wall of steel built from the flesh and blood of 1.4 billion Chinese people.'

Extract from Xi Jinping's speech marking the centenary of the CCP, 1 July 2021.

'Chinese school textbooks refer to a century of humiliation stretching from roughly 1839 to 1949, in which China was set upon, colonized and exploited by ... foreign powers. Gunboat diplomacy forced open Chinese ports ...

'The narrative of the century of humiliation has left the Chinese, particularly those who are products of its contemporary education system, hypersensitive to matters of "the sovereignty and integrity of territory". Anything that seems to be an incursion on Chinese soil ... can open old wounds.

'The Communist Party did not exist at the time of the Unequal Treaties [a reference to China being "carved up" by foreign powers], and hence is able to spin the history of the century of humiliation as a story with two bad guys – the outmoded Qing dynasty and the evil foreign imperialists.'

Extract from Modern China: All That Matters *by Jonathan Clements, Hachette, 2013.*

'The term [century of humiliation] is widely used among Chinese policymakers as shorthand to describe how China's sense of its central role in world affairs was weakened by Western incursions that began with the Opium Wars in the 1840s. Chinese often draw on humiliation narratives as a starting point for their discussions of how China should interact with other nations ...

The constant references within China to this period of weakness in China's history seem peculiar given the growth in Chinese economic and military power ... However, accounts of weakness and loss are a critical aspect of the unified national identity that the Party-state uses to ensure stability and CCP legitimacy. The past humiliation suffered by China means that it must now be strong and unified against what are described as "foreign incursions", whether territorial, economic, political, social or cultural. Furthermore, it is argued that only by having a stable and united country can China resume its "former, and rightful, position" as a "peace-loving, harmony-promoting, and internationally respected nation-state". These views also have an important political purpose, as they ultimately work to support the broader narrative that the CCP is the only entity that could have successfully led China from its former weakness, defeating the Japanese, and ushering in the "new China".'

Extract from 'China's Worldviews and China Foreign Policy' by Merriden Varral, Lowy Institute, 26 November 2015.

✗ Activity 3.2.3 – Exam-style short-answer questions

Check your understanding

Test your key knowledge by attempting the questions below.

You should aim to craft clear and comprehensive responses that address the specific demands of each question by drawing on detailed, relevant and accurate information. Pay attention to the task word, also known as the command term or instructional verb.

1. Outline one factor that has shaped China's pursuit of your chosen national interest.

2. Identify one factor and explain its significance to the way China seeks to advance its your chosen national interest.

Differing interpretations of national interests

Key quote – National interests

"'There is no such thing as the national interest," I tell my first-year Australian foreign policy students …

'Unfazed by 420 concerned stares, I continue:

"When you argue for a particular policy, you can put forward ideas about morality or strategy, present facts and figures, precedents or philosophical arguments. But you may not simply assert that a particular policy is or isn't in the national interest. Before you do that, you must tell me what the national interest is." …

'We need to put aside the idea that it is possible to create objective policy in the name of the national interest – for the national interest itself should be decided by the community whose interest it is.

'As far as it is something real, the national interest is a product of the political, social and cultural meaning we give it.'

Extract from '"National Interest" Figleaf Avoids Debate on Wars and Terror Laws' by Danielle Chubb, The Conversation, 22 September 2014.

A state's national interests can be categorised into the four core goals of national security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing. Beyond this, as the quote above suggests, interpretations regarding what and how national interests should be prioritised and pursued differ immensely. Individuals, groups and institutions from within a state and external actors have different points of view on what a state's national interest should be, which in turn inform and have an impact on the policies and actions that a state ultimately pursues.

Advice for tackling differing interpretations

Analysing differing interpretations of China's national interests implies looking at competing points of view. Consider these competing points of view in terms of a debate about China's national interests. In turn, ask yourself:

- What is the debate about?
- Who is the debate between?
- What are the opposing views?
- Where does the debate play out?

There is no magic number for how many different interpretations you should explore, however, you need at least one set of opposing views for each of the four main national interests. To be safe, you may want to investigate two lots of differing interpretations for each of China's four main national interests. For example, you could have two opposing views that reflect on:

- *internal debate in relation to your state's pursuit of national security* – that is, two groups within China, such as the CCP regime and an ethnic minority making a separatist claim
- *external debate in relation to your state's pursuit of national security* – that is, a debate between China or the CCP regime and an outside actor, such as a rival claimant state that contests and asserts its sovereignty in the South China Sea.

You would repeat this process for your state's pursuits of economic prosperity, regional relationships and international standing. In doing so, you would be prepared for an assessment or exam question that asked you to examine differing interpretations within an Asia-Pacific state.

The key skill in the VCE Study Design is to 'analyse differing interpretations of national interests' *(VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023, p. 32).* The instructional verb *analyse* requires you to delve deeply and critically into a bigger overall topic or issue by examining its main elements and showing how they connect together.

One way to approach this analysis is through four steps:

1. Provide an overview of the overall national interest debate.

2. Discuss the prevailing interpretation versus the opposing interpretation.

3. Locate the differing interpretations in a contemporary case study.

4. Draw a logical conclusion.

These four steps are not a formula for a pre-prepared response – in the study of global politics, you must address the demands of a question. However, the steps are a way for you to organise your thinking. The following section will guide you in taking this analytical approach.

Step 1: Provide an overview of the overall national interest debate

- What is the central issue at the heart of the competing interpretations? What is being contested and fought over?

- Who represents the competing interpretations? Who are the competing camps engaged in the debate?

- Where do these competing interpretations stem from? What brought on the debate? Did it arise as a result of an event, individual or group? Was it a result of a social, political, economic or cultural factor?

- How divided are these interpretations? How contentious is this debate? Is it bitter and divided, leading to heightened tensions or a deadlock? Is there a spirit of negotiation with both sides willing to find common ground through compromise and trade-offs?

Step 2: Discuss the prevailing interpretation versus the opposing interpretation

- Who are the actors actually debating?

- What are their main points in support of their interpretation?

- What are their main criticisms of the opposing interpretation?

- What is informing each actor's stance? Is it personal philosophy or political ideology? Is it loyalty or allegiance to a group identity (such as a political party or faction, religion, race, class or gender)? Is there an influence from a lobby or interest group?

Step 3: Locate the differing interpretations in a contemporary case study

- Identify a relevant case study that highlights the differing interpretations.

- Justify how and why your case study reflects the differing interpretations.

Step 4: Draw a logical conclusion

- Consider the impact these competing interpretations have on the state's overall attempt to pursue, advance and successfully achieve the national interest being debated.

Examples of differing interpretations of national interests

Table 3.2.3 shows debates with differing interpretation associated with China's four main national interests. (The table is an illustrative example rather than an exhaustive list.)

Table 3.2.3 – Examples of differing interpretations of China's national interests

National interest and debate	Interpretation 1	Interpretation 2
National security Uyghur repression in the name of halting separatist threats	The CCP's justification of its crackdown in Xinjiang in the name of halting separatist threats and preserving social cohesion.	Uyghurs and a growing chorus of regional and international voices condemning the CCP for grave human rights abuses. Most notably, high-level condemnation from the US under the Trump administration (upheld under the Biden administration), declaring that China's actions in Xinjiang amount to genocide. Canada's parliament in February 2021 voted to recognise China's treatment of Uyghurs as genocide.
Economic prosperity The merits of China's economic miracle	The official CCP claim that since opening up to the world over the last 40 years, China has undergone an economic miracle like no other, citing 850 million people being lifted out of poverty in the 40 years from 1979 to 2019. Most recently seen in Xi Jinping's February 2021 announcement declaring China had eradicated extreme poverty, claiming China had lifted 100 million rural Chinese out of absolute poverty.	Competing perspectives, mainly from Western economists, who acknowledge China has economically developed, but nevertheless point to its growth being unsustainable. They say this is mainly due to demographic shifts linked to an ageing population, which could likely stall China's economic potential by mid-century. They also point to the unacceptable human and environmental costs associated with China's economic miracle. They reject Xi's 2021 claim, arguing that China has set a low bar in its definition of extreme poverty, with the threshold set as amounting to $1.69 a day. This is in contrast to the World Bank's global threshold of $1.90. These economists argue that there is a need for ongoing investment in China's poorest areas.

Regional relationships Can China rise peacefully?	The CCP claim that China is not interested in pursuing regional hegemony (leadership or dominance) over the Asia-Pacific region and that its ascendancy is beneficial for the entire Asia-Pacific as a whole.	China's neighbours are unconvinced and anxious that China cannot rise peacefully, as seen through regional flashpoints such as the East China Sea and South China Sea disputes, Taiwan, and trade tensions between China and Australia. Some academics say that China's rise cannot and will not be peaceful.
International standing Is China a responsible global leader and a viable replacement for US global leadership?	The CCP claim that China is a responsible global citizen and that humanitarian initiatives, like China providing COVID-19–related medical aid, is altruistic and benevolent.	There are unfavourable international opinions about China's leadership, as detailed in the findings from the Pew Research Centre's global survey Unfavourable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries (2020).

Activity 3.2.4 – Exam-style short-answer questions

Check your understanding

Test your key knowledge by attempting the questions below. You should aim to craft clear and comprehensive responses that address the demands of each question by drawing on detailed, relevant and accurate information. Pay attention to the task word, also known as the command term or instructional verb.

1. Discuss two competing interpretations regarding how China should advance a national interest of your choice.

2. Analyse two opposing views in relation to China's pursuit of a national interest of your choice.

Types of power and foreign policy instruments

> Power … determines who gets to determine the rules of the game.
>
> —Eric Liu, 'How to understand power' (2014)

Advice for tackling types of power and foreign policy instruments

The VCE Study Design's key skill states 'evaluate the relative importance and effectiveness of different types of power and foreign policy instruments in achieving a specific Asia-Pacific state's national interests' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 32).

The instructional verb *evaluate* requires you to make an informed judgement call by weighing up an idea and exploring multiple possibilities to reach a logical conclusion.

To establish the relative importance of types of powers and instruments, ask yourself how relevant, significant, valued or necessary each is to China's pursuit of its national interests. In other words, consider the extent to which China relies on or gravitates towards using some types of power and foreign policy instruments over others. Does China have a default position when it comes to pursuing its national interests? If so, which and why is this so? Account for the preference of one type of power and foreign policy instrument over the others.

To establish the *effectiveness* of types of powers and instruments, think about China's ability of to achieve the outcomes it originally intended. What is China's capacity and capability to produce the desired results it seeks to successfully achieve its national interests?

One way to approach this evaluation is through three steps:

1. Name – what

2. Explain – how and why

3. Evaluate – well-supported personal judgement.

You will need to address the specific demands of individual questions, so you cannot use these steps to pre-prepare a response, but using this evaluative approach is an effective way for you to organise your thinking.

Step 1: Name – what

- What type of power (hard, soft, military, economic, political, diplomatic or cultural) and what kind of foreign policy instruments (diplomacy, trade, aid or military) does China wield in pursuit of [insert national interest]?

Step 2: Explain – how and why

- How are these types of power (hard, soft, military, economic, political, diplomatic or cultural) and foreign policy instruments (diplomacy, trade, aid or military) exercised by China in pursuit of [insert national interest]?

- Does China use these powers and instruments in a hard power or soft power fashion? Justify your answer – what makes you say it is used in a hard or soft way?

- Why does China opt for certain types of power and foreign policy instruments in particular situations over others? Justify your answer – what makes you say that?

Step 3: Evaluate – well-supported personal judgement

- When examining specific examples and case studies, can it be said that China has wielded specific types of power or used specific foreign policy instruments *effectively* in pursuit of [insert national interest]?

- Ultimately, has China got what it wanted through a particular use of power or foreign policy instrument? Justify your answer – what makes you say that?

Examples of China using types of power and foreign policy instruments

The following pages explore how China uses different types of power and foreign policy instruments, drawing on the VCE Study Design's key skill 'use a variety of source material to analyse types of power' *(VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023, p. 32)*.

The examples provided here are intended to be illustrative, rather than exhaustive, and some examples can transfer across categories. Note that there are not examples for cultural power, trade or aid, as these have been set up as structured inquiry research tasks (see pp. 97–121).

Hard power

Hard power is power based on coercion and guided by an attitude of 'do as I say, or else!' The actor compels another actor to do what they want through the threat or use of force (sticks), or by inducements, usually financial (carrots).

Sources of China's hard power

Material resources:

- most populous country
- major military power
- second-largest economy.

Examples of China exercising hard power

Use of grey-zone warfare (GZW) against Taiwan

- China exerts military pressure on Taiwan, using aggressive tactics that deliberately stop short of an all-out shooting war, while inflicting physical, psychological and economic damage to deter Taiwan from pursuing independence.

- GZW enables China to bully, harass, frustrate and exhaust Taiwan. In 2020, for example, China launched regular and disruptive cyber-attacks (778,000 on Taiwanese government agencies) and probed and provoked Taiwanese airspace with Chinese jet fighters (380 sorties).

- China threatens Taiwan's air space. As an act of military posturing, China sends a harsh and direct message to Taiwan that resistance is futile. The act also forces Taiwan to scramble its jet fighters, leading to wear and tear on its air force and putting pressure on its military resources, which are far more limited than China's. The situation also provides China with a war-game scenario and military-exercise training to prepare for and refine potential real future strikes.

- The ambiguity of GZW enables China to avoid a bigger confrontation with the United States, which is seen as one of Taiwan's major backers.

Government-backed security force crackdowns

- The anti-Christian crackdown targeting a growing underground Christian church.

- The 'Strike-Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism' (in effect, an anti-Muslim crackdown) that targets Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

Soft power

Soft power is power based on persuasion and guided by an attitude of 'want what I want!' Soft power allows an actor to co-opt another actor to their will through appeal and attraction. It is usually accompanied by a narrative (a winning story) that those being influenced buy into. Soft power is more sophisticated and subtle in its approach than the direct and overt tactics of hard power.

Sources of China's soft power

- Societal and cultural channels – what is often referred to as Sinic culture (Sino = referring to China). Examples are Chinese history, art and cuisine.

- Official and unofficial cultural ambassadors like Yao Ming (former NBA basketballer) and Jackie Chan (actor, director and martial artist). Even pandas, as a national animal loaned to international zoos, can be included.

Important considerations

China's soft power is often directed towards its own citizens (in particular, the Han Chinese majority) and is geared towards them aligning their loyalties with the CCP regime.

- According to Jade Guan, lecturer in Strategic Studies at Deakin University and the Australian War College: 'The first audience of China's soft power is more domestic-oriented rather than a more international-oriented audience.'

- According to Stanley Rose, professor in Chinese politics and society at the University of Southern California: 'China's soft power is domestically focused. It's all about how Chinese citizens think of the country.'

Examples of China exercising soft power

China-Africa Higher Education Cooperation

- This cooperation is a way by which China can leverage its economic investments in Africa through educational exchanges and people-to-people links.

- Some of the initiatives include the Chinese Government Scholarship-China-Africa Friendship Program, the Chinese Government Africa Union Scholarship for African Students, and the China-Africa Universities 20+20 Cooperation Plan, itself part of the UNESCO-China-Africa Tripartite Initiative on University Cooperation.

- According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, China is the largest provider of university scholarships to students from Sub-Saharan Africa, with 12,000 of the total 30,000 scholarships that were distributed by the top 50 global donors being granted by China.

- China is able to present initiatives as an empowering experience by framing them as an example of global south collaboration among developing states.

Other examples

- *Stadium construction diplomacy:* China 'gifts' (bank rolls) sports stadiums and similar infrastructure, particularly in African and Pacific Island states. This example could arguably qualify as a hard-power carrot inducement because it is transactional.

- *Face mask or vaccine diplomacy:* China's COVID-19–related medical aid to Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Latin American countries and even Europe, can be seen as a bid to shift the narrative away from its being the source of the global pandemic. Instead, China is seen as a responsible global leader assisting with goodwill humanitarian efforts. Note this example could also qualify as a hard-power carrot inducement, as it is transactional.

- *Patriotic blockbuster films:* This is a domestically focused soft power effort to inspire national pride and, by extension, loyalty to the CCP regime. Films include Chinese box-office hits like Wolf Warrior 1, Wolf Warrior 2 and Operation Red Sea.

- *International sports and technological innovation:* International sports and science and technology are alternative arenas to project power. At the 2016 Summer Olympics, for example, China took home 71 medals. China also hosted the 2022 Winter Olympics and, in 2019, as part of China's Lunar Exploration Program, China's Chang'e 4 mission achieved a historical first – the first ever soft landing on the far side of the moon.

Military power and use as an instrument

Military power refers to power exercised through military capabilities. There is an emphasis on influence through the threat or actual use of violence. It can include armed conflict, military interventions, arms build-ups, defence alliances, military aid and covert actions. Military power is perhaps best summed up by Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* (1832): 'War is a continuation of policy by other means. We see, therefore, that war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument …'

Sources of China's military power

- *China's annual military expenditure for 2019:* China was the second-highest military spending state in the world (behind the United States), with a military expenditure of US$175 billion (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021).

- *China's 2020 estimated nuclear warhead inventory:* China has between 320 and 350 nuclear warheads. These weapons can be launched by air, sea and land – completing a nuclear triad (Arms Control Association, 2022; Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, 2020).

- *Shipbuilding:* As of 2020, China had the largest navy in the world. It has an overall battle force of approximately 350 ships and submarines. By comparison, the US naval battle force is approximately 293 ships (US Department of Defense, 2020).

Examples of military use as a power and an instrument

Militarisation of the South China Sea

- In trying to advance and further its sovereignty claims over a large portion of the contested South China Sea, China has undertaken a multifaceted militarisation approach. This has been guided by the concept of anti-access/area deniability (A2/AD). A2/AD implies a strategy where a state uses military technology to prevent an adversary from entering a certain location ('anti-access') and severely restricting said adversary's movements should they enter the guarded location ('area deniability').

- For China, key aspects of this strategy include a methodical naval build-up, focusing on both its near-seas defence (known as 'green-water navy') and far-seas protection (known as 'blue-water navy') capabilities.

- From 2012, China has continued to develop artificial islands, equipped with military facilities such as airfields, ports, surveillance systems, bunkers and missile silos.

- China also presses its sovereignty claims on the South China Sea with a 3000-ship-strong maritime militia. The maritime militia is another example of China's use of the asymmetric warfare tactic of grey-zone warfare.

Territorial claims in the South China Sea. Image: Voice of America

- Taken together, China's militarisation A2/AD strategy in the South China Sea allows it to project power over land, sea, and potentially even air, across a very geo-strategic part of the Asia-Pacific.

- China has ultimately manoeuvred itself into a position of military strength whereby it can enhance its long-term presence in the South China Sea, which in turn enables it to forcibly assert against rival claimant states what it perceives to be its rightful territorial sovereignty claims, as well its maritime rights and interests.

Use of intelligence-gathering assets

- In 2017 and 2019, China sent an auxiliary general intelligence vessel (AGI) to study US and Australian manoeuvres during their joint-military exercise known as 'Talisman Sabre'. An AGI is essentially a high-tech surveillance ship. For the 2021 exercise, China sent two AGIs, with both ships remaining outside of Australia's territorial waters, but within Australia's exclusive economic zone.

Economic power

Economic power is power exercised through the capacity to raise revenue and generate material or financial wealth. The emphasis is on influencing others through economic means such as investment, finance or lending, aid, trade and sanctions.

Sources of China's economic power

- *COVID-19 economic recovery:* China was the only major economy to increase in 2020, growing at 2.3 per cent, while most of the world fell into recession due to the economic impact of the pandemic (BBC News).

- *2019 trade statistics:* Out of 127 states, China was the leading exporting state, totalling $2.5 trillion; it was the second-leading importing state, totalling $2.1 trillion; and it was the leading state for trade balance, with a surplus of $4.3 billion (globalEDGE, Michigan State University).

- *2021 trade statistics:* China overtook the United States as the world's top destination for new foreign direct investment. In 2020, China had $163 billion in inflows, compared to $134 billion in the United States. China also overtook the United States as the EU's biggest trading partner. China–EU trade was worth $709 billion in 2020, compared with United States–EU trade at $671 billion (BBC News).

- *Dominance of a strategic industry:* China provides over 85 per cent of the world's rare earths, and has up to two-thirds of the global supply of rare metals and minerals (South China Morning Post, 2021). Rare earths are critical in manufacturing modern-day technologies such as smartphones, electric vehicles and military weapon systems.

- *Chinese state-owned enterprises in the top 10 of Fortune's 2020 Global 500:* Ranked second, Sinopec Group's revenue was $407,009 million; ranked third, State Grid's revenue was $383,906 million; and ranked fourth, China National Petroleum's revenue was $379,130 million (Fortune).

Examples of China using economic power

Economic coercion, through 'weaponising' cross-strait trade

- China's and Taiwan's economies have increasingly integrated since the 1990s.

- While cross-strait trade offers mutual benefits (valued at $149.2 billion in 2019), the relationship is significantly unbalanced in China's favour, which gives it significant economic leverage to influence Taiwan politically.

- Relevant trade statistics:
  - China is Taiwan's largest trading partner
  - In 2014, China became Taiwan's largest source of imports
  - In 2019, travellers from China made 2.68 million visits to Taiwan
  - Despite tensions, China still accounted for 33 per cent of Taiwan's overall trade in the first quarter of 2021.
- Taiwan's economic prosperity is so heavily reliant on trade with China that China has arguably engineered a situation where it has achieved a reunification of sorts with Taiwan. In effect, Taiwan has been forced into a conditional surrender because it is extremely difficult (if not impossible) for Taiwan to de-couple its economy from China's.

Belt and Road Initiative

- The BRI is Xi's flagship policy, centred on joint infrastructure projects between China and partnered states. It potentially stands to reconfigure international trade, and by extension the global economic order, in China's favour.
- The BRI is seen as a way for China to boost its economy, as Chinese construction companies with fewer opportunities domestically are able to seek out international business ventures through BRI contracts. A further requirement for BRI projects is the use of Chinese workers.
- In 2019, Chinese companies had contracts worth up to $128 billion to start infrastructure projects in various countries.

Economic inducements versus economic coercion

- China provided generous financial aid packages to developing states like Cambodia and the Solomon Islands in return for their support on the issues of the South China Sea and Taiwan.
- Conversely, China placed trade sanctions against Australian exports because of Australia's role as the first country to publicly ban China's Huawei from its 5G network, and for calling an independent international inquiry into the origins of COVID-19.

Political power

Political power is power exercised within a state. The emphasis is on the influence exerted through the machinery of government.

The separation of powers versus the China model

- Separation of powers refers to the three branches of government, which is a model made famous by the Enlightenment philosopher, Montesquieu. In his work *The Spirit of the Laws (1748)*, Montesquieu explained how the independent branches of the Executive Legislature and the Judiciary would ensure state power is distributed, rather than concentrated, through a system of checks and balances. Each branch in the model is responsible for different areas and able to hold the others to account through oversight measures. This serves as a safeguard against tyranny and abuses of power.
- According to the streaming news service Bloomberg Quicktake, the China model, on the other hand, is a strategy for the CCP to maintain exclusive political control. It achieved this by doing away with the separation of powers and instead merging political authoritarianism with state-directed capitalism in a system underpinned by four key components that bolster China's one-party state.

- *The grand economic bargain:* an agreement by the CCP to pacify China's citizens, whereby the CCP guarantees the people material prosperity in return for loyalty and obedience.

- *Nationalism:* where the CCP stokes an us-versus-them patriotism to bind China's citizens to the CCP regime, which has positioned itself as the defender of Chinese honour.

- *Strict party discipline:* based on a rigid expectation that CCP members tow the party line.

- *Prohibiting political opposition:* whereby the CCP targets and resists any critical voices.

Examples of China using political power

Safeguarding the CCP regime's security

China safeguards the CCP's security through policy actions in the name of 'social stability management' (a CCP term for imposing party control on the everyday life of Chinese people):

- *Internet censorship ('the great firewall of China')* The CCP controls the flow of online information to ensure only its official and regime-friendly narratives dominate and shape online opinions, especially the views of China's general population. Internet censorship is also a means to shut down dissent. Key aspects involve IP address blocking, keyword filtering, monitoring by net police and banning virtual private networks. Altogether, these measures create a climate of fear and pressure, where Chinese netizens feel the need to self-censor.

- *Mass Surveillance* The CCP is safeguarding the regime via an extensive and intrusive surveillance network of security cameras. By 2020, an estimated 350 million security cameras were operational across China (approximately one camera for every four people), many equipped with the latest facial recognition technology. China is also exporting its AI-powered surveillance technology to authoritarian governments around the world. According to a 2018 report by Freedom House, Chinese firms are providing high-tech surveillance tools to at least 18 states, such as Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

- *Social credit system* The CCP is safeguarding the regime via an expansion of the social credit system, itself an initiative closely interconnected with China's mass surveillance security camera network. The social credit system began in 2014, with pilots in nominated areas across China. It is designed to measure the political and economic trustworthiness of China's citizens. It operates according to three main elements:

- *A master database:* the National Credit Information Sharing Platform, (NCISP) contains the personal data of individuals and businesses.

- *A blacklisting system:* individuals and businesses can be denied services or publicly named and shamed for apparent 'bad behaviour'.

- *A punishment-and-rewards mechanism:* punishes or rewards individuals and businesses for behaviour that is deemed 'bad' or 'good'.

Repressing the Uyghurs of Xinjiang in the name of 'halting separatist threats'

- In 2014, the CCP relaunched a policy known as the Strike-Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism, which can be seen as the overarching initiative that frames state-backed repression, suppression and violence against Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in Xinjiang.

- Uyghur persecution can be understood as a maximum-pressure campaign that rests on four pillars. Note: the following terms are not official CCP language.

  - *Securitisation:* all Uyghurs are treated as potential terrorists, resulting in intrusive surveillance of homes and mosques and the collection of personal biometric data, along with restricted freedom of movement and forcible detention without due process.

  - *Assimilation:* cracking down on outward displays of Uyghur culture, particularly involving traditional faith practices linked to Islam.

  - *Sinocisation:* the deliberate and systematic attempt to shift the demographics of Xinjiang by incentivising Han Chinese migration to the area.

  - *Sanitisation:* propaganda efforts to conceal rights abuses, for example, referring to detention camps as 'vocational training centres', and the production of films such as Winds of Song that gloss over ethnic tensions to present a false image of social cohesion and harmony between China's different ethnic groups.

Diplomatic power and its use as an instrument

Best summed up by Sir Harold Nicholson, who was a British diplomat and author, diplomacy is 'the management of international relations by negotiation'. It refers to power exercised through interstate relations. Emphasis on diplomatic power can be understood as the influence a state can exert through strategic manoeuvres in regional and international forums such as discussions, negotiations, summits, and participation in bilateral and multilateral cooperation and agreements. However, diplomacy may also take on a coercive dimension. For example, through public condemnation, criticism of one state by another or multilateral efforts where states work collectively as an independent coalition or as a lobbying bloc via an intergovernmental organisation (mainly the United Nations) to sanction or isolate another state from the rest of the international community.

Sources of China's diplomatic power

- China is one of the five permanent members (P5) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In many ways, this is the height of diplomatic power, because of the prestige associated with the UNSC as a diplomatic forum, and the authority granted to a permanent member to wield a veto. In effect, China's P5 membership status enables it to manipulate the UNSC to fulfil its own self-interests.

- China-led (or dominated) multilateral initiatives include:

  - Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

  - Forum on China–African Cooperation

  - Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnerships

  - Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (also known as the Shanghai Pact)

  - World Internet Conference (also know as the Wuzhen Summit).

- China's membership of other prominent multilateral organisations includes:

  - United Nations Human Rights Council (in October 2020, China was narrowly re-elected, giving it a seat at the 47-member UN intergovernmental body)

  - Group of 20 (G20)

  - Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

Examples of diplomacy as a power and an instrument

Diplomatically isolating Taiwan, denying it international recognition

- According to China's One China Policy, states that seeks diplomatic relations with China must break ties with Taiwan and recognise the PRC as the rightful and only China. Due to the potential for lucrative trade, investment and generous aid, many states are willing to comply. This has left Taiwan diplomatically isolated. As at the time of writing, only 15 states recognise Taiwan.

- In May and November 2020, China denied Taiwan's application for 'observer status' at the World Health Assembly, which is the UN World Health Organization's decision-making body. This is despite Taiwan's early success in combatting COVID-19. The PRC argued that only it had the right to represent China at the United Nations and in other intergovernmental organisations where membership is based on statehood. Incidentally, China has obstructed Taiwan's World Health Assembly application since 2016, as punishment for Taiwan electing a pro-independence president, Tsai Ing-Wen.

- China actively works to poach Taiwan's few remaining diplomatic allies mainly through economic incentives such as concessional loans, generous aid packages and the 'gifting' of infrastructure projects. In 2017, Panama cut ties with Taiwan and switched its diplomatic allegiance to China, as did the Dominican Republic in 2018, and the Solomon Islands and Kiribati in 2019, with China promising the Solomon Islands alone $730 million in financial aid. Technically, the means in relation to this last point more accurately qualify as economic power, however as an outcome China's efforts clearly serve a diplomatic purpose, namely to isolate Taiwan from the international community by incentivising other states to deny Taiwan international recognition (itself a core component of sovereignty) and thus degrading and delegitimising Taiwan's claims to independent statehood.

China's wolf warrior diplomacy

- China's wolf warrior diplomacy refers (ironically) to an increasingly undiplomatic tone used by some of China's official diplomats to promote and defend China's interests. The messaging is usually done through aggressive social media posts that target and even troll foreign governments and individuals perceived to be critical of China.

- The term refers to a popular Chinese film, Wolf Warrior. As a tactic (be it deliberate or consequently), the 'diplomacy' represents the disruptive power states can wield by weaponising information.

- Wolf warrior diplomacy can be thought of as a form of 'Twiplomacy' (Twitter diplomacy). On one level, this simply denotes the use of social media by politicians, government representatives and intergovernmental organisations. However, it also reflects a broader evolutionary trend influencing the dynamics of contemporary international relations, whereby traditional interstate diplomacy (generally based on formal and private exchanges) is now practised on platforms that are largely informal and very public.

Structured inquiry research task 2

Examples of China's use of cultural power

This activity is designed to assist you with investigating two examples where China deploys cultural power in pursuit of its national interests. Specifically, through:

1. the expansion of China's global media reach
2. China's use of Confucius Institutes.

These examples of cultural power are a means to foster and develop China's regional relationships and overall international standing. Before you begin your research, consider the following quotes.

Key quotes – Cultural power

'Core socialist values are the soul of cultural soft power ... Basically, the soft power of a nation depends on the vitality, cohesive force and charisma of its core values.'

Extract from Xi Jinping's address at a group study of the political bureau of the CCP's Central Committee, February 2014.

Xi Jinping is the custodian of the 'China story' – the authorised version of how the country and its leadership wish to be perceived by us all. At his first national meeting on propaganda and ideology in August 2013, Xi said leaders needed to find new ways to 'tell China's story well, and properly disseminate China's voice'. More than a year later, at a foreign affairs work meeting in November 2014, he said that China 'must raise our country's soft power, telling China's story well'.

Extract from 'Fable of the Master Storyteller' by David Bandurski, Modern Chinese Literature and Culture Resource Centre, The Ohio State University, 29 September 2017.

3. Review the information at the links provided below.
4. Summarise your findings as revision notes, using your preferred summary format.

Introduction to China's cultural power

Eleanor Albert, 'China's Big Bet on Soft Power', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 9 February 2018
  www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-big-bet-soft-power

China's global media expansion and Confucius Institutes

Louisa Lim and Julia Bergin, 'Inside China's Audacious Global Propaganda Campaign', *The Guardian*, 7 December 2018
  www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/07/china-plan-for-global-media-dominance-propaganda-xi-jinping

Helen Vatskikopoulos, 'As Australia's Soft Power in the Pacific Fades, China's Voice Gets Louder', The Conversation, 21 February 2019
  theconversation.com/as-australias-soft-power-in-the-pacific-fades-chinas-voice-gets-louder-111841

Jeffrey Gil, 'Explainer: What are Confucius Institutes and do they Teach Chinese Propaganda?', *The Conversation*, 29 March 2019
  theconversation.com/explainer-what-are-confucius-institutes-and-do-they-teach-chinese-propaganda-114274

Pratik Jakhar, 'Confucius Institutes: The Growth of China's Controversial Cultural Branch', *BBC News*, 7 September 2021
  www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-49511231

Activity 3.2.5 – Structured inquiry research task 3

Examples of China's use of trade as an instrument

This activity is designed to assist you with investigating two examples of China using trade to pursue its national interests.

1. China's trade sanctions on Australia

2. China's leadership role in the world's largest free trade deal, the Regional Economic Cooperation Partnership.

These examples have ramifications for China's pursuit of economic prosperity and regional relationships.

An article has been provided on the concept of *guanxi* (pronounced 'gwan shee'), which translates as 'connections', 'networks' and 'relationships', although 'mutual obligations' might be a more accurate way to conceptualise the idea. *Guanxi* is an important idea to consider when exploring China's use of trade and aid as foreign policy instruments.

3. Review the information at the links provided below.

4. Summarise your findings as revision notes, using your preferred summary format.

Understanding guanxi

Katie Hope, 'Doing Business the Chinese Way', *BBC News*, 8 October 2014
https://www.bbc.com/news/business-29524701

China's trade sanctions on Australia

Reuters staff, 'Timeline: Tensions Between China and Australia over Commodities Trade', Reuters, 11 December 2020
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-trade-china-commodities-tim-idUSKBN28L0D8

Stephen Dziedzic, 'Chinese Official Declares Beijing has Targeted Australian Goods as Economic Punishment', *ABC News*, 7 July 2021
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-07/australia-china-trade-tensions-official-economic-punishment/100273964

Roland Rajah, 'The Big Bark but Small Bite of China's Trade Coercion', *The Interpreter*, 8 April 2021)
https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/big-bark-small-bite-china-s-trade-coercion

Ian Verrender, 'How Beijing Shot Itself in the Foot with its Trade War in Australia', *ABC News*, 7 June 2021
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-07/how-beijing-shot-itself-in-the-foot-with-its-trade-war/100194386

China's lead role in world's largest trade deal: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Robert Ward, 'RCEP Trade Deal: A Geopolitical Win for China', *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 25 November 2020
https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2020/11/rcep-trade-deal

CNBC International, 'What is the RCEP?', *YouTube*, 29 December 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weyA6-aqqfo&t=40s

DW News, 'China and 14 Partners Sign World's Biggest Trade Deal without US', *YouTube*, 15 November 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4GsAVN4Emk&t=135s

Al Jazeera English, 'Why is Asia-Pacific's Trade Deal so Important?', *YouTube*, 17 November 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UweLxcrgO2E&t=12s

Activity 3.2.6 – Structured inquiry research task 4

Examples of China's use of aid as a foreign policy instrument

This activity is designed to assist you with investigating three examples where China uses aid in pursuit of some of its national interests, namely, national security, regional relationships and overall international standing.

1. China's aid to Cambodia in return for Cambodia acting as a diplomatic proxy to shut down criticism of China in the South China Sea within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

2. China's aid to the Solomon Islands in return for diplomatic recognition and severing ties with Taiwan

3. China's COVID-19 medical aid, particularly to Africa.

4. Review the information at the links provided below.

5. Summarise your findings as revision notes, using your preferred summary format.

China's aid to Cambodia in relation to the South China Sea

Al Jazeera English, 'Start Here: What's Behind the South China Sea Dispute?', *YouTube*, 23 November 2020

🌐 www.youtube.com/watch?v=f00V9MQBhg8

Reuters staff, 'China Gives Cambodia Aid and Thanks for ASEAN Help', Reuters, 4 September 2012

🌐 www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-china-idUSBRE88306I20120904

Sok Khemara, 'China Gives Cambodia $600m in Exchange for International Support', VOA, 16 July 2016

🌐 www.voanews.com/a/china-gives-cambodia-millions-exchange-international-support/3421648.html

China's aid to the Solomon Islands in relation to diplomatically isolating Taiwan

Natalie Whiting, Christina Zhou and Kai Feng, 'What Does it Take for China to Take Taiwan's Pacific Allies? Apparently, $730 million', *ABC News*, 18 September 2019

🌐 www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-18/solomon-islands-cuts-ties-with-taiwan-in-favour-of-china/11524118

Edward Cavanough, 'When China Came Calling: Inside the Solomon Islands Switch', *The Guardian*, 8 December 2019

🌐 www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/08/when-china-came-calling-inside-the-solomon-islands-switch

Evan Wasuka and Bang Xiao, 'China Bankrolls Solomon Islands Stadium Ahead of Pacific Summit', *ABC News*, 17 October 2019

🌐 www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-17/china-bankrolls-solomon-islands-stadium-ahead-of-pacific-summit/11612524

China's COVID-19 medical aid, in particular to Africa

Jacob Kurtzer, 'China's Humanitarian Aid: Cooperation amidst Competition', Center for Strategic and International Studies, 17 November 2020

🌐 www.csis.org/analysis/chinas-humanitarian-aid-cooperation-amidst-competition

Cornelia Tremann, 'As Africa Prepares to Fight COVID-19, China Steps Up', *The Interpreter*, 15 April 2020

🌐 www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/africa-prepares-fight-covid-19-china-steps-up

Dinko Hanaan Dinko , 'China's "Mask Diplomacy" Wins Influence Across Africa, During and After the Pandemic', *The Conversation*, 14 September 2020

🌐 theconversation.com/chinas-mask-diplomacy-wins-influence-across-africa-during-and-after-the-pandemic-153048

The effectiveness of the state in achieving its national interests

✳ Key quote – China's future

'We do not predict either a failed (or failing) China or a triumphant hegemonic China – what happens will depend on the choices China's leaders make in what will be seen as a watershed moment.'

Thomas Fingar and Jean Oi, 'China's Challenges: Now It Gets Much Harder', The Washington Quarterly, 2020.

Advice for tackling the effectiveness of the state in achieving its national interests

The VCE Study Design's key skill asks you to 'evaluate the success of a specific Asia-Pacific state in achieving its national interests' *(VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 32). The instructional verb *evaluate* requires you to make an informed judgement call by weighing up an idea and exploring multiple possibilities. You will then draw a logical conclusion, after careful consideration.

This skill requires you to judge whether China has been able to accomplish what it set out to attain regarding its big four national interest goals. You will need to interrogate if it has or has not been successful.

In fact, you have already had practice in this type of evaluation. In Unit 3 Area of Study 1 you had to 'assess the extent to which key global actors achieve their aims' *(VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 31). The principle here in Unit 3 Area of Study 2 is much the same, keeping in mind the aims of state actors are expressed as national interests.

Put another way, do China's intended ambitions match up with the results after it has implemented a policy action? If you can produce an argument that is supported with detailed, relevant and accurate information that answers 'Yes' to this question, then China has been successful in achieving its national interests.

See this part of the Study Design as an opportunity to synthesise your knowledge. It is a chance for you to draw on all your learning from this area of study by applying it to four key inquiry questions:

1. What ideas does your state have about its own national interests?

2. What types of power and foreign policy instruments has China used in pursuit of its national interests?

3. Which of these types of power and foreign policy instruments have proven the most effective in China's pursuit of its national interests?

4. How have you judged China's success or failure in achieving its national interests? What evidence is your verdict based on?

Taken together, your findings from these inquiry questions will enable you to reach a conclusion on whether China has ultimately been successful in achieving one, some, or all of its national interests.

Keep in mind that for a state to successfully achieve a national interest it can potentially (and often does) come at the expense of achieving another interest. Ultimately, a state's pursuit of its national interests is usually an exercise in trade-offs. In fact, it is very rare for a state to successfully achieve all its national interests at the one time. Be on the lookout for this dynamic and include it in your overall evaluative judgements.

Activity 3.2.7- Independent inquiry research task 1

Has China successfully achieved its national interests?

Conduct independent research investigating whether China has successfully achieved its big four national interests. Consolidate your research findings by completing the summary table template shown in Figure 3.2.4. As you research, continue to return and reflect upon the following paragraph from the VCE Study Design:

> To achieve its national interests, a state may use various types of hard and soft power. Students consider the main foreign policy instruments available to the state: diplomacy, trade, aid and military. Students develop an understanding that the relative importance and effectiveness of different types of power and foreign policy instruments in pursuit of a state's national interests vary considerably, and there is often a marked difference between the intentions and results.
>
> —*Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 32.

Use the following inquiry questions to guide your research and to assist you in framing summary notes:

1. Ultimately, how effective has China been in achieving [insert national interest]? Weigh up the difference between what China 'wants' (intentions) versus what China ultimately 'got' (results).

2. Has China experienced any push back in attempting to achieve [insert national interest]? If so, from who, and why and how did China resolve this (if indeed it did)? If it remains unresolved, why is this so?

3. Has China's attempt to achieve [insert national interest] backfired or come at the expense of its other national interests?

Table 3.2.4 – Summary table template

National interest	China's intentions versus China's results	Your verdict
National security Maintaining the CCP's political control, safeguarding China's territorial integrity and halting separatist threats		
Economic prosperity Achieving China's two centennial goals: tackling corruption, and continued economic development and growth, through the BRI		
Regional relationships Advancing China's sovereignty claims and maritime rights, reunification with Taiwan, and asserting economic power through trade, aid and the creation of a China-led regional economic network		
International standing Manoeuvring China to resume a central role in world affairs as a powerful and respected actor		

Activity 3.2.8 – Exam-style short-answer questions and essays

Test your key knowledge by attempting the questions in this activity. You should aim to craft clear and comprehensive responses that address the specific demands of each question by drawing on detailed, relevant and accurate information. Pay attention to the task word, also known as the command term and instructional verb.
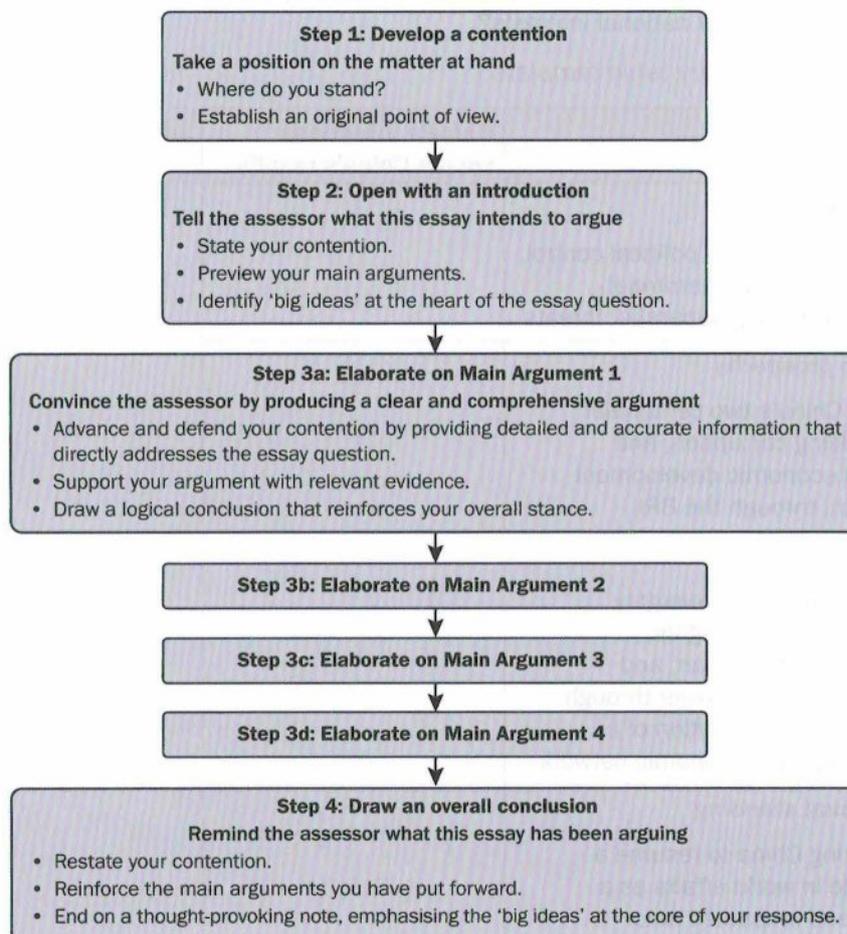
1. Analyse how China has used [insert type of power or foreign policy instrument] to pursue its national interests within the last 10 years.

2. Assess the extent to China has succeeded in achieving two of its national interests.

3. Discuss the extent to which China achieved all four of its key national interest pursuits.

4. 'For states wishing to achieve their national interests abroad, a foreign policy approach guided by idealism is ultimately less successful than one guided by pragmatism.' Analyse the accuracy of this statement with reference to China.

5. 'The age of hard power is over. Soft power is the only way for states to advance their interests.' Evaluate the effectiveness with which your state has exercised soft power to achieve at least three national interests.

Essay writing advice

Visualising the structure of an essay

A major section of the end-of-year exam for VCE Global Politics is the essay in section B. Figure 3.2.8 steps you through the key components of an essay.

Figure 3.2.8 – Main components of an essay response

Step 1: Develop a contention
Take a position on the matter at hand
- Where do you stand?
- Establish an original point of view.

Step 2: Open with an introduction
Tell the assessor what this essay intends to argue
- State your contention.
- Preview your main arguments.
- Identify 'big ideas' at the heart of the essay question.

Step 3a: Elaborate on Main Argument 1
Convince the assessor by producing a clear and comprehensive argument
- Advance and defend your contention by providing detailed and accurate information that directly addresses the essay question.
- Support your argument with relevant evidence.
- Draw a logical conclusion that reinforces your overall stance.

Step 3b: Elaborate on Main Argument 2

Step 3c: Elaborate on Main Argument 3

Step 3d: Elaborate on Main Argument 4

Step 4: Draw an overall conclusion
Remind the assessor what this essay has been arguing
- Restate your contention.
- Reinforce the main arguments you have put forward.
- End on a thought-provoking note, emphasising the 'big ideas' at the core of your response.

Conclusion

> If there is no freedom of expression then the beauty of life is lost. Participation in a society is not an artistic choice, it's a human need.
>
> — *Ai Weiwei, Chinese dissident artist*

At the time of writing, Xi Jinping had reached a major milestone in his political career – a decade as China's paramount leader.

Interestingly, 2022 should have been the year Xi's reign came to an end. It is the year of the next CCP Congress, which only takes place every five years. In addition, Xi reached the age of 68 in 2021, which is the customary age of retirement for CCP leadership. However, with the 2018 amendment to China's constitution that ended two-term presidential term limits, China at least for the foreseeable future appears to remain 'Xi's China'. This idea was further reinforced in November 2021 during a CCP plenum (a major annual meeting dedicated to the CCP's policies for the upcoming year), where a resolution on China's history was adopted that many China watchers have interpreted as signalling that the CCP will almost certainly guarantee Xi an unprecedented third term as leader at the 2022 Party Congress.

During his first 10 years Xi has steered China down an assertive path, both regionally and internationally. This transition was captured best in a 2014 online headline by the CCP's own major newspaper, *The People's Daily*: 'Mao Zedong made Chinese people stand up; Deng Xiaoping made Chinese people rich; Xi Jinping will make Chinese people strong' (Beech, 2014). China's military continues to grow and modernise, flexing its might across multiple territorial disputes. China has also increased its aggressive rhetoric regarding reunification with Taiwan, as well as through its Wolf Warrior diplomacy, and engaged in coercive economic punishment of countries that are deemed to have publicly offended China, such as Australia. Subsequently, China pushes forward with the BRI, as well as its efforts to brand itself as a global leader in space and artificial intelligence technology, sporting prowess and humanitarian efforts through COVID-related medical aid. Taken together, there is no doubt that China is a very consequential actor on the world stage.

Domestically, too, China exerts power. This is evidenced by the strengthening of the CCP's presence in the everyday lives of China's citizens and by extension through the strengthening of Xi's own personal political authority, particularly through his anti-corruption campaign and cult of personality. However, for all the CCP's secrecy and tightly controlled messaging, it is also domestically where China's vulnerabilities are most notable. Demographic challenges such as a wealth gap and an ageing population persist, and the CCP's authority continues to be challenged by separatist claims in Xinjiang and Tibet and pro-democracy forces in Hong Kong. All of these have led to China suffering reputational damage abroad, as the CCP's heavy-handed response has brought major (and very public) condemnations of China's perceived human rights abuses. Add to this unwanted global media attention and scrutiny regarding the 'disappearances' of high-profile Chinese citizens who are seen to be critical of the CCP (for example, business magnate Jack Ma, actress Fan Bingbing and professional tennis player Peng Shuai), along with ever louder questions about the true state of China's economic health in light of the Evergrande debt crisis. Taken together, the notion of an invincible China and an inevitable Chinese twenty-first century seems overstated, if not an outright myth. While China is no 'paper tiger', it is arguably at best a fragile power.

What chapter China writes next in its history and for its people during the remainder of the 2020s through to 2050, and what this could mean for the rest of the world as a consequence, is really anyone's guess. Perhaps the only thing we can be sure of is that over the next 30 to 40 years we may come to have a newfound appreciation for the old words attributed to a Chinese curse: 'May you live in interesting times'.

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Glossary of terms

Anarchy Originating from the Greek words *ano* meaning 'without' and *archos* meaning 'leader' when combined meaning 'leaderless'.

Economic prosperity This national interest indicates whether a state can weather international economic instability as well as protect and build the wealth and welfare of its citizens. If a state is economically prosperous, it encourages other states to develop relationships with it and bolsters state sovereignty.

Gross domestic product (GDP) A measure of a state's economy, assessed through the total value of all goods and services produced within the state.

Idealism A school of thought in which foreign policy is influenced above all else by an ideological principle, as opposed to practical and pragmatic considerations.

International standing Influences the power a state has in global politics. Other national interests impact on international standing as well as a state's role and recognition in intergovernmental organisations and as a proponent of international law. If a state has a poor international standing, it may threaten its sovereignty.

National interests The national interests of a state are pursued to ensure the survival and potential growth of that state. States implement policies and types of power to achieve their national interests and maintain state sovereignty.

National security The national interest of a state to ensure it maintains sovereignty. Traditionally, this term refers to the protection of a state's borders from intruders but has evolved to include other forms of security, such as resources and environmental security which are necessary for a state to maintain sovereignty.

Power The ability of one global actor to influence the actions of another global actor. Power can be exercised in a range of ways.

Pragmatism A school of thought in which foreign policy is influenced above all else by practical considerations, as opposed to a particular ideology.

Realism Involves states (and other global actors) prioritising their specific interest and needs over those of the global community.

Regional relationships Positive regional relationships are an important national interest to a state, as they ensure its neighbours will not behave in a hostile manner and thus threaten state sovereignty. Alliances with other like-minded neighbours may help the success of other national interests. However, a state may consider other national interests more important than positive regional relationships if they better achieve the aims of a state.

Tiananmen Square massacre A violent clash that occurred in 1989 between Chinese civilians and the CPC and the People's Liberation Army. This event resulted in an unknown number of deaths, with some estimates in the thousands. The massacre developed from a multifaceted protest movement, largely remembered as a prodemocracy protest, which took place across China but culminated on 4 June in the capital, Beijing, specifically in Tiananmen Square.
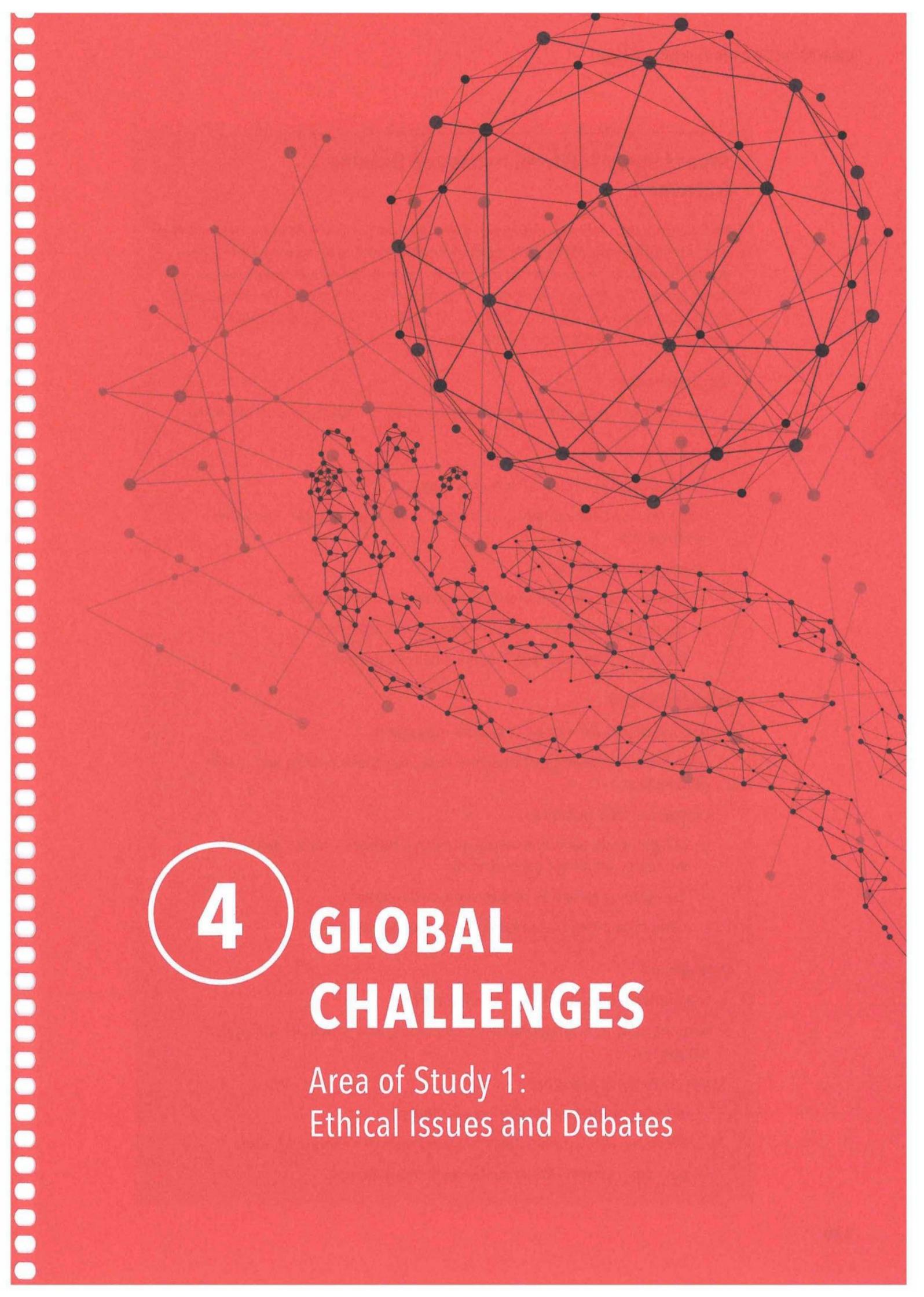
4 GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Area of Study 1:
Ethical Issues and Debates

Area of Study 1: Ethical Issues and Debates
Outcome 1

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority says '[o]n completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the debates relating to TWO global ethical issues and evaluate the effectiveness of global actors' responses to these issues. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

Key knowledge

- the key terms: realism, cosmopolitanism, justice, ethics, international law

Human rights

- international laws relating to human rights
- responses by relevant global actors including cosmopolitan and realist perspectives
- ethical debates including:
  - economic challenges to the universality of human rights
  - cultural challenges to the universality of human rights
  - state sovereignty versus 'Responsibility to Protect'.

People movement

- international laws relating to people movement
- responses by relevant global actors including cosmopolitan and realist perspectives
- ethical debates including:
  - obligations to asylum seekers and other refugees versus national interests including border security
  - the rights of refugees versus economic migrants
  - differing approaches regarding refugee resettlement.

Development

- international laws relating to development
- responses by relevant global actors including cosmopolitan and realist perspectives
- ethical debates including:
  - differing strategies for poverty alleviation
  - overseas development assistance versus self-interest of states
  - economic growth versus sustainable development.

Arms control

- international laws relating to arms control
- responses by relevant global actors including cosmopolitan and realist perspectives
- ethical debates including:
  - differing approaches regarding non-state proliferation
  - international security versus state security
  - arms control versus disarmament.

Key skills

- define and explain key global politics terms and use them in the appropriate context
- analyse international law relating to TWO ethical issues
- analyse ethical debates surrounding TWO ethical issues, including the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism
- evaluate the effectiveness of responses by global actors to TWO ethical issues
- use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments.

4 Global Challenges

Area of Study 1: Ethical Issues and Debates

Ethical issues and debates

In this area of study, you will explore the nature of ethical issues and debates within the context of the twenty-first century. Ethical concerns relate to the moral principles that govern standards of behaviour and action in society.

The basic concept and principles of what is ethical is a contested idea and has been the source of debate and conflict across many corners of the world since the twenty-first century. This is despite the widespread acceptance of universal principles of ethical standards enshrined in **international law**.

Customary international law applies to all global actors. Written legal agreements, such as treaties, are only binding on those who consent to them through explicit ratification. However, international humanitarian law applies to states and non-state actors. This is because states have the responsibility to ensure that non-state actors do not prevent others from exercising their human rights.

The theory of **cosmopolitanism** suggests that we are one common humanity and should work together – that is, the universal values of individual human rights and the interests of the global community needs to be prioritised over a state's pursuit of national interest or the principle of not interfering in another state's affairs. A cosmopolitan approach to human rights can be seen in the periodic reports that states give to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. For example, in early 2020 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women stressed the 'need for harmonisation of gender equality policies and programmes' to avoid their uneven application across Pakistan.

On the other hand, **realism** is a theory that primarily involves states putting their national interests ahead of the interests of the global community. This includes intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which can have self-interests that compel their actions.

Studying **ethics** in an international relations context involves investigating how state and non-state actors should respond in any given circumstance that arises, as well as how they should respond if they are being their best moral selves. When actors move away from the ethical principles underpinning the universal system of rights, **justice** is sought as a response.

Debates arise as events and decisions crop up – global actors respond to situations and often clash against the responses from other state and non-state actors. This impacts upon the individuals within those states.

International law is a body of rules established by custom or written legal agreements that are accepted as binding upon the international community. Traditionally these laws only relate to states. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely accepted treaty with 196 signatories. The convention protects children's rights across several areas including the right to education. It is the key source of checks and balances on states responses in this area, as seen in the convention's committee reports on Pakistan.

Cosmopolitanism reflects a desire among global actors to cooperate to reach common goals and outcomes to meet challenges that are presented to the global community.

Realism involves states (and other global actors) prioritising their specific interest and needs over those of the global community. Australia's policy of detaining child asylum seekers is a core component of its realist border security policy, implemented through the policy of Operation Sovereign Borders.

In this section you will have the opportunity to examine two of four issues:

- human rights
- people movement
- development
- arms control.

You can use these focus questions as an analytical framework to examine your chosen issues:

- What is the issue?
- Who is affected by the issue?
- What rights do they have in relation to this issue?
- What responsibilities do global actors have with respect to this issue?
- How effectively do global actors respond to the issue?
- What debates have emerged relating to the issue?
- What international laws relate to this issue?

The study of ethical issues in the twenty-first century emphasises the tension between common ethical standards (and moral values) and the extent to which these standards are reflected in the actions of various actors in the global arena. This includes states, intergovernmental organisations, non-state actors and transnational corporations.

This tension defines the disconnect between universalism and cultural perspectives – that is, on human rights, obligations to asylum seekers and other refugees versus national interests with respect to people movement, or differing strategies for poverty alleviation versus the pursuit of economic development, or international security versus state security in response to arms control.

In examining international law relating to these issues, this study provides an opportunity for an analysis of the efficacy of the international system in responding to the selected issues of ethical concern in the twenty-first century.

> **Ethics** refers to moral principles that govern behaviour. In global politics, actors have underlying ideologies such as realism or cosmopolitanism that inform their actions. Amnesty International, for example, comes from a cosmopolitan perspective as it seeks to ensure that everyone enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

> **Justice** refers to the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, law, fairness and equity. Importantly, justice also involves punishment for those who breach ethical codes. For example, the International Criminal Court convicted Germaine Katanga in 2014 for crimes against humanity and war crimes, sentencing him for 12 years for the part he played in a 2003 massacre in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Activity 4.1.1 – Realism versus cosmopolitanism

Taking into account the VCE study design's definitions of realism or cosmopolitanism, investigate five current global ethical issues and respond to the questions below.

1. What is the issue?
2. How has the relevant global actor or actors responded to the issue?
3. Have the responses been cosmopolitan or realist in nature?
4. How effective have the responses been in seeking to resolve the issue?

Figure 4.1.1 opposite is a graphical representation to keep handy to remind you of what you will achieve after completing this Area of Study.
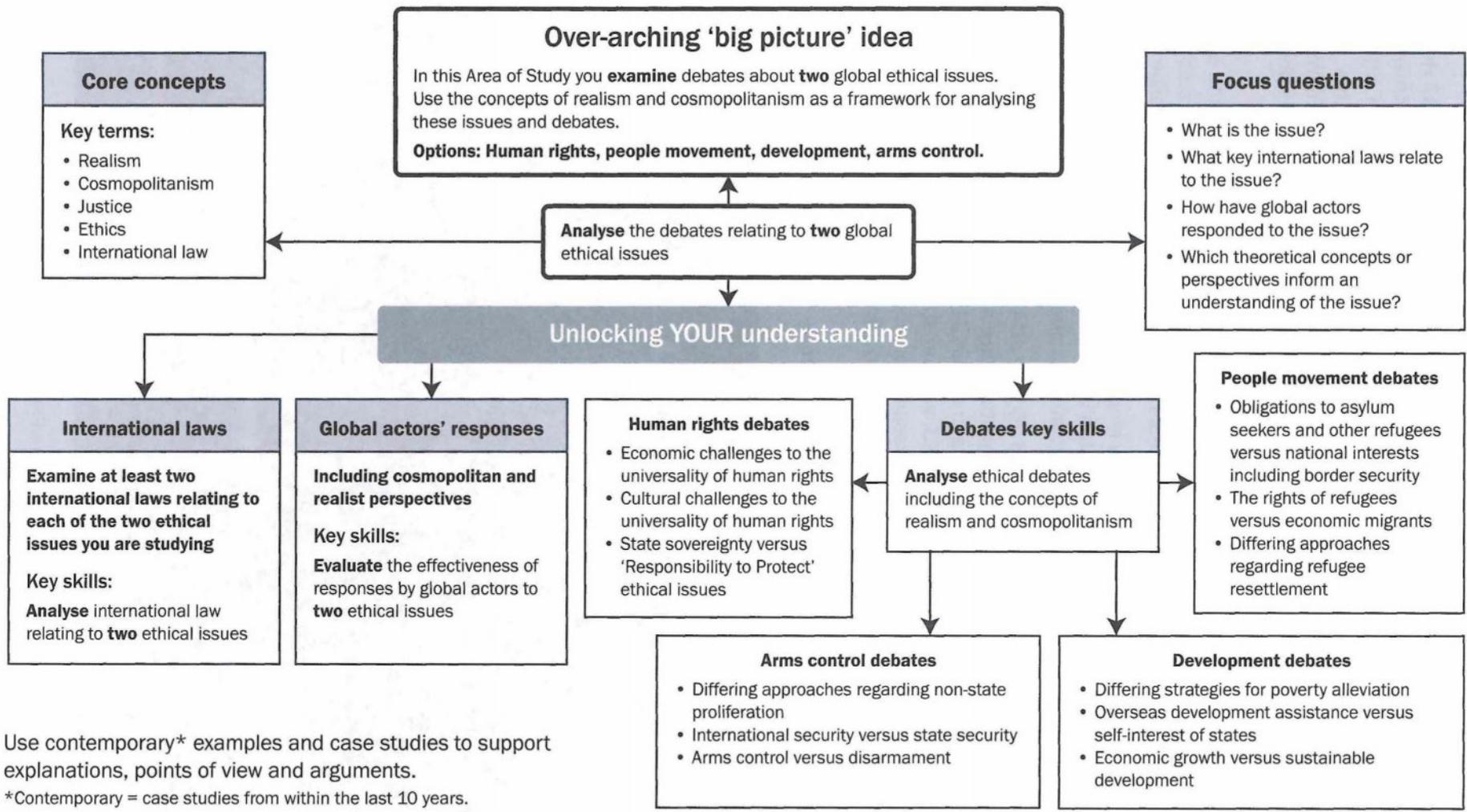
Over-arching 'big picture' idea

In this Area of Study you **examine** debates about **two** global ethical issues. Use the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism as a framework for analysing these issues and debates.

Options: Human rights, people movement, development, arms control.

Core concepts

Key terms:

- Realism
- Cosmopolitanism
- Justice
- Ethics
- International law

Focus questions

- What is the issue?
- What key international laws relate to the issue?
- How have global actors responded to the issue?
- Which theoretical concepts or perspectives inform an understanding of the issue?

Analyse the debates relating to **two** global ethical issues

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Unlocking YOUR understanding

International laws

Examine at least two international laws relating to each of the two ethical issues you are studying

Key skills:

Analyse international law relating to **two** ethical issues

Global actors' responses

Including cosmopolitan and realist perspectives

Key skills:

Evaluate the effectiveness of responses by global actors to **two** ethical issues

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Human rights debates

- Economic challenges to the universality of human rights
- Cultural challenges to the universality of human rights
- State sovereignty versus 'Responsibility to Protect' ethical issues

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Debates key skills

Analyse ethical debates including the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism

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People movement debates

- Obligations to asylum seekers and other refugees versus national interests including border security
- The rights of refugees versus economic migrants
- Differing approaches regarding refugee resettlement

Arms control debates

- Differing approaches regarding non-state proliferation
- International security versus state security
- Arms control versus disarmament

Development debates

- Differing strategies for poverty alleviation
- Overseas development assistance versus self-interest of states
- Economic growth versus sustainable development

Use contemporary* examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments.

*Contemporary = case studies from within the last 10 years.
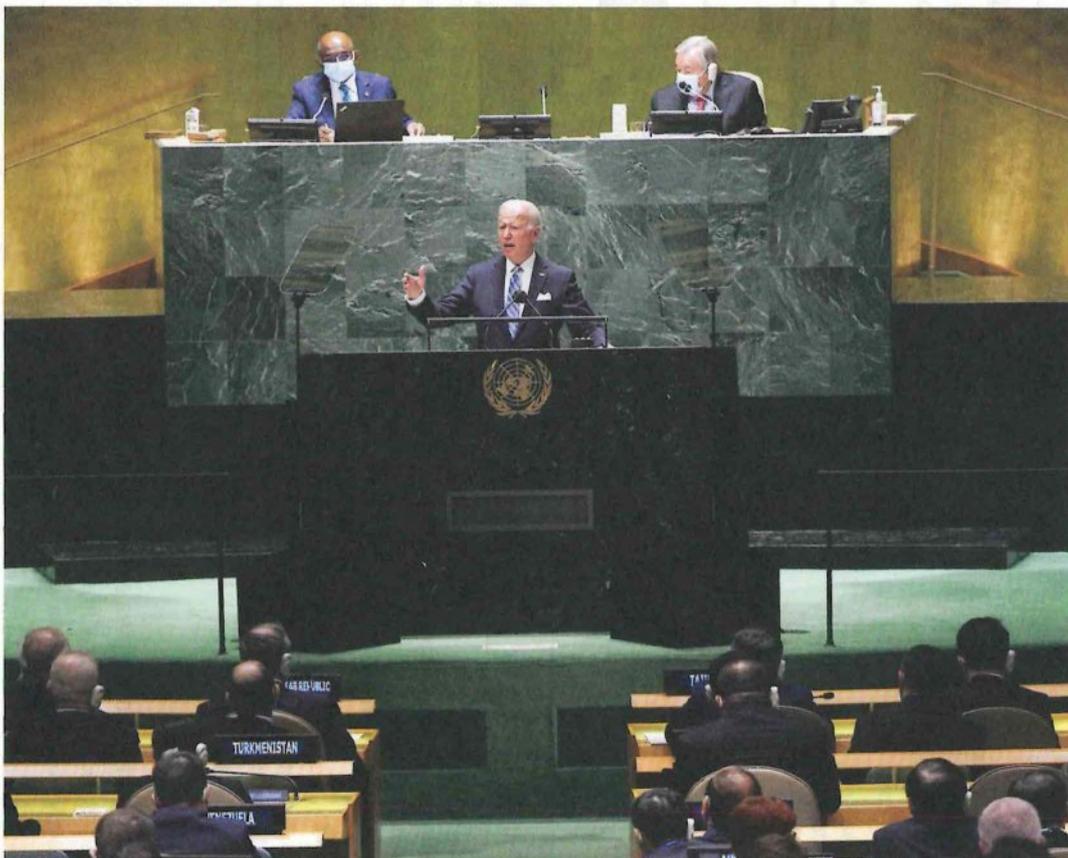
Human rights

What are human rights? What key international laws relate to human rights? How have global actors responded to the issue of human rights? Which theoretical concepts or perspectives inform an understanding of the issue of human rights? Which ethical debates surround the issue of human rights? How are universal human rights challenged by economic factors or needs on economic grounds? How are universal human rights undermined by cultural challenges? How is the principle of responsibility to protect challenged by the imperatives of state sovereignty?

The ethical issue of human rights emerged as an international concern at the end of World War 2. Prior to this, the human rights of individuals were seen to be a domestic concern, the prerogative of sovereign states, rather than an international issue.

The atrocities of the war shifted this thinking and with it emerged the human rights movement. The movement sought to establish new norms for the way states behaved in relation to one another to, in effect, establish a new order.

The United Nations (UN) was created on 26 June 1945 to facilitate international cooperation and the pursuit of human rights. Figure 4.1.2 shows the UN's General Assembly Hall in New York. The central aim of the UN was expressed in its charter, which the original 50 states (and the 193 member states of today) are obliged to promote. The central aim is: 'universal respect for, and observance of, human rights' (Article 55) and to take 'joint and separate action' (Article 56) to that end (UN, 1945).

Figure 4.1.2 – The United Nations General Assembly

President Joe Biden addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York
Photo: Getty Images

The adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948, under Resolution 217 A, reaffirmed the UN Charter's pledges on human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an aspirational document and is not binding in international law. However, the UN has developed a range of instruments that oblige states under international human rights law to respond to human rights concerns.

This includes the:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The UN's charter has a provision to take measures for the protection of human rights. This includes the work of the:

- High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Human Rights Council
- Human Rights Treaty Bodies
- Security Council.

As Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein (the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights) proclaimed: 'the power of the universal declaration is the power of ideas to change the world' (UDHR, 2015).

To understand international relations today, it is important to understand the international human rights system and the idea of human rights, both universal and fundamental, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Extracts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are below.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

Signatories: 48 of the 58 members in 1948

Non-signatories: Eight abstained, two did not vote

Parties: 193 member states have ratified at least one of the nine treaties that have been informed by the declaration, with the majority ratifying four or more.

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1 Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

2 No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1 Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

2 Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1 Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

2 This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1 Everyone has the right to a nationality.

2 No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1 Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

2 Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3 The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1 Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

2 No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1 Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

2 No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1 Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

2 Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

3 The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1 Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

2 Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

3 Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

4 Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1 Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2 Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1 Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2 Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3 Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1 Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2 Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised.

Article 29

1 Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2 In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3 These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Source: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 10 December 1948, available at www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is based on five essential characteristics of human rights (see Table 4.1). Human rights are seen as:

1. universal

2. inalienable

3. interrelated

4. interdependent

5. indivisible (OHCHR, 2012).

However, the universality of human rights is challenged by differing perspectives of how human rights should be viewed, valued and upheld. This is explored later in the chapter in relation to human rights instruments (such as international laws) and with respect to dominant debates relating to human rights as an ethical concern.

Table 4.1.1 – Essential characteristics of human rights

Universal	Inalienable	Interrelated	Interdependent	Indivisible
Human rights are universal, regardless of political, economic or cultural systems	Human rights are inherent in all persons and cannot be alienated from an individual or group except with due process and in specific situations	Improvement in the realisation of any one human right is a function of the realisation of the other human rights	Human rights are interdependent, as the level of enjoyment of any one right is dependent on the level of realisation of the other rights	All civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights are equally important. Improving the enjoyment of any right cannot be at the expense of the realisation of any other right

Source: *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2012, p. 11.

✳ Spotlight: Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch is an international human rights organisation that reports on human rights abuses around the world.

The organisation was established in 1978 as Helsinki Watch, in response to human rights abuses in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The movement expanded in 1981 as Americas Watch to undertake investigations of human rights violations in Central America. Under the umbrella of 'The Watch Committees', other arms of the organisation emerged, including: Asia Watch in 1985, Africa Watch in 1988, and Middle East Watch in 1989.

The all-inclusive Human Rights Watch we know today was formed in 1988 and has since responded to human rights challenges in all parts of the world in a range of areas. These areas include:

- government pressures on political activists

- war and genocide

- discrimination against women and other disenfranchised communities.

Human Rights Watch's mission statement says it aims to 'defend the rights of people worldwide'. It works towards achieving this by undertaking to 'investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice'.

Human Rights Watch's research methodology is based on whether the violations are in emergency or rapidly developing situations, or whether they are related to longer term issues.

In its submissions to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women's committee on the Rights of Women in Saudi Arabia, it documented the rights and challenges faced by women in the country, including the male guardianship system. In 2016, it reported that Saudi Arabia had failed to take adequate steps to end the discriminatory system where '[e]very Saudi woman must have a male guardian, normally a father or husband, but in some cases a brother or even a son' that has the authority to make decisions on her behalf.

The criticism follows the Saudi government's lack of progress on the issue, which stems back to the committee's review in 2008 that called for 'immediate steps to end the practice of male guardianship over women, including awareness-raising campaigns'.

Campaigns and lobbying of the Saudi government by Human Rights Watch and other non-government human rights organisations has seen the lifting of male guardian's role in Saudi women's travel overseas, but reforms have not been immediate or far-reaching, despite international pressures from the sector.

Sources: Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org; and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 'Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,' 8 April 2016, pp. 3–4.

Activity 4.1.2 – Review questions

1. Define the concept of human rights as it relates to the study of Global Politics.

2. Annotate the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to identify the key ideas of human rights (for example, Article 15's right to a nationality).

3. Using the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights give:
   - five examples of different kinds of human rights (for example, Article 4's no slavery)
   - provide a contemporary case or situation for each that demonstrates how the selected human right is upheld and how the selected human right is challenged.

4. Explain why the protection of human rights is considered to be of fundamental and universal importance. To what extent is the notion of universal human rights challenged by other views and values or other interpretations of human rights?

5. Review Table 4.1 and explain the meaning of each characteristic of human rights in your own words.

6. Investigate the work of a human rights organisation of your choice. (You could research either Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch to support your analysis of global actors' responses relating to your human rights case study. Refer to the Spotlight below as an example of Human Rights Watch at work. Use the table template provided here to organise your research.)

Name of organisation	
Type of organisation (the issues central to the organisation's work)	
History (background – when was the organisation established and what was happening at this time?)	
Aims:	
Activities (the actions undertaken)	
Methods (the methods used to achieve their aims)	
Effectiveness (impact and success in achieving their aims)	
Limitations or challenges (in meeting their aims)	
Case study: Provide an account of a specific case study that your selected organisation has responded to. Evaluate the organisation's response to the selected case study.	

International laws relating to human rights

The VCE study design says: 'International law encompasses a wide range of rules that might be seen to govern the actions of states in international relations such as treaties, declarations, bilateral and multilateral agreements and even decisions made by bodies such as the UN Security Council' *(VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023, p. 34).*

The key skill in this area, according to the VCE study design is to 'analyse international law relating to TWO ethical issues' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023, p. 35).*

International human rights law consists of the treaties and instruments adopted since 1945, including declarations, conventions and agreements. International human rights law establishes the obligations that states have in relation to promoting, protecting and fulfilling human rights. The box below summarises the UN's core international human rights instruments.

✳ Core international human rights instruments of the United Nations

- ICERD: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (21 December 1965)

- ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (16 December 1966)

- ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (16 December 1966)

- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (18 December 1979)

- CAT: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (10 December 1984)

- CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989)

- ICMW: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (18 December 1990)

- CPED: International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Disappearance (20 December 2006)

- CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (13 December 2006)

- The texts of the Treaties in PDF format can be found at: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx

- For a wider list of Universal Human Rights Instruments see http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx

While the United Nations Charter (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) were the founding documents of the international human rights movement, they have been supplemented with a range of other core UN international human rights instruments. For example, the International Bill of Human Rights, which sets out the system of human rights, consists of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with its two optional protocols.

States undertake their obligations under international human rights law through the process of signing and ratifying international human rights treaties. When a state signs the treaty, it effectively expresses agreement to comply with the treaty, although this is not binding on the state.

However, once the state carries out its own internal procedures – such as executive approval (parliamentary approval being unnecessary in Australia), or the executive branch along with Senate approval by two-thirds of the vote as required in the United States – then the state has formally consented to be bound by the treaty. For example, Australia has implemented its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women through the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. This process of ratification establishes the treaty as binding on the state.

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* Complying, signing and ratifying

The international human rights system has been widely endorsed, with the majority of member states signing and ratifying the various human rights instruments of the UN.

However, there are also many states that have neither signed or ratified, or signed but later withdrawn, from significant human rights instruments. For example, the United States can be singled out for its reluctance to sign or ratify core human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). Both of these conventions were signed by the United States but not ratified.

In comparison, Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1996 with **reservations**; Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1996 with reservations, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2000; and Afghanistan signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 and joined the treaty in 1994, and is a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women having acceded in 2003 (although it initially signed the agreement in 1980).

> **Reservations** are alterations made to a specific law or section of the law to suit a particular state.

Nevertheless, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan have faced criticisms for their human rights records, despite their commitments to and obligations under international law. Afghanistan, for example, has a long way to go before women can enjoy equal rights and live safely in the country. This is particularly so in light of the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, following the withdrawal of United States and coalition forces after 20 years of the 'war on terror', which was waged in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

It is the disconnect between states' formal undertaking to comply with international human rights obligations and their willingness or capacity to do so that remains a challenge for the international system.

The effectiveness of the international human rights system

The extent to which the international human rights system is effective needs to be considered in relation to a range of implementation, compliance and enforcement measures:

- participation rate
- implementation reports
- individual enforcement
- state enforcement.

Participation rate

The participation rate of states around the world through ratification of human rights law is certainly a factor in any measure of the international human rights system. A state's willingness to sign and ratify a treaty positions them on the international stage as global leaders on human rights. However, a state's credibility in relation to the international human rights system can be undercut if they fail to promote, protect and fulfil the human rights they have consented to under international human rights law.

Implementation reports

Compliance with treaty obligations can be undertaken through regular implementation reports and the committees' established to monitor implementation.

Individual enforcement

Enforcement measures to hold individuals accountable for human rights violations are available through domestic law. For example, pay equity commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women can be dealt with in Australia under its *Fair Work Act 2009*.

State enforcement

Enforcement measures at the international treaty system level, where a state acting in defiance of its obligations can be punished, are available under the UN's charter (see Article 42, Chapter VII). This outlines the provision to 'take all necessary measures' in order to maintain peace and security, and to protect citizens in cases of human rights violations by states against their own citizens. For example, the UN Security Council responded to the situation in Libya in 2011 under Resolution 1973, authorising UN members to 'take all necessary measures' to protect Libyan citizens from the human rights abuses of the Gaddafi regime.

Activity 4.1.3 - Research and respond

1. Find an example of a state that has incorporated the obligations of one international law relating to human rights into its domestic jurisdiction.

2. Analyse the impact of the international law on the issue of human rights. Consider:
   - whether the implementation of treaty obligations can be determined by a state's incorporation of treaty obligations into domestic law
   - the extent to which a state has undertaken appropriate processes to implement the treaty obligations (such as access to services for disenfranchised groups)
   - whether the state has achieved its outcome targets (such as school enrolment targets for girls).

Challenges to the international human rights system

Challenges to the international human rights system can emerge from a range of quarters, but they often begin with the view that treaty obligations under international law can limit state sovereignty. This has been the case with Russia and China in employing their right of veto at the UN Security Council in relation to the situation in Syria, amounting to 16 vetos on draft UN Security Council resolutions between 2011 and 2020. The blocks can be seen as the UN being passive in the face of mass human rights violations in Syria while also being resistant to Western pressure about the violations. One of the biggest challenges, therefore, has emerged from ethical debates on human rights and how to respond to violations as an international community.

The universality of human rights is seen as a Western idea that emphasises the rights of the individual above, or ahead of, community rights. As a result, the various international human rights instruments need to be considered through different world views.

Cultural relativism is the view that human rights need to be regarded from the perspective of the culture itself. This means that human rights standards need to be modified to conform with the views and values of local cultural traditions. Therefore, the international human rights system has been challenged by:

> **Cultural relativism** is the principle of viewing the beliefs, values, traditions and practices of a culture from the perspective of the culture itself.

- 'Asian values' proponents
- Islamic communities
- Indigenous peoples' rights.

Before discussing these challenges it is important to consider a couple of the UN's core instruments for international human rights:

- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).

Human rights instruments

Convention on the Rights of the Child

> The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly on 20 November 1989.
>
> **Signatories:** 140
> **Non-signatories that have since signed (s), acceded (a) to, ratified (r):** Cook Islands (1997a), Niue (1995a), the State of Palestine (2014a), and the Holy See (1990 s + r)
> **Parties:** 196 (as at August 2021 – some with stated reservations)
> **Non-state parties:** The United States (the United States is the only UN member that is not a state party).

The Convention of the Rights of the Child has been the most readily and widely ratified international human rights treaty since 1945 and it includes 54 articles in total. The scope of the treaty includes:

- the right of children to survival and development
- the right to quality care and health
- the right to education, freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion

- protection from violence, exploitation and abuse
- protection from armed conflict.

The first article of the convention is below.

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

You can examine the following articles of the convention for the case study on girls' education in this chapter. To what extent do relevant state parties and other global actors uphold the rights provided for here?

Article 28

1. States parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

   a. Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

   b. Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

   c. Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

   d. Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

   e. Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

   a. The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

   b. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

   c. The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

---

    d. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

    e. The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

Source: Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, 20 November 1989, available at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx.

The convention also addresses other areas of concern for the promotion of children's rights and freedoms, including:

- children in detention
- child marriage
- children in armed conflict
- child labour.

Activity 4.1.4 – Research and present

1. Choose an issue relating to children's rights and research a case study of your choice.

2. Present a brief report to your class.

(You will need to look at provisions in the convention that are relevant to the issue you choose. For example, if you choose child marriage as your issue, you would find articles 24, 28 and 34 in the convention most relevant.)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly on 18 December 1979.

Signatories: 99
Parties: 189 (as at August 2021 – some with stated reservations)
Non-state parties: Palau and the United States have signed but not ratified. Iran, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga have not signed or acceded to the convention.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has 30 Articles. The scope of the treaty includes women's:

- rights in political life, representation and rights to nationality
- economic and social rights, including education, employment and health
- rights to equality in marriage and family life
- rights to equality before the law.

The intention of the convention is outlined in the preamble:

... discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity.

Source: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, United Nations, 18 December 1979, available at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx.

You can examine the following articles of the convention for the case study of girls' and women's rights in this chapter. To what extent do relevant state parties and other global actors uphold the rights provided for in the document? For example, Article 5 recognises the role that culture can play in the enjoyment of women's rights and seeks to eliminate 'the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women'. While Article 16 emphasises the equal rights men and women have in marriage, and seeks to reinforce these rights in relation to family, occupation and property.

Article 5

1. States parties shall take all appropriate measures:

   a. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

   b. To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

   ...

Article 16

1 States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and, in particular, shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

   a The same right to enter into marriage;

   b The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

   c The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

   d The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

   e The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

   f The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

   g The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

> h The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.
>
> 2 The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.
>
> Source: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, United Nations, 18 December 1979, available at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx.

For further information, you can find the texts of the treaties at:

www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx.

You will find a wider list of universal human rights instruments at:

www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx.

Activity 4.1.5 – Research and present

1. Choose an issue relating to girls' and women's rights, and research a case study of your choice.

2. Present a brief report to your class.

(You will need to look at provisions in the convention that are relevant to the issue you choose. For example, if you choose the issue of sex outside of marriage, you will need to look at articles 12 and 16 in the convention and consider practices like 'virginity examinations'. Alternatively, if you focus on women's rights in Afghanistan over the past 10 years and whether the Taliban in 2021 is any different from the Taliban that ruled from 1996 to 2001, you will need to look at articles 7, 8 and 10 from the convention.)

Cultural relativist human rights instruments

Different views have impacted how human rights are perceived, particularly in relation to the rights of girls and women. This can be seen by the states which have signed conventions with reservations because of their social and cultural perceptions. It is also evident in responses that global actors have to human rights violations.

The following instruments illustrate interpretations of human rights from a culturally relative perspective:

- the Bangkok Declaration
- the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam
- the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

You will need to consider these instruments alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to get a deeper understanding of the ethical issues and debates involved.

The Bangkok Declaration

The 1993 'Bangkok Declaration' on human rights was adopted on 2 April 1993 by various Asian governments.

Signatories: 40

From 29 March to 2 April 1993, ministers and representatives from Asian states held a regional meeting in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights that was held by the UN. The regional meeting is known the 'Bangkok Declaration' and was held to '[recognise] the contribution that can be made to the World Conference by Asian countries with their diverse and rich cultures and traditions'.

The declaration outlined the aspirations and commitments of the Asian region in its preamble by 'reaffirming the principles of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States'. It also reiterated the view that 'the interdependence and indivisibility of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, and the inherent interrelationship between development, democracy, universal enjoyment of all human rights, and social justice, which must be addressed in an integrated and balanced manner', is paramount to Asian countries.

There are 30 articles in the declaration. The key ideas are below.

Article 4

Discourage any attempt to use human rights as a conditionality for extending development assistance;

Article 5

Emphasize the principles of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and the non-use of human rights as an instrument of political pressure;

Article 6

Reiterate that all countries, large and small, have the right to determine their political systems, control and freely utilize their resources, and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development;

...

Article 11

Emphasize the importance of guaranteeing the human rights and fundamental freedoms of vulnerable groups such as ethnic, national, racial, religious and linguistic minorities, migrant workers, disabled persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and displaced persons;

Source: Bangkok Declaration, 29 March to 2 April 1993, available at faculty.washington.edu/swhiting/pols469/Bangkok_Declaration.doc

The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam

The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam was adopted on 5 August 1990 by the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Signatories: 45 (as at 2012)

The declaration outlines the states' commitment to human rights by emphasising that 'fundamental rights and freedoms according to Islam are an integral part of the Islamic religion and that no one shall have the right as a matter of principle to abolish them either in whole or in part or to violate or ignore them in as much as they are binding divine commands'.

The declaration is set out in 25 Articles, including the articles below.

Article 1

a All human beings form one family whose members are united by their subordination to Allah and descent from Adam. All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations. The true religion is the guarantee for enhancing such dignity along the path to human integrity.

b All human beings are Allah's subjects, and the most loved by Him are those who are most beneficial to His subjects, and no one has superiority over another except on the basis of piety and good deeds.

…

Article 5

a The family is the foundation of society, and marriage is the basis of making a family. Men and women have the right to marriage, and no restrictions stemming from race, colour or nationality shall prevent them from exercising this right.

b The society and the state shall remove all obstacles to marriage and facilitate it, and shall protect the family and safeguard its welfare.

Article 6

a Woman is equal to man in human dignity, and has her own rights to enjoy as well as duties to perform, and has her own civil entity and financial independence, and the right to retain her name and lineage.

b The husband is responsible for the maintenance and welfare of the family.

…

Article 11

a Human beings are born free, and no one has the right to enslave, humiliate, oppress or exploit them, and there can be no subjugation but to Allah the Almighty.

b Colonialism of all types, being one of the most evil forms of enslavement, is totally prohibited. Peoples suffering from colonialism have the full right to freedom and self-determination. It is the duty of all states peoples to support the struggle of colonised peoples for the liquidation of all forms of and occupation, and all states and peoples have the right to preserve their independent identity and exercise control over their wealth and natural resources.

Source: Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 5 August 1990, available at www.bahaistudies.net/neurelitism/library/Cairo_Declaration_on_Human_Rights_ in_Islam.pdf.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007.

Signatories: 144
Non-signatories: 4 against (Canada, Australia, the United States of America and New Zealand) and 11 abstain
Parties: 148 (Canada, Australia, the United States of America and New Zealand reversed their positions and expressed support in 2016)
Absent: 34

The preamble of the declaration affirms 'that Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such'.

There are 46 provisions in the treaty, which emphasise the specific rights of Indigenous people, including the following articles.

Article 2

Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their Indigenous origin or identity.

Article 3

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

...

Article 8

1 Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

2 States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:

   a Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;

   b Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;

   c Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;

   d Any form of forced assimilation or integration;

   e Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them.

...

Article 26

1 Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

2 Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

3 States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the Indigenous peoples concerned.

Source: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations, 13 September 2007 available at: www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/un-declaration-rights-Indigenous-peoples-1.

Activity 4.1.6 – Review questions

1. Compare the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

2. Compare the Bangkok Declaration on human rights with the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.

3. Explain how the different interpretations can be reconciled.

4. Analyse the impact the differing interpretations of human rights has on the international human rights system.

Cosmopolitan and realist responses from global actors

The VCE study design says the key skills in this area are to 'evaluate the effectiveness of responses by global actors to TWO ethical issues' and 'use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

The phrase 'global actors' refers to the various entities that play a role in the global political arena. These entities include:

- states
- intergovernmental organisations (like the UN, International Monetary Fund and International Criminal Court)
- non-state actors (such as non-government organisations and global terrorist movements)
- transnational corporations.

Global actors can have various responses to an ethical issue. A response could be:

- *unilateral* – that is, an action or decision made by one state involved in a situation
- *bilateral* – that is, an action or decision by two states involved in a situation
- *multilateral* – that is, an action or decision by three or more states involved in a situation.

Realist responses, whereby states and global actors prioritise their interests and needs over those of the global community, are often seen in unilateral or bilateral responses to a situation. For example, the US strikes against the Syrian regime in 2017 were in response to the Syria's use of chemical weapons against its own people; this was part of the United States' wider campaign of addressing human rights violations. While China and Russia's use of the veto as part of the UN Security Council is about exerting their interests in Syria at the expense of peace and security and the rights of Syrian citizens.

Cosmopolitan approaches, on the other hand, bring global actors together to cooperate to reach common goals and to overcome challenges presented to them. As such, cosmopolitan approaches are usually associated with multilateral responses to issues of global and ethical concern. Examples related to human rights are the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (a body of 18 independent experts

that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (a body of 23 independent experts that monitors implementation of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, states can also respond to human rights situations unilaterally from a cosmopolitan perspective. For example, in 2017 former US president Trump gave an executive order that blocked the property of persons involved in serious human rights abuse or corruption.

Global actor responses can include:

- financial restrictions
- military intervention
- economic sanctions
- UN Security Council resolutions
- European Union resolutions
- domestic law
- international law
- implementation reports
- monitoring committees
- agreements
- executive orders (such as an order issued by the president of the United States).

The responses global actors take can be for a variety of reasons, including to:

- pursue national interests
- uphold sovereignty
- seek justice
- meet a treaty obligations
- protect territorial integrity
- address human rights violations.

Activity 4.1.7 - Review questions

1. Compare the effectiveness of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral responses to ethical issues. Refer to at least one case study example.

2. Consider the issue of girls' rights to education. Identify whether responses from global actors are realist or cosmopolitan in nature. Explain your stance.

Case study: Pakistan and girls' education

The issue of girls' rights to education was brought to public attention by the attack on Malala Yousafzai in October 2012. Yousafzai was then a 15-year-old Pakistani student activist, who was on a school bus. She was shot by Taliban gunmen because of her advocacy for girls' education in Pakistan, particularly in the Swat Valley where the Taliban had banned girls from attending school. Yousafzai fought to highlight the inequality in access to education for girls in Pakistan.

Gender equality in education as a human rights concern was articulated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was then reinforced in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Pakistan had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 12 March 1996 with reservations, and it had signed to and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 12 November 1990. Despite these obligations under international law, the rights of girls to an education was compromised in Pakistan by the actions of the Taliban and other militant groups.

On 15 October 2012, a few days after Yousafzai was attacked, Gordon Brown, who was a UN special envoy for global education, launched a petition in Yousafzai's name. In support of what Malala fought for, the petition's slogan was 'I am Malala'.

Following the 'I am Malala' campaign, the Pakistan government ratified its initial Right to Education Bill in December 2012. The Act included the adoption of free and compulsory education for all children aged between 5 and 16 years old as a constitutional right. The government also committed to increase its spending on education from 2 to 4 per cent of GDP. In the same month, UNESCO and the government of Pakistan announced the 'Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education'. This fund was extended in February 2014 under the 'Malala Funds-in-Trust for Girls agreement', which was a $7 million fund to support better educational opportunities for girls across Pakistan.

On 12 July 2013 Yousafzai spoke at the UN, leading the first ever UN Youth Takeover. She called for worldwide access to education and the event became known as 'Malala Day'.

Figure 4.1.3 – Girls in School in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Photo: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Girls_in_school_in_Khyber_
Pakhtunkhwa,_Pakistan_(7295675962).jpg

On 10 October 2014 Yousafzai received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her advocacy for girls' education worldwide. However, her campaign to bring attention to the plight of girls' in Pakistan was marred in December 2014 after armed militants attacked the Army Public School in Pakistan's Peshawar city. There were 145 deaths, including children and teachers at the military-run school. Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, the 'Pakistani Taliban', claimed responsibility for the attack.

Yet the international recognition of Yousafzai's work continued and was supported by Pakistan through government reforms. For example, the 'Pakistan Vision 2025' (a blue print created in 2015 for Pakistan's long-term future development) included basic and higher education as one of the nine pillars on its agenda. Similarly, the Pakistan government endorsed the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education in 2015 – that is, to ensure gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2030.

However, according to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, Pakistan's education budget was short USD $565 million to meet the Sustainable Development

Goal 4 target and to provide 12 years of education for all children in Pakistan by 2030. In fact, the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report gender review revealed that the percentage of girls who have never attended school is high in Pakistan. The report showed that 70 per cent of the poorest girls in Pakistan had never attended school compared with 40 per cent of the poorest boys in Pakistan.

In 2017, Human Rights Watch criticised the Pakistan government in a 72-page report (*Dreams turned into nightmares – Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan*) for its inadequate protections for schools, students and teachers, as well as its response to the assault on education in the country.

The Pakistan government's submitted its fifth periodic report to the committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on 9 October 2018. It advised 'special security arrangements have been made to protect schools from terrorist attacks all over Pakistan', including barbed wires on schools' boundary walls and the use of specialised security guards to protect school communities from violations to the Right to Education Act. In 2020, the committee considered Pakistan's report and concluded that a national gender equality policy was needed to avoid the country's uneven application of programs and policies. The committee emphasised the need for a harmonisation of the approaches on the rights of women so responsibility didn't devolve to the provinces.

In the final analysis, greater reforms are necessary in a range of areas to ensure the universal rights of women in Pakistan are achieved.

Sources: aserpakistan.org/document/aser/Pakistan_Fact_Sheet2016.pdf;
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002460/246045e.pdf;
www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/pakistan0317_web_0.pdf; https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/PAK/5&Lang=en; and www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25545&LangID=E

Activity 4.1.8 – Case study questions

1. Watch the documentary *He Named Me Malala* to provide context to Yousafzai's story and her advocacy for girls' education. Discuss the content as a class.

2. Yousafzai received the Nobel Peace Prize on the 10 October 2014. (Read her acceptance speech at https://www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2018/06/yousafzai-lecture_en.pdf).

3. Describe how relevant global actors responded to the issue of girls' education in Pakistan.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the response of one global actor to the issue of girls' education in Pakistan.

5. Using the example above of girls' and women's rights in Pakistan, investigate another case study of your choice. (For example, you could examine the situation for girls and women in Afghanistan under the new Taliban regime, the practice of female genital mutilation, or the use of child soldiers in armed conflict.)

Ethical debates around the issue of human rights

The VCE study design says the key skill in this area is to 'analyse ethical debates surrounding TWO ethical issues, including the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism'. It advises that the ethical debates for human rights are:

- economic challenges to the universality of human rights
- cultural challenges to the universality of human rights
- state sovereignty versus the "Responsibility to Protect".

(*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35.)

Ethical debates can be described as contested perspectives on the ethical issues we face today. They include questions about the rights and responsibilities states have in relation to others in the global arena. Violations of human rights are certainly a significant concern. Many of the debates that arise from the issue demonstrate the difference between the realist school of thought and the cosmopolitan perspective. Below are some common debates on the ethical issue of human rights.

Economic challenges to the universality of human rights

Economic advancement over human rights is at the core of this debate. For instance, the economic interests or realist stance of transnational corporations can conflict with the protection of workers' rights because corporations, by their nature, put profit before people. Apple, Shell, Foxconn and McDonald's are all examples of transnational corporations (TNCs). The advantages of TNCs within a country are that they can create jobs and invest in infrastructure.

However, one of the key disadvantages is that employees may be subject to poor working conditions, low wages or both, impacting on their human rights, such as 'the just and favourable conditions of work' and 'the right to equal pay for equal work' (UDHR, Article 23). A cosmopolitan view would emphasise these disadvantages for employees. For example, a 2019 report by China Labor Watch, a non-profit advocacy group, accused Apple of 'labor violations, including withholding bonus payments, rolling back safety training and employing more temporary workers than China's laws allow' (Albergotti, 2019). By exploiting loopholes in the country's labour laws, Apple is contravening the universal aspirations imbedded in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is placing profits ahead of the rights of humans.

Cultural challenges to the universality of human rights

Culture is made up of, but is not limited to, moral, ethical and religious beliefs, customs and traditions, language, art, knowledge, and the organisation and governance of society.

The universalist or cosmopolitan perspective argues that certain human rights and protections are common or, at least, should be available to all people regardless of culture, race, sex, religion, geographical location or state. It accepts that the UN Charter (1945) and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) enshrine these universal rights, and are extended by two international covenants on human rights: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

Cultural relativists (or what might be seen as the realist perspective), do not argue against human rights but they do argue that human rights are socially constructed, and are shaped by local, cultural and religious contexts. They argue that the international human rights system must avoid promoting the values of a single culture at the expense of others.

A major criticism of the universalist side of the debate is that universality is being used as a form of cultural, economic or political imperialism. Cultural relativist perspectives have been expressed as Asian values in the Bangkok Declaration (1993) on human rights, Islamic values in the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990) and Indigenous rights in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

Cultural relativism has also been criticised for its reinforcement of local, cultural and religious traditions in areas that are gender-based or that otherwise disenfranchise individuals. This can be through marriage, family structures, female genital mutilation, honour killings, sexual assault, male guardianship or sexual orientation. In cultural relativism, collective rights are favoured over the rights of the individual. The core of this ethical debate is which interests should be upheld and at what expense?

State sovereignty versus responsibility to protect

At the 2005 United Nations World Summit, the heads of state and government affirmed their **responsibility to protect** their own populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Implicitly they accepted a collective responsibility to work together to uphold this commitment and to take timely and decisive action under the UN Charter.

The Responsibility to Protect was endorsed at the 2005 World Summit and is a doctrine that is committed to preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

Below are some paragraphs from the summit, which outline the key elements of the responsibility to protect principle.

Paragraphs on the responsibility to protect

138 Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.

139 The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications, bearing in mind the principles of the Charter and international law. We also intend to commit ourselves, as necessary and appropriate, to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out.

140 We fully support the mission of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.

Source: 2005 *World Summit Outcome Document*, United Nations, available at www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml.

The most prominent and only example thus far of the responsibility-to-protect principle leading to direct military action emerged in 2011 when the Libyan government assaulted Benghazi (a city of one million people), which prompted calls for an international multilateral response to the issue. The Arab League, a regional organisation of Arab countries in and around North Africa, asked the UN to intervene to protect Benghazi civilians.

In March 2011, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973 which authorised 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians, including the enforcement of a no-fly zone. NATO bombing of government forces led to the regime's collapse and the end of the war on 23 October 2011.

This intervention by the international community directly challenged the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Libyan government. Yet, the UN Security Council's actions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter authorised these measures to maintain international peace and security in the region, and to uphold the responsibility to protect.

Despite these determinations, the international community has been inconsistent and selective as to when to intervene under the principle of responsibility to protect principle. It has failed to provide a timely and decisive multilateral response to the situation in Syria that emerged following the Assad government's crackdown on the Arab Spring protestors in 2011. As a result, the international community has implicitly committed to Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity rather than its commitments outlined at the 2005 world summit. The responsibility to protect doctrine was also sidelined in response to the civil war in Yemen, and there has been no international consensus to authorise military action in response to the atrocities committed against the Rohingya minority in Myanmar.

For proponents of the responsibility to protect, the principle is ultimately about reminding states to fulfil their obligations to protect their citizens, and the international community's fidelity to this goal.

Analysing ethical debates

When analysing ethical debates, you might want to consider which side of the debate is:

- more defensible (for example, doing the most to protect human rights)
- justified on cultural, ideological, religious, economic, developmental or national interest imperatives
- reliable in ensuring that diverse cultural views are not subsumed by one view due to cultural, religious, political or economic interests
- legitimate in relation to balancing state interests and global concerns.

Activity 4.1.9 – Review questions

1. Evaluate a situation where the principle of the universality of human rights has been challenged by economic interests.

2. Using a case study of cultural challenges to universality, analyse the extent to which cultural relativist conceptions of human rights are justified.

3. Should the responsibility to protect override state sovereignty?

4. Identify the stakeholders for the three human rights debates and case study examples you are investigating. Focus on the viewpoints of each stakeholder by taking into consideration their needs, wants, concerns, rights and responsibilities. Identify their stance on the selected debate, the reasons for this stance and counter-arguments from the other stakeholder(s).

Here are some examples of stakeholders to consider:

- Cultural challenges to the universality of human rights (examples for girls' education in Pakistan)

  - the Pakistani government, the Taliban, the UN, non-governmental organisations (such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Action Aid), neighbouring states (such as Afghanistan and India), the Malala Fund, European Union and the United States.

- Economic challenges to the universality of human rights

  - Governments, workers, displaced people, transnational corporations and non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Action Aid.

- State sovereignty versus responsibility to protect (examples for Libyan intervention)

  - NATO, Libyan government, the United States, the Russian Federation, the UN, the Arab League, citizens of Benghazi, opposition groups, the International Criminal Court, non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Action Aid.

Extension questions

1. Outline two sides to an ethical debate that has arisen from a global issue of human rights.

2. Discuss how this issue can challenge the national interest of a state.

Activity 4.1.10 – Analysing ethical issues

Choose an ethical issue on human rights and complete the template below by bringing together the essential elements on the case study you have selected. (You can use this template to analyse other ethical debates.)

Ethical issue	
Specific issue	
Case example	
International law	
Global actor responses	
Effectiveness of global actor responses, including	
Challenges to global actor responses	
Ethical debates relating to the case example, including realism and cosmopolitanism	

Links to useful media can be found online. UN Human Rights, 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (6:10 minutes): www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, List of Human Rights issues: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/ListofIssues.aspx

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, profiles on Human Rights by country: www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/HumanRightsintheWorld.aspx

UN Human Rights YouTube channel, 'What is a Treaty Body?' (1:22 minutes): www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEOT45t04O0k&feature=related

UN Human Rights YouTube channel, 'The UN Human Rights Treaty Body System' (39:07 minutes): www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPOfB-_XOl8&feature=youtu.be

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, texts of the treaties in PDF format: www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, wide list of Universal Human Rights Instruments: www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx

United Nations Treaty Collection: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/Home.aspx?clang=_en

People movement

What is people movement? What key international laws relate to people movement? How have global actors responded to the issue of people movement? What ethical debates surround the issue?

People movement and migration have played a pivotal role in the development of human society over centuries. Globalisation has accelerated the rate of migration over the past 40 years – the democratisation of travel and improved access to communication have empowered individuals to become true members of the global community. Today, economic **migrants** who seek new opportunities have the means to move across state borders in either temporary or permanent circumstances.

Concurrently, as the global community grapples with other contemporary issues – human rights, development and armed conflict, for example – migration is a natural consequence for displaced populations. People movement is now considered a 'problem' that states, as the key stakeholders within the global political system, cannot afford to ignore.

A number of fundamental moral and ethical issues are raised by the notion of people movement. These issues often bring up highly contested debates regarding the obligations states hold to assist foreigners in comparison to their own national interest, as well as how to best process the resettlement of **refugees** and **asylum seekers**.

> A **migrant** is an individual who moves freely, by choice, from their state of origin to another, which will accept them. This move usually occurs to seek a better life.

> A **refugee** is an individual who is forced to seek protection in another state from their state of origin due to persecution, usually as a result of ethnicity, race, religion, nationality or viewpoints.

> An **asylum seeker** is an individual who is of the same status as a refugee, but is yet to have their claim for asylum processed by the state they wish to enter.

When investigating people movement, it is important to recognise the array of global actors that hold influence and authority in this ethical issue but also how their power is used within the context of global governance.
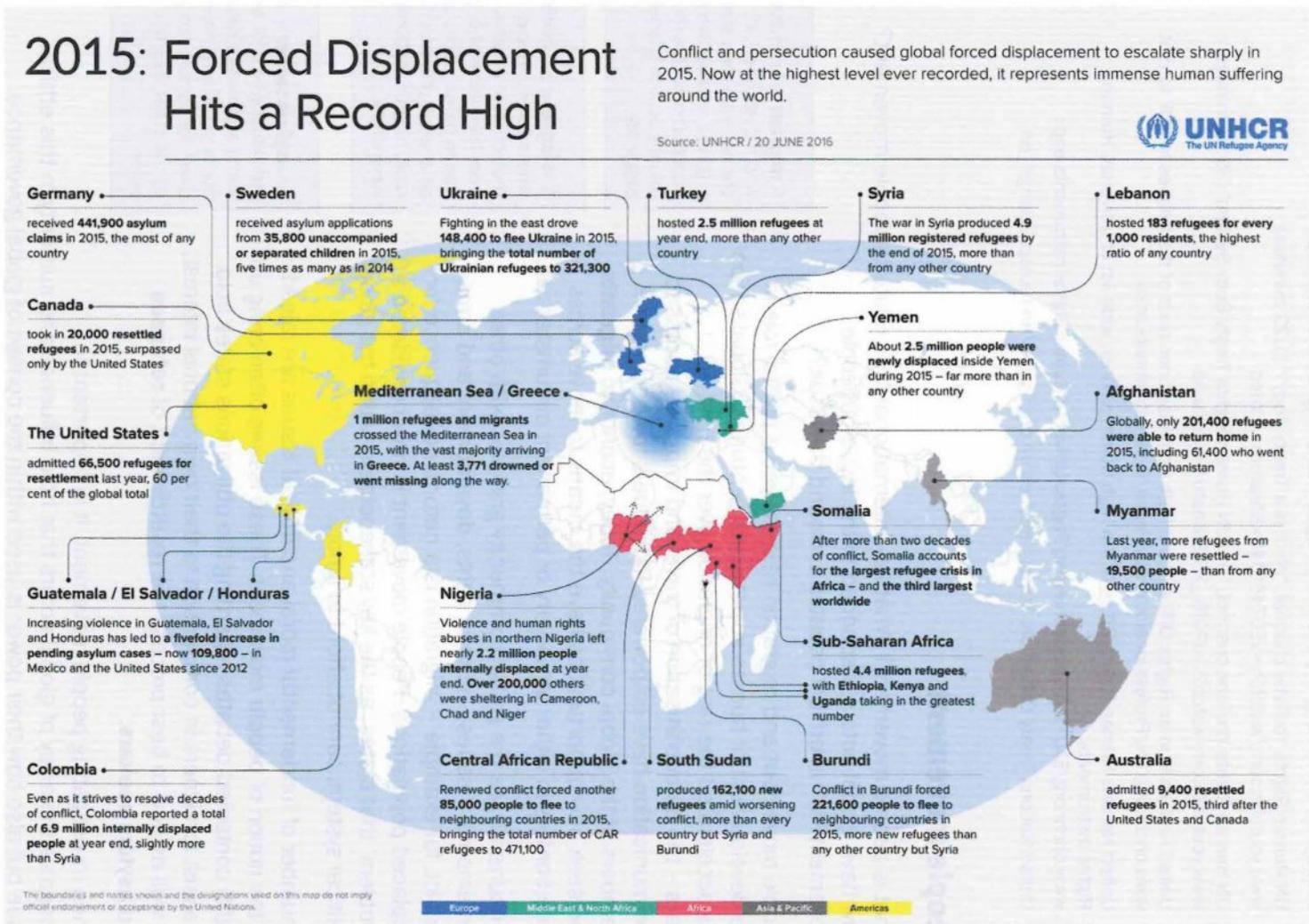
While the frameworks provided by intergovernmental organisations and international laws define the accepted behaviour of states towards those seeking both legal and illegal entry into their territory, the extent to which states follow these parameters is key to understanding the ethical debates which surround people movement.

2015: Forced Displacement Hits a Record High

Conflict and persecution caused global forced displacement to escalate sharply in 2015. Now at the highest level ever recorded, it represents immense human suffering around the world.

Source: UNHCR / 20 JUNE 2016

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Germany

received **441,900 asylum claims** in 2015, the most of any country

Sweden

received asylum applications from **35,800 unaccompanied or separated children** in 2015, five times as many as in 2014

Ukraine

Fighting in the east drove **148,400 to flee Ukraine** in 2015, bringing the **total number of Ukrainian refugees to 321,300**

Turkey

hosted **2.5 million refugees** at year end, more than any other country

Syria

The war in Syria produced **4.9 million registered refugees** by the end of 2015, more than from any other country

Lebanon

hosted **183 refugees for every 1,000 residents**, the highest ratio of any country

Canada

took in **20,000 resettled refugees** in 2015, surpassed only by the United States

Yemen

About **2.5 million people were newly displaced** inside Yemen during 2015 – far more than in any other country

Afghanistan

Globally, only **201,400 refugees were able to return home** in 2015, including 61,400 who went back to Afghanistan

The United States

admitted **66,500 refugees for resettlement** last year, 60 per cent of the global total

Mediterranean Sea / Greece

1 million refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2015, with the vast majority arriving in Greece. At least **3,771 drowned or went missing** along the way.

Somalia

After more than two decades of conflict, Somalia accounts for **the largest refugee crisis in Africa** – and **the third largest worldwide**

Myanmar

Last year, more refugees from Myanmar were resettled – **19,500 people** – than from any other country

Guatemala / El Salvador / Honduras

Increasing violence in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras has led to **a fivefold increase in pending asylum cases** – now **109,800** – in Mexico and the United States since 2012

Nigeria

Violence and human rights abuses in northern Nigeria left nearly **2.2 million people internally displaced** at year end. **Over 200,000** others were sheltering in Cameroon, Chad and Niger

Sub-Saharan Africa

hosted **4.4 million refugees**, with **Ethiopia, Kenya** and **Uganda** taking in the greatest number

Colombia

Even as it strives to resolve decades of conflict, Colombia reported a total of **6.9 million internally displaced people** at year end, slightly more than Syria

Central African Republic

Renewed conflict forced another **85,000 people to flee** to neighbouring countries in 2015, bringing the total number of CAR refugees to 471,100

South Sudan

produced **162,100 new refugees** amid worsening conflict, more than every country but Syria and Burundi

Burundi

Conflict in Burundi forced **221,600 people to flee** to neighbouring countries in 2015, more new refugees than any other country but Syria

Australia

admitted **9,400 resettled refugees** in 2015, third after the United States and Canada

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Europe | Middle East & North Africa | Africa | Asia & Pacific | Americas

Figure 4.1.4 – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – infographic of a decade of displacement

International laws relating to people movement

The VCE study design says: 'International law encompasses a wide range of rules that might be seen to govern the actions of states in international relations such as treaties, declarations, bilateral and multilateral agreements and even decisions made by bodies such as the UN Security Council' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 34).

The key skill in this area, according to the VCE study design, is to 'analyse international law relating to TWO ethical issues' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

The principles and parameters of global conduct surrounding people movement are enshrined in several international laws. The international laws surrounding people movement broadly aim to protect and provide the means for global actors to legally determine and implement the appropriate treatment for **displaced persons**.

A **displaced person** is an individual who is forced to flee their home and move elsewhere. A displaced person can be internally or externally displaced. This is often as a result of natural disaster, famine, conflict or poverty.

The most significant of these international laws are listed below, along with the key articles within these documents. Access to the full-text documents of the international laws used in this chapter can be easily located online.

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 28 July 1951.

Signatories: 145
Non-signatories: 10
Parties: 146

As outlined in the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' 2011 Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status*, the 1951 convention (and subsequent 1967 protocol) contains three types of provisions:

i   Provisions giving the *basic definition* of who is (and who is not) a refugee and who, having been a refugee, has ceased to be one ...

ii   Provisions that define the *legal status* of refugees and their rights and duties in their country of refuge. Although these provisions have no influence on the process of determination of refugee status, the authority entrusted with this process should be aware of them, for its decision may indeed have far-reaching effects for the individual or family concerned

iii Other provisions dealing with the *implementation* of the instruments from the administrative and diplomatic standpoint.

Source: *Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2011.

There are 46 articles in the convention, including the following:

Article 1: Definition of the term 'refugee'

A   For the purposes of the present Convention, the term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who:

...

2   As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

...

Article 3: Non-discrimination

The Contracting States shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin.

Article 4: Religion

The Contracting States shall accord to refugees within their territories treatment at least as favourable as that accorded to their nationals with respect to freedom to practice their religion and freedom as regards the religious education of their children.

...

Article 16: Access to courts

1   A refugee shall have free access to the courts of law on the territory of all Contracting States.

...

Article 33: Prohibition of expulsion or return ('refoulement')

1   No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Source: Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, United Nations, 28 July 1951, available at www.unhcr.org/en-au/3b66c2aa10.

The 1951 Convention outlines a refugee to be one of the following:

- an individual who has a 'well-founded fear of persecution' due to nationality, race, ethnicity, social group, religion or political views (note that this does not include poverty)
- an individual who is outside their own state and fears returning due to this persecution
- an individual who is unable to obtain protection from this persecution in their own state.

States that have ratified the 1951 Convention must:

- provide the means for refugees to have their claims for asylum processed
- provide protection for refugees whose claims are genuine in the face of persecution
- follow the principle of **non-refoulement**
- provide refugees with access to the same rights provided to citizens of the state, including legal representation, education, freedom of religion and movement.

Non-refoulement is the practice of not forcing refugees or asylum seekers to return to a country in which they are liable to be subjected to persecution.

United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime was adopted by the General Assembly on 15 November 2000.

Signatories: 147
Parties: 190 (as of 26 July 2018)

The purpose of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime is outlined in its foreword, which provides useful context in understanding the history and purpose of this international law:

With the signing of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in Palermo, Italy, in December 2000, the international community demonstrated the political will to answer a global challenge with a global response. If crime crosses borders, so must law enforcement. If the rule of law is undermined not only in one country, but in many, then those who defend it cannot limit themselves to purely national means. If the enemies of progress and human rights seek to exploit the openness and opportunities of globalization for their purposes, then we must exploit those very same factors to defend human rights and defeat the forces of crime, corruption and trafficking in human beings.

Source: The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, United Nations, 15 November 2000, p.iii.

There are 41 articles in the convention, some of which are below:

Article 1: Statement of purpose

The purpose of this Convention is to promote cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime more effectively.

Article 2: Use of terms

For the purposes of this Convention:

a. 'Organized criminal group' shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit;

b. 'Serious crime' shall mean conduct constituting an offence punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or a more serious penalty.

...

Article 4: Protection of sovereignty

1 States Parties shall carry out their obligations under this Convention in a manner consistent with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States.

Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking In Human Beings

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is a regional agreement adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 3 May 2005.

Signatories: 48

The Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking In Human Beings focuses on the protection and safeguarding of human rights for victims of trafficking. It takes into account: 'the need to prepare a comprehensive international legal instrument focusing on the human rights of victims of trafficking and setting up a specific monitoring mechanism' (*Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, p.1).

The Council of Europe includes 47 member states, as shown in Figure 4.1.5. For a full list of member states and their positions on the 2005 Convention, visit www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/197/signatures?p_auth=Je5SMiI5.

Figure 4.1.5 – Map of the Council of Europe's member states

Source: edoc.coe.int/en/map-of-the-member-states/5332-map-of-the-council-of-europe-47-member-states.html

There are 47 articles in the conventions. Some are outlined below.

> ### Article 1: Purposes of the Convention
>
> 1 The purposes of this Convention are:
>
> a to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, while guaranteeing gender equality;
>
> b to protect the human rights of the victims of trafficking, design a comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of victims and witnesses, while guaranteeing gender equality, as well as to ensure effective investigation and prosecution;
>
> c to promote international cooperation on action against trafficking in human beings.
>
> ### Article 2: Scope
>
> This Convention shall apply to all forms of trafficking in human beings, whether national or transnational, whether or not connected with organised crime.
>
> ...

Article 7: Border measures

1   Without prejudice to international commitments in relation to the free movement of persons, Parties shall strengthen, to the extent possible, such border controls as may be necessary to prevent and detect trafficking in human beings.

2   Each Party shall adopt legislative or other appropriate measures to prevent, to the extent possible, means of transport operated by commercial carriers from being used in the commission of offences established in accordance with this Convention.

Activity 4.1.11 - Research and compile

Research online to compile introductory information about an international law regarding people movement. Use the suggested template below to organise your work.

International law	
Number of states signed and notable members	
Number of states ratified and notable members	
Key articles	
Reasons why selected states have chosen to not ratify this international law (two or three reasons)	
Major criticisms of this international law by global actors	
Example where a state has upheld this international law and its provisions (include evidence)	
Example where a state has not upheld this international law and its provisions (include evidence)	

Cosmopolitan and realist responses from global actors

The VCE study design says the key skills in this area are to 'evaluate the effectiveness of responses by global actors to TWO ethical issues' and 'use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Established in 1950 in the aftermath of World War 2, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides a multilateral framework to protect and assist refugees across the globe.

In accordance with the broader mandate of the United Nations as an intergovernmental organisation, the UNHCR upholds a cosmopolitan approach to people movement. With nearly 18,000 staff, the UNHCR is one of the UN's largest agencies. It works across 130 countries and in 2021 had a budget of US$9.15 billion. During times of displacement, the agency provides critical emergency care in the form of health, sanitation, clean water and shelter. This can be seen in locations such as the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, where the UNHCR provided camp coordination in 2021 through protection, health, shelter and site planning to almost 80,000 Syrian refugees.

(X) Activity 4.1.12 – Research task

To enhance your understanding of the work of the UN and UNHCR, research the most recent versions of the following online:

- UNHCR global trends and displacement statistics
- UN global trends report.
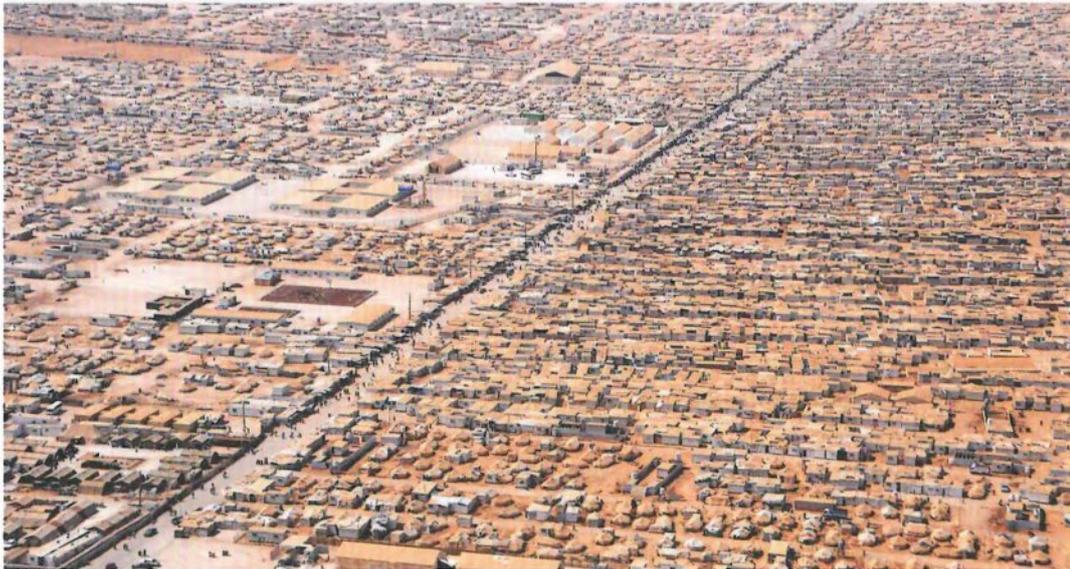
Figure 4.1.6 – Zaatari refugee camp

Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/statephotos/9312291491/sizes/o/in/photostream/

The UNHCR *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons* (2006) emphasises a rights-based approach to people movement and outlines the agency's core principles. The principles emphasise humanitarian action, humanity and the humanitarian imperative, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

As part of its mandate, the UNHCR is engaged in addressing the various protection issues that have resulted from the intersection between international migration and refugee protection. The agency's key tool is the 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration, developed in 2007 to assist states in creating a comprehensive and sensitive strategy to address asylum and migration issues (UNHCR, 2021). It was updated on its ten-year anniversary in 2017. As a **living document**, the plan of action and is available for review via the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.org).

> A **living document** is able to be regularly updated.

Overall, the UNHCR aims to coordinate international, multilateral action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems through:

- providing humanitarian assistance by establishing refugee camps near conflict zones
- processing claims for refugee status on behalf of states
- upholding the principle of non-refoulement, which is prohibiting the forcible return of refugees to a state where they have reasonable fear of persecution
- providing states with advice and guidance on how to implement effective and just refugee law.

Limitations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' response

While the UNHCR has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize twice (in 1954 and 1981) in recognition of its work in protecting the rights of displaced persons, its cosmopolitan approach to people movement has not escaped criticism.

Despite having a broad global reach, the agency has several limitations. The following critical questions have been directed towards this global actor in its response to people movement:

- *Accountability.* When humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR step in to assist states when they cannot adequately provide for displaced persons, who holds such agencies accountable for their level of care, governance and protection?

- *Political problems.* Within the internal structure of the UN, how is the UNHCR limited by the decisions and power of veto-holding states? Within the global political arena, how strong are the UNHCR's 'teeth' – can it force a state to uphold its mandate, even if it is a signatory to key international laws such as the 1951 Refugee Convention?

- *Economic problems.* Is the UNHCR adequately funded to be able to deal with the global issue of people movement in the immediate and long-term future?

Above all, despite bringing together a range of state and non-state actors to address the global refugee crisis, the UNHCR's mandate is limited by the realist actions of states, as we will see further on in this chapter.

Activity 4.1.13 - Article analysis

Read the following Reuters article by Tom Miles and complete the questions: www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-unhcr-insight/as-refugee-crisis-grows-u-n-agency-faces-questions-idUSKCN0RG13E20150916

1. Locate three key pieces of evidence that explain the context of the Syrian refugee crisis.
2. What key criticisms are levied at the UNHCR in regards to their work in dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis?
3. Locate three quotes that give voice to these criticisms.
4. What support is given to the work of the UNHCR in dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis?
5. Locate three quotes that give voice to this support.

Activity 4.1.14 - Research and summary

Using the article from the previous activity, plus your own online research, create a summary table in your notes that details aspects of the UNHCR's response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Use these headings to help you with organising your research:

- 'Factors that have forced the movement of people from Syria'
- 'Key statistics regarding the displacement of people from Syria'
- 'Strategies used by the UNHCR to solve the crisis'
- 'Challenges faced by the UNHCR in solving the crisis'
- 'Quotes from relevant actors associated with the UNHCR'.

Australia

People movement and migration has been a consistent issue in Australian political and social debate since federation in 1901. There has been an array of immigration policies throughout the twentieth century: the White Australia Policy from 1901 to 1973, a 'threat mentality' fear of foreigners, and a transition from assimilation to multiculturalism across a succession of governments. The issue continues into the twenty-first century in a polemical manner.

Above all, Australia has pursued a realist approach to people movement, where the sovereignty of the state, particularly its border security, has been prioritised over assisting displaced people.

While the use of **mandatory detention** in the 1990s was considered an interim measure by the Keating Labor Government, it has become a mainstay of Australian immigration policy since the early 2000s. This need is justified via border protection because asylum seekers are largely considered **illegal immigrants** by the Australian Government.

> **Mandatory detention** is the practice of detaining individuals who are seeking political asylum.

People may apply to migrate to Australia for economic reasons (primarily for employment) and are known as **economic migrants**. Sometimes this term has been used to cast aspersions on the claims for asylum of those who arrive by boat.

> An **illegal immigrant** is an individual who enters and settles in another state without seeking proper permission to do so.

Driven by the decisions of the Howard government, following the Tampa crisis in August 2001 (see the case study box), the mandatory detention of refugees in offshore processing centres has received largely bipartisan support from both major political parties.
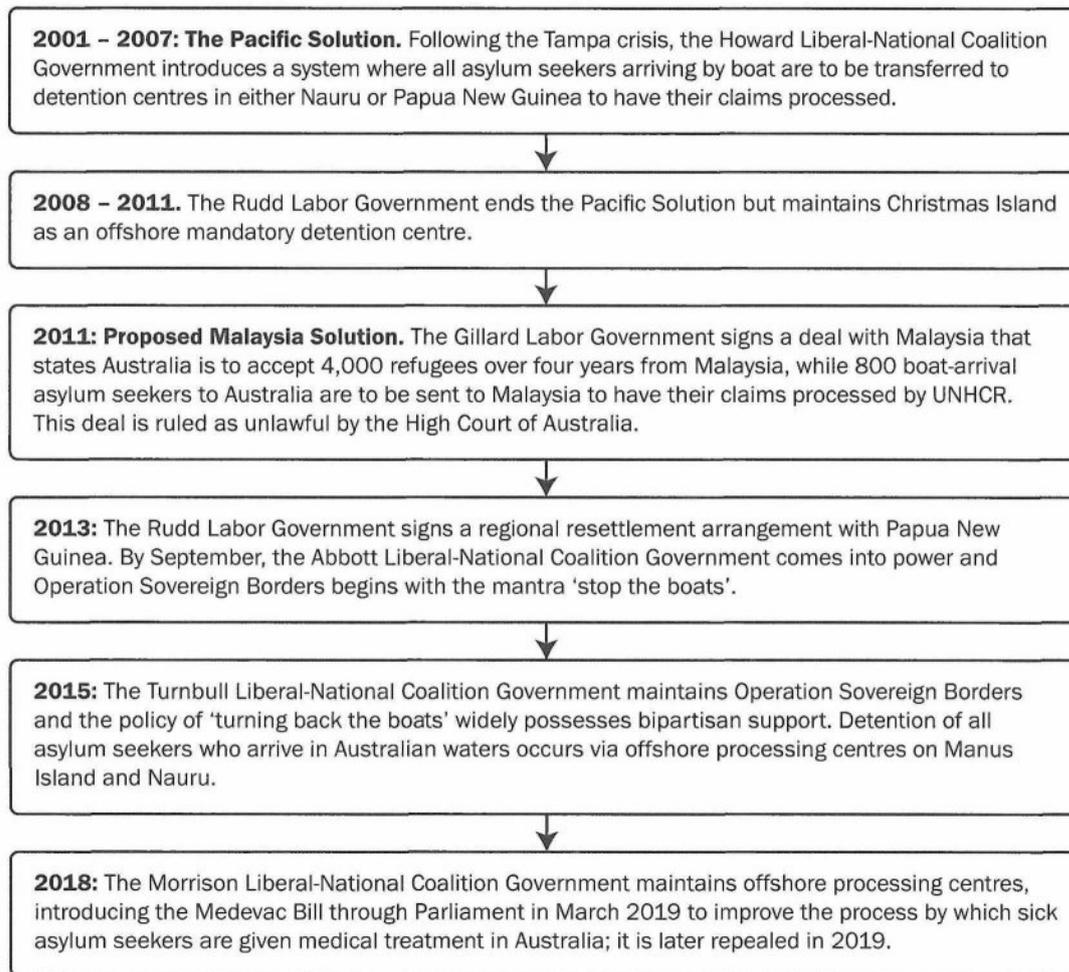
> An **economic migrant** is an individual who applies to enter a state for financial reasons, commonly employment.

However, as Figure 4.1.7 shows, the population of asylum seekers in Australia's offshore detention centres has not decreased over time and the time it takes to process refugees is one of the main criticisms of Australia's treatment of asylum seekers. See Figure 4.1.8 for an Australian immigration policy timeline.

Figure 4.1.7 – Population at detention centres
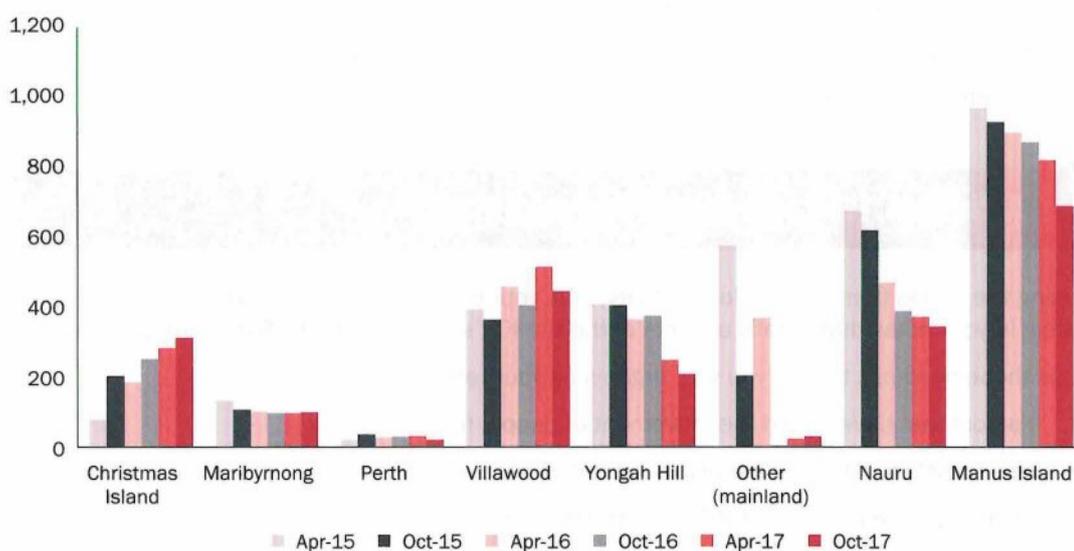
Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Figure 4.1.8 – Australian immigration policy timeline

2001 – 2007: The Pacific Solution. Following the Tampa crisis, the Howard Liberal-National Coalition Government introduces a system where all asylum seekers arriving by boat are to be transferred to detention centres in either Nauru or Papua New Guinea to have their claims processed.

2008 – 2011. The Rudd Labor Government ends the Pacific Solution but maintains Christmas Island as an offshore mandatory detention centre.

2011: Proposed Malaysia Solution. The Gillard Labor Government signs a deal with Malaysia that states Australia is to accept 4,000 refugees over four years from Malaysia, while 800 boat-arrival asylum seekers to Australia are to be sent to Malaysia to have their claims processed by UNHCR. This deal is ruled as unlawful by the High Court of Australia.

2013: The Rudd Labor Government signs a regional resettlement arrangement with Papua New Guinea. By September, the Abbott Liberal-National Coalition Government comes into power and Operation Sovereign Borders begins with the mantra 'stop the boats'.

2015: The Turnbull Liberal-National Coalition Government maintains Operation Sovereign Borders and the policy of 'turning back the boats' widely possesses bipartisan support. Detention of all asylum seekers who arrive in Australian waters occurs via offshore processing centres on Manus Island and Nauru.

2018: The Morrison Liberal-National Coalition Government maintains offshore processing centres, introducing the Medevac Bill through Parliament in March 2019 to improve the process by which sick asylum seekers are given medical treatment in Australia; it is later repealed in 2019.

Case study: Tampa crisis

In the aftermath of the Tampa crisis, the Howard Government passed a series of laws that created a new legislative framework for handling asylum seekers known as the 'Pacific Solution'.

The framework included the excision of many of Australia's offshore islands, including Christmas Island, from Australia's migration zone. This meant that asylum seekers had no automatic right to apply for refugee status if they arrived on these islands.

The Pacific Solution also meant that asylum seekers could be processed offshore in Nauru and Papua New Guinea's Manus Island. The Australian Labor Party, which was in opposition at the time, did not oppose these measures.

The Australian government's handling of the Tampa crisis and implementation of the Pacific Solution attracted international criticism. However, in the six years from 2002, only 23 boats arrived in Australia compared to 43 carrying more than 5,000 asylum seekers in 2001 alone. The government stated that the implementation of its immigration policy was saving lives by discouraging people from setting sail for Australia in unseaworthy boats.

Source: Defining Moments in Australian History, Tampa Affair, National Museum of Australia, 2017, available at: www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/tampa_affair.

Limitations of Australia's response

Australia's prioritises its national security when it comes to people movement. The government justifies its immigration policies by saying lives are saved because people traffickers are discouraged. It also points to the significant reduction of boat arrivals in Australian waters since offshore processing was implemented (see Figure 4.1.9).

Figure 4.1.9 – Offshore processing 2012–2016
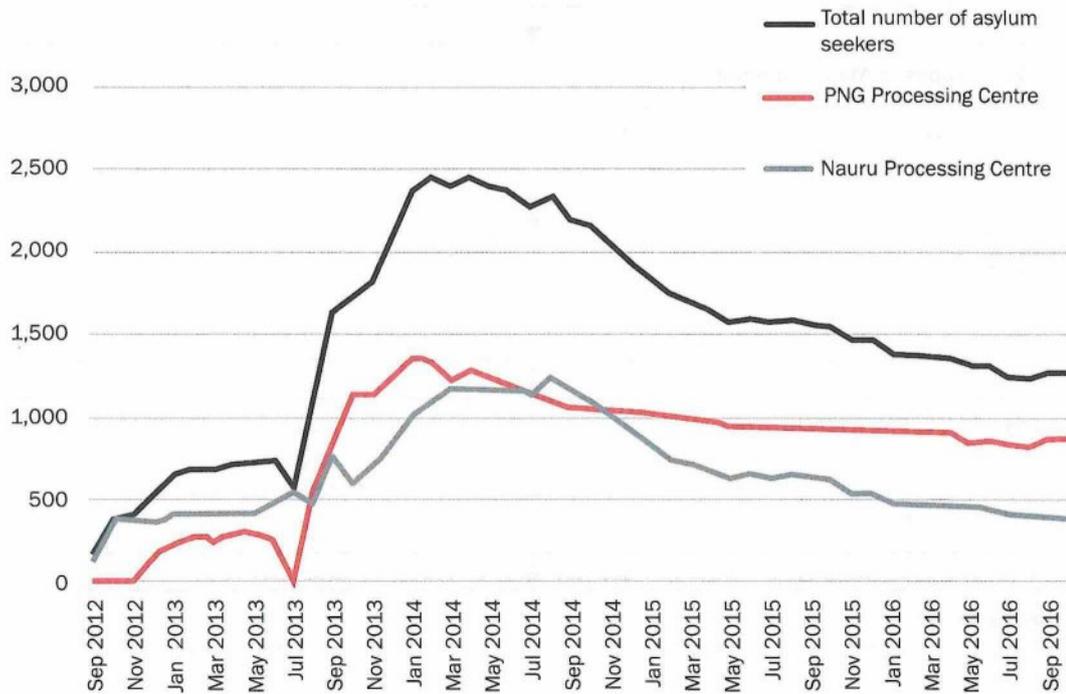
Source: www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/Offshore

However, global actors widely criticise Australia's mandatory detention policy and treatment of those seeking asylum. Criticisms frequently levelled at Australia are often because of the:

- *poor conditions within offshore mandatory processing facilities*. Both Amnesty International and UNICEF have released public reports which outline the human cost of the conditions faced by asylum seekers in mandatory detention.

- *breach of the 1951 refugee convention*. Australia has come under repeated criticism from member states of the UN for shirking its obligations under international law. In 2015, the United States called upon Australia at the 2015 UN Human Rights Council review to 'enter humane treatment and respect for the human rights of asylum seekers, including those processed offshore'. Further, in 2018, the UNHCR condemned the state, saying 'concerted action, founded upon a clear humanitarian imperative, is needed to prevent further deaths and harm to innocent men, women and children'.

- *breach of the principle of non-refoulement*. By denying the right of refugees to seek asylum, Australia is explicitly violating the principle of non-refoulment (Article 33) outlined in the 1951 refugee convention.

Case study: *No Friend But the Mountains*

Behrouz Boochani is a Kurdish-Iranian writer, journalist, scholar, cultural advocate and filmmaker. He wrote *No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* via WhatsApp while inside a detention centre on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island.

Boochani was held in the Australian-run detention centre from 2013 until its closure in 2017. He remained on the island until the end of 2019 in alternative accommodation. The New Zealand Government granted Mr Boochani refugee status in 2020, and he now lives there.

Since its publication, Boochani's book has won many awards, including the 2019 Victorian Prize for Literature.

You can find out more about his case by searching for him on www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au or looking for 'Behrouz Boochani: Detained Refugee Wins Top Australian Prize' on YouTube.

Activity 4.1.15 – Identify and review

1. Work together in a small group to identify and review the criticisms of Australia's approach to people movement. To help you get started, search for the following resources:

    *   'Human Rights Watch condemns Australian detention policy' at www.refugeecouncil.org.au

    *   'United Nations human rights commissioner criticises Australia's asylum-seeker policies' at www.abc.net.au

    *   'Australia refuses to sign UN migration pact, citing risks to turnbacks and detention' at www.theguardian.com.

2. After your research, outline the criticisms of Australia's approach to asylum seekers and refugees. For each criticism, include a quote and identify who said it. To help you develop an evidence bank, complete the table template below.

Criticism	Evidence
Members of the international community have criticised Australia's policies for unfairly targeting specific groups, which has allowed racist attitudes to flourish.	Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated in 2019 that Australia's immigration policies 'has become weaponised by misinformation and discriminatory – and even racist – attitudes, including with respect to Islam'.

Activity 4.1.16 – Writing task

Using the three criticisms often levelled at Australia outlined previously and your own online research, write three paragraphs that discuss the criticisms levied at Australia by global actors in regard to its treatment of asylum seekers. Your paragraphs need to include explicit evidence (that is, quotes, facts and statistics) as well as some type of analysis (to demonstrate your higher level of interrogation of the evidence you have collected).

European Union

As a regional grouping, the European Union's (EU) response to people movement can be viewed from both a cosmopolitan and realist viewpoint. While member states agree to uphold the provisions established by the EU in regard to people movement, they ultimately still possess their own self-determination in decision-making. The aim of the EU's asylum policy is to:

harmonise asylum procedures in the member states by establishing common asylum arrangements, with a view to offering appropriate status to any third-country national requiring international protection and ensuring compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.

Source: European Parliament, 2017.

Such policy is grounded in the following two key agreements:

3. *The Dublin Regulation.* Established in 1990 and reviewed in 2003 and 2013, the Dublin Regulation requires any individual who is seeking asylum to register in the first European state that they enter. This prevents individuals from making multiple claims across states. The state in which they first register must take responsibility for processing their claim.

4. *The Schengen Agreement.* Effective since 1995, the Schengen Agreement allows asylum seekers to cross the borders of member states freely, without a passport, once their claim has been processed.

Limitations of the European Union response

The EU migrant crisis, caused by the Syrian civil war, reached its peak in 2015–2016. The crisis has demonstrated the limitations the regional grouping has when trying to resolve largescale people movement.

Table 4.2: Germany's and Hungary's responses to the migrant crisis

Germany	Hungary
In 2015 Germany, under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel, accepted nearly 1.1 million refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The refugees were being forcefully rejected by other EU member states.	In 2015 Hungary responded to the 170,000 refugees entering the EU via Serbia into Hungary by building a 175km-long razor wire fence between the two states. This was to control what it referred to as 'illegal immigrants'.
The Chancellor declared 'Wir schaffen das' ('We'll manage this') after visiting a camp for newly arrived refugees.	President Viktor Orban stated at the time that 'European Christian heritage is under threat because most of migrants are Muslim'. This demonstrates a prioritisation of cultural values above the fulfilment of EU protocols surrounding people movement.
Merkel's controversial open-door, cosmopolitan approach, which suspended the Dublin Regulation, was based on ethics and the 'right' thing to do. She said the state had to fulfil its 'international humanitarian duty'.	
This response was not without domestic political repercussions, but since 2015 the state has expanded its asylum authority within the EU. Germany now has the fifth highest population of refugees in the world.	In 2016, only 9 per cent of the over 2.5 million refugees who entered the EU were assisted by Hungary. By comparison, 91 per cent of refugees were processed by Germany.

Thousands of people seeking asylum in boats have drowned at sea because they attempted to cross the Mediterranean. Those who did manage to cross landed in Italy but there is no coordinated EU policy on border protection. This means that member

states that are on the geographical fringes of the regional grouping – such as Italy, Greece and Spain – face the influx of individuals seeking asylum, and with this, a myriad of political, economic and social issues.

Therefore, one of the greatest limitations of the EU's response to people movement is in the way its member states approach the ethical issue and whether they maintain the regional grouping's cosmopolitan agenda over the temptation to prioritise their national interests. Germany and Hungary's responses to the migrant crisis demonstrate this (see Table 4.2).

Activity 4.1.17 – Research and respond

Using online research, create a summary table that details aspects of the EU's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. The following headings will assist you in organising your research:

- 'Outline of response by the EU to the crisis'
- 'Key statistics regarding the displacement of people from Syria to Europe'
- 'Strategies used by the EU and its member states to solve the crisis'
- 'Challenges faced by the EU and its member states in solving the crisis'
- 'Quotes from relevant actors associated with the EU and its member states'.

Activity 4.1.18 – Summary table

For the global actors you review in this section, create a table using a shared digital document which includes the headings listed below. It may help to complete this with a few other people so you can compile a comprehensive revision document. Headings to use:

- 'Actor'
- 'Outline of response'
- 'Brief timeline of actions' (at least three points)
- 'Evaluation of the effectiveness of their response'
- 'Criticisms of their response'
- 'Perspective of greatest influence (realism or cosmopolitanism) and why this is the case'
- 'Applicable international laws which they follow or contravene in their response and why the actor responds in this way'.

Ethical debates around the issue of people movement

The VCE study design says the key skill in this is to 'analyse ethical debates surrounding TWO ethical issues, including the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism'. It advises that the ethical debates for people movement are:

- 'obligations to asylum seekers and other refugees versus national interests including border security
- the rights of refugees versus economic migrants
- differing approaches regarding refugee resettlement'.

(*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

Ever since human beings gathered into social groups they have been confronted by the issue of how to treat outsiders. Numerous ethical debates surround the issue of people movement as communities draw significant moral distinctions between insiders and outsiders (Shapcott, 2011).

Therefore, we need to consider two questions when it comes to people movement:

1. Is it just or ethical to make a distinction between insiders and outsiders?

2. If we make a distinction, what just treatment are these groups subject to by global actors?

Many of the responses by global actors discussed in the previous section intersect with the ethical debates that surround people movement. Apply your knowledge of these responses to the ethical debates outlined below to get a holistic understanding of what these debates involve and the ways that they can be complemented by contemporary case studies and examples.

Obligations to asylum seekers and other refugees versus national interests including border security

At the crux of this argument is the cosmopolitan notion that states with the capacity to support those less fortunate have the moral responsibility to do so. This responsibility is greater than any argument pertaining to the national interest including border security, which realists would prioritise instead.

In Australia, cosmopolitan thinkers argue that it is in Australia's national interest to accept asylum seekers. The employment of these individuals in areas where there is a shortage of workers, for example, would be in the national interest – socially and economically. We would also be fulfilling our role as a good international citizen.

Consider the following questions when thinking about Australia's obligation to asylum seekers:

- Is it Australia's role, as a wealthy nation, to accept asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds?

- Is the emphasis on the national interest (particularly on border security) significant when considering the treatment of asylum seekers?

Despite these questions being posed, and argued over, Australia's obligation to asylum seekers remains a political and social issue. The Australian Government promotes a realist position where the state, as the supreme power in global politics, has no common morality or obligation to other states.

Activity 4.1.19 - Discussion points

1. Does Australia prioritise border protection or obligations to refugees higher on its agenda? Analyse the reasons for your response.

2. Is there any evidence that refugees who arrive by boat pose a greater security threat to the state than those who arrive by other means?

3. Can immigration policies proposed by governments be justified by the need for national security?

4. To what extent does Australia have an obligation to protect refugees (including, and beyond, the requirements of the 1951 Refugee Convention which it has signed and ratified)?

5. Is the use of mandatory detention a deterrent for refugees? Discuss the ethical concerns with this policy. Is it cosmopolitan or realist?

6. Discuss Australia's border protection policies from 2012. Are they cosmopolitan or realist in nature?

Activity 4.1.20 - Research task

Complete some online research to compile quotes from current and previous prime ministers of Australia (within the last 10 years) for their views on this ethical debate while they were in office.

The rights of refugees versus economic migrants

The rights afforded to refugees are clearly established within international law and the key articles listed earlier in this chapter. While the work of the UN particularly focuses upon the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and those who have been the victim of **people trafficking**, these rights need to be considered alongside the rights of economic migrants.

> **People trafficking** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people for the purposes of exploitation, financial gain or both.

The realist perspective to this debate argues that economic migrants should only be allowed entry to a state based on their skills and what the state needs. The economic migrants would need to take formal pathways to obtain entry and they should gain entry to a state before refugees (who may even possess the same skills).

Conversely, the cosmopolitan perspective argues that both refugees and economic migrants have an equal right to be accepted into a state, regardless of their status.

Differing approaches regarding refugee resettlement

The debate on people movement is not only concerned with the responses global actors take but also with whether the responses to resettlement can be judged as ethical or just within the global political arena.

While global actors are bound to the principles established by intergovernmental organisations and international law, the extent to which these parameters are upheld and the ways that they are interpreted remains fluid.

The realist perspective to this debate argues that refugees threaten a state's sovereignty and security, and so the refugees should not be resettled. The cosmopolitan perspective, on the other hand, argues that states have an international humanitarian duty to fulfill by allowing the resettlement of refugees in their territory.

Activity 4.1.21 - Discussion points

Discuss the following points by using Australia and Hungary as examples of states who possess a realist approach, and Germany and the EU as examples of global actors that employ cosmopolitan viewpoints.

1. What are three different approaches to refugee settlement?

2. What restrictions are put in place on refugees while living in their new country? How long are they in place? Are these realist or cosmopolitan measures?

3. What legal processes are asylum seekers submitted to in order to prove they are refugees? Áre these measure cosmopolitan or realist?

4. Is there a consensus in how all states in a regional grouping behave? If not, why not?

Activity 4.1.22 – Practice tasks and bringing it all together

Practice tasks

1. Outline two sides to an ethical debate that has arisen in relation to the global ethical issue of people movement.

2. Using a different ethical debate than the one in the first question, discuss the ways that an issue can challenge the national interest of a state.

Bringing it all together

1. Define the term 'ethics' as it relates to the study of Global Politics.

2. Identify one debate associated with the ethical issue of people movement.

3. Describe one international law related to the ethical issue of people movement. Use the following two points to guide your answer:

   • introduce your chosen international law

   • describe the contents of this international law and the ways in which it relates to people movement.

4. Explain the response of one global actor to the issue of people movement in the twenty-first century, using the following points to guide your answer:

   • introduce two global actors

   • discuss the response of the first actor and include evidence to back up your answer

   • discuss the response of the second actor and include evidence to back up your answer.

5. Discuss the responses of two global actors to the ethical issue of people movement.

6. Evaluate the response of one global actor to one ethical debate related to the ethical issue of people movement.

Development

What is development? What key international laws relate to development? How have global actors responded to the issue of development? Which theoretical concepts or perspectives inform an understanding of the issue of development? What ethical debates surround the issue of development?

The twenty-first century has seen global inequality continue to grow. There is an increase in the economic and social gap between the richest and poorest states, as well as within their populations. Global development has flourished since the 1980s because of the worldwide proliferation of a neoliberal economic order (also known as the **Washington Consensus**), and the growth in size and reach of intergovernmental organisations (Thomas and Evans, 2011).

However, while developed countries have reaped the greatest benefits from the advent of globalisation, developing countries have felt its impacts acutely. The promised benefits of free market policies have failed to reach the states and world citizens that need it the most.

Essentially, development aims to eradicate inequality. However, the challenges are enormous. In 2020, the World Bank's Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report estimated that:

Washington Consensus refers to a set of neoliberal ideals supported by prominent economists and intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which advocate for economic reform through trade liberalisation, floating of exchange rates and deregulation.

- between 110 million and 150 million people could fall back into extreme poverty in 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

- between 2015 and 2018, extreme poverty rates nearly doubled in the Middle East and North Africa between 2015 and 2018 because of the conflicts in Syria and Yemen

- up to 132 million people may fall into poverty by 2030 due to the manifold effects of climate change.

Consequently, development as an ethical issue is more pronounced than ever.

The magnitude of these challenges continues to be recognised by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (2015 to 2030), which is the successor to the UN's Millennium Development Goals (2000 to 2015).

The impact of advanced development

According to Nagle (2005), the following factors show if a state has advanced development:

- improved demographic (population) conditions, such as falling birth rates and increasing life expectancy

- economic progress, such as increased **gross domestic product (GDP), gross national income (GNI)** and **purchasing power parity (PPP)**

- social improvement, such as gender equality, better race relations and greater participation in the political process.

Measures like GDP, GNI and PPP per capita are the most commonly reported statistics used to assess the development of a state. The **Human Development Index (HDI)** is also a summary measure of various dimensions of development.

> **Gross domestic product (GDP)** is a measure of a state's economy, assessed through the total value of all goods and services produced in the state.

> **Purchasing power parity (PPP)** is a method of comparison for the value of currency between states.

> **Human Development Index (HDI)** is a measure of a state's development, assessed through criteria such as: life expectancy, literacy levels and income of the population.

Activity 4.1.23 - Research task

Visit the United Nations Development Programme online (http://hdr.undp.org) and investigate the HDI rankings.

1. Which states are in the top 10?

2. Which states are in the bottom 10?

Development is an ethical issue that directly challenges the state and its sovereignty, regardless of the level of development a state has. This is because the premise of the global political system is built on the obligation of states to look after and provide for their own citizens and citizens outside their borders. In this way, states meet their global obligations to uphold a universal set of principles.

In linking this concept to poverty, Arvanitakis and Hornsby (2015) maintain that globalisation raises questions regarding the obligations the wealthy owe to the poor and vulnerable, and a set of ideals around global justice which consider what states owe each other in the process of global cooperation. They argue that those with the

power and ability to assist have a moral and ethical obligation to try to solve poverty. This is underpinned by the idea that it is logical that developed states have an obligation to help poor states because they can do so with minimal effort.

The differing strategies for the alleviation of poverty by states also leads to a consideration of the economic interests of a state and the ways these intertwine with economic development across the globe. Can the moral obligation to help poor states, or to provide aid on humanitarian grounds, ever be separated from the self-interest of the state? Is a more developed world more peaceful? Can development ever truly be sustainable when it must adapt to a variety of economic, social, cultural and political circumstances across the globe?

International laws relating to development

The VCE study design says: 'International law encompasses a wide range of rules that might be seen to govern the actions of states in international relations such as treaties, declarations, bilateral and multilateral agreements and even decisions made by bodies such as the UN Security Council' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 34).

The key skill in this area, according to the VCE study design is to analyse international law relating to TWO ethical issues' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

The principles and parameters for global conduct surrounding development are enshrined in a number of international laws. These international laws broadly aim to define the principles for alleviating inequality and the mechanisms by which global actors may do so.

Many international laws regarding development originate out of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD originated from the 1960 Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The most significant of international laws relating to development are listed below, along with their key articles. Access to the full-text documents of the international laws used in this chapter can be easily located online.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 December 1966.

Signatories: 71
Non-signatories: 20
Parties: 171
Non-state parties: 4

There are 31 articles in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Some of the key articles are below.

Article 1

1 All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

2 All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

3 The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

…

Article 11

1 The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

2 The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

a To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

b Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

…

Article 12

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

…

Article 13

1 The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Source: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, United Nations, 16 December 1966, available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly on 18 December 1979.

Signatories: 99
Parties: 189 (as at August 2021 – some with stated reservations)
Non-state parties: Palau and the United States have signed but not ratified. Iran, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga have not signed or acceded to the convention.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was discussed on pages 155 in relation to human rights. Some of the key articles in relation to the issue of development are outlined below.

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term 'discrimination against women' shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

…

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure a basis of equality of men and women …

Article 14

1 States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

Source: *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, United Nations, 18 December 1979, available at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly on 20 November 1989.

Signatories: 140
Non-signatories that have since signed (s), acceded (a) to, ratified (r): Cook Islands (1997a), Niue (1995a), the State of Palestine (2014a), and the Holy See (1990 s + r)
Parties: 196 (as at August 2021 – some with stated reservations)
Non-state parties: The United States (the United States is the only UN member that is not a state party).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was discussed on pages 153 in relation to human rights. Some of the key articles in relation to the issue of development are outlined below. They have been taken from a simplified version of the convention available from the UN.

Article 27

Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 32

Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education.

Source: Children's Rights, Simplified, United Nations, available at www.unicef.org.au/our-work/information-for-children/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child.

Activity 4.1.24 –

Research online to compile introductory information an international law regarding development. Use the suggested template below to organise your work.

International law	
Number of states signed and notable members	
Number of states ratified and notable members	
Key articles (list three)	
Reasons why selected states have chosen to not ratify this international law (two or three reasons)	
Major criticisms of this international law by global actors	
Example where a state has upheld this international law and its provisions (include evidence)	
Example where a state has not upheld this international law and its provisions (include evidence)	

Cosmopolitan and realist responses from global actors

> The VCE study design says the key skills in this are to 'evaluate the effectiveness of responses by global actors to TWO ethical issues' and 'use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

Global actors have a variety of responses to the issue of development. Within this section you will find that the global actors discussed predominantly take a cosmopolitan approach to the issue. For realist perspectives read the ethical debates associated with development.

The United Nations

Development remains core to the purpose and mandate of the UN. This is explicitly outlined in Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations:

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

a higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;

b solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation.

Source: Charter of the United Nations, United Nations, 26 June 1945, available from legal.un.org/repertory/art55.shtml.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) drives policy formation and decision-making, with the aim to guide, support, track and oversee the coordination of development work in more than 160 states. The major strategic priorities of the UNDP is to support states in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring that international standards of human rights obligations are met throughout the process (United Nations Development Group, 2016).

The UNDP has been praised for promoting an ambitious global agenda, which emphasises ending poverty and reducing the inequalities that exist across and within states.

While the SDGs are not an international law, they are key to understanding the concepts surrounding development. The goals for are available for review at www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals and a broad overview is shown in Figure 4.1.10.

Figure 4.1.10 – United Nations Development Program's Sustainable Development Goals

Source: sdgs.un.org/goals

Limitations of the United Nations' response

The UNDP focused on human rights after it established its 2015 development agenda. This is because many non-governmental organisations, like Amnesty International, publicly denounced the UN for its failure to pursue a rights-based approach to development.

As the world's predominant cosmopolitan intergovernmental organisation, UNDP has received criticisms to its response to development, including:

- *challenges to the sustainability of benefits*. While the UNDP enables states to achieve goals relating to improved development, the likelihood of such benefits continuing after the UNDP program is completed are not always positive. The program enables the environment for development through influencing a state's planning, economic growth and programming, but these do not always carry into the long term.

- *doubts the program for Sustainable Development Goals is making sufficient progress*. We are over halfway through the 2030 timeline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but the eradication of severe poverty remains slow and a continued barrier for the UNDP to face. The goals have also been criticised for promoting and ignoring underlying inequalities that exist across different regions; for example, some goals may be achieved sustainably in some states, but that might be at the detriment of others.

- *concerns there is a one-size-fits-all approach*. Much like the criticisms levied at the UN in other areas of its work and mandate, the Sustainable Development Goals are limited in their success by a universal approach that does not take into account local contexts. This can undermine the achievement of sustainable development.
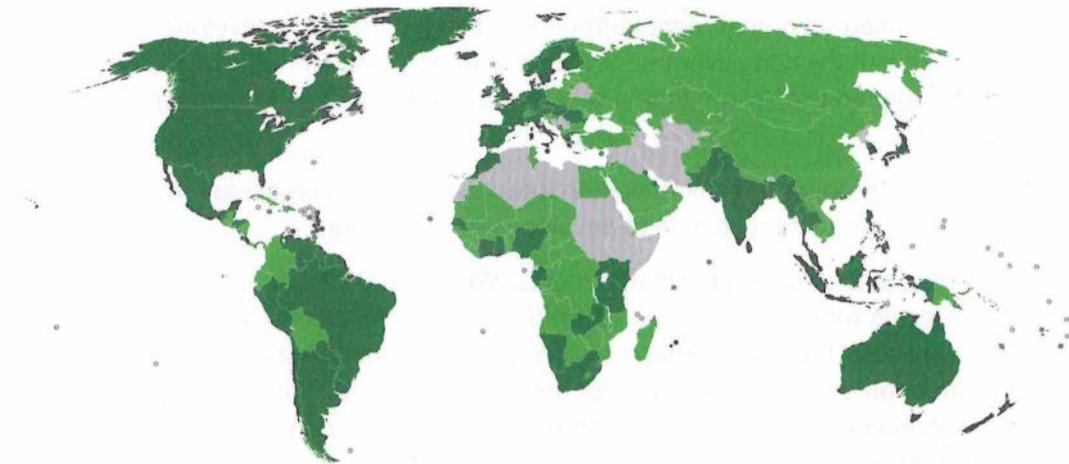
Activity 4.1.25 – Research and respond

1. Research the work of the UNDP in a specific state (see https://undg.org/crisis-post-crisis/country-stories to get started).

2. Investigate the UNDP's work by using the following questions to guide your research:

   - What were the aims of the UN Development Group in working with the state?

   - How did the UN Development Group work collaboratively with the state?

   - What were the key outcomes of the UN Development Group's work in this state?

The World Trade Organisation

Through its ongoing Doha round of trade talks (continuing from 2001 and known as the 'Doha Development Agenda'), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has promoted the development of poor states through reducing poverty and stimulating growth by trade.

All WTO agreements contain provisions to ensure that reasonable and sustainable levels of development can be achieved in states (World Trade Organisation, 2017). This is because more than three-quarters of the intergovernmental organisation's 157 member states are considered to be either developing or least-developed.

Figure 4.1.11 – World Trade Organisation member states

Source: World Trade Organisation, WTO accessions map, available at www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/acc_map_e.htm.

Limitations of the World Trade Organisation's response

The WTO has been criticised for the slow progress of the Doha round of trade talks and its over-reliance on trade as a mechanism to achieve developmental progress. Whether the interests of developing states are served well within the WTO is also a matter of ongoing debate.

This links with the Washington Consensus model of development where states are encouraged to liberalise trade policies with them aim of improving rates of global development. However, this approach has not been shown to deliver the anticipated equality of social and political development across states.

Oxfam America's Director of Policy and Research, Gawain Kripke, stated in 2012 that:

First, trade isn't – and never was – a silver bullet. Trade offers important advantages, and when it works well, it reduces costs, improves consumer options, and assists in managing risks. But over-reliance on trade – either as importers or exporters – has real economic risks.

Source: Gawain Kripke, Finding some focus: Trade and food security,6 June 2012, available at politicsofpoverty.oxfamamerica.org/finding-some-focus-trade-and-food-security

Activity 4.1.26 – WTO summary task

Create a summary that identifies and explains what the WTO can do towards the issue of development (look on the WTO's website for '10 things the WTO can do'). Summarise your findings in three dot points.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supports the UNDP's mandate for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In doing so, it gives policy assistance to developed and developing states by monitoring strategies and systems to measure performance (OECD, 2017). It outlines seven areas that are vital in the process :

1   Working with all stakeholders for better policies
2   Promoting investment in sustainable development
3   Supporting inclusive growth and wellbeing
4   Ensuring the planet's sustainability
5   Leveraging the power of partnerships
6   Strengthening data availability and capacity
7   Facilitating follow up and review.

Source: OECD, 'The Sustainable Development Goals: An Overview of Relevant OECD Analysis, Tools and Approaches', 2016, available at https://www.oecd.org/dac/The%20Sustainable %20Development%20Goals%20An%20overview%20of%20relevant%20OECD%20analysis.pdf

In 2020, the OECD acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic poses a challenge to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in developing states, as the unprecedented health and economic crisis aggravates existing challenges to development. The OECD has stated that the international response to such a crisis should mobilise an unprecedented number of resources to prevent loss of life and bolster a sustainable recovery.

Limitations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's response

The OECD's approach to development complements the trickle-down model, which maintains that benefits will be passed on to all citizens if overall improved economic growth is achieved. This approach has been criticised for failing to take into account the increasing disparity that exists between the rich and the poor, not only within states but among states.

Much like the UN, the OECD is criticised for in its one-size-fits-all approach to sustainable development. Having one approach is a predominantly Western perspective of economic development, which fails to take into account different localised contexts.

Activity 4.1.27 - Research relevant quotes

Complete some online research to locate quotes from global actors. Use quotes from within the last ten years that criticise the OECD and WTO's approaches to development. To get started, visit:

money.cnn.com/2015/06/15/news/economy/trickle-down-theory-wrong-imf/index.html

www.thebrokeronline.eu/washington-consensus-and-trickle-down/

Ethical debates around the issue of development

The VCE study design says the key skill in this area is to 'analyse ethical debates surrounding TWO ethical issues, including the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism'. It advises that the ethical debates for development are:

- 'differing strategies for poverty alleviation
- overseas development assistance versus self-interest of the state
- economic growth versus sustainable development.'

(*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35.)

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Apply your knowledge of the responses to the ethical debates listed below in order to obtain a holistic understanding of what these debates involve and how they can be complemented by contemporary case studies and examples.

Differing strategies for poverty alleviation

This debate is concerned with the responses taken by global actors in regard to development and whether these responses can be judged as ethical or just within the global political arena. While global actors are bound to the cosmopolitan principles outlined by intergovernmental organisations and international law, the extent to which these parameters are upheld and how they are interpreted remains fluid. In particular, the emphasis on whether the global actor's primary focus is poverty alleviation and not general economic growth is a source of contention.

In his book, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002), former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz provides a number of examples that highlight how the free-market, neoliberal economic agenda, driven by intergovernmental organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, has relied on the flawed belief that economic growth and increases in overall state wealth will eventually trickle down to all segments of society (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2015).

Following the global financial crisis of 2008, Stiglitz argues that this major event demonstrates a clear weakness in the trickle-down model. This event that began in one state quickly reverberated across the interconnected global economy and, ultimately, hindered existing efforts to reduce poverty at the time (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2015).

The strategies offered by intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations in regard to poverty alleviation largely take a cosmopolitan approach. For realist viewpoints towards poverty alleviation, greater detail can be found through discussion of the following ethical debate.
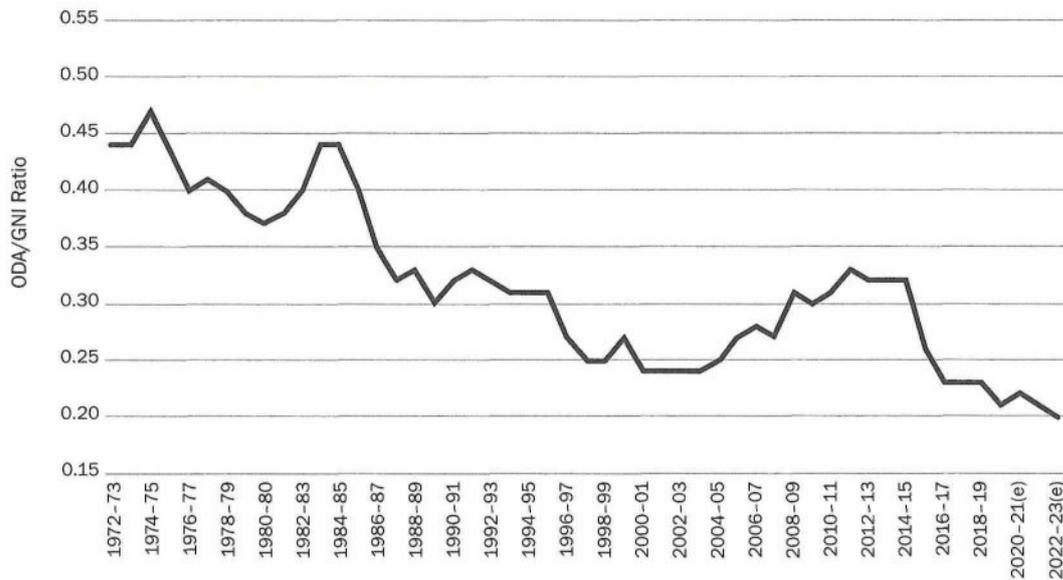
Overseas development assistance versus self-interest of the state

At the crux of this argument is the cosmopolitan proposition that states with the capacity to support the development of less fortunate states have the moral responsibility to do so, and that this responsibility is greater than any realist argument pertaining to the national interest.

Arvanitakis and Hornsby (2015) maintain that states must assist in the alleviation of poverty not just because they have the means to do so but because they are often implicated in the creation of the conditions for poverty in the first place. This is affirmed by Thomas Pogge (2008) who argues that poverty exists due to the existing global order – spurred by models such as the Washington Consensus and the trickle-down theory – which continues to disadvantage the poor and reinforces the ongoing cycle of poverty. This signifies a global problem that requires a global solution. Developed states, as the majority influence-holders in multilateral organisations, have a moral responsibility to address this global issue (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2015).
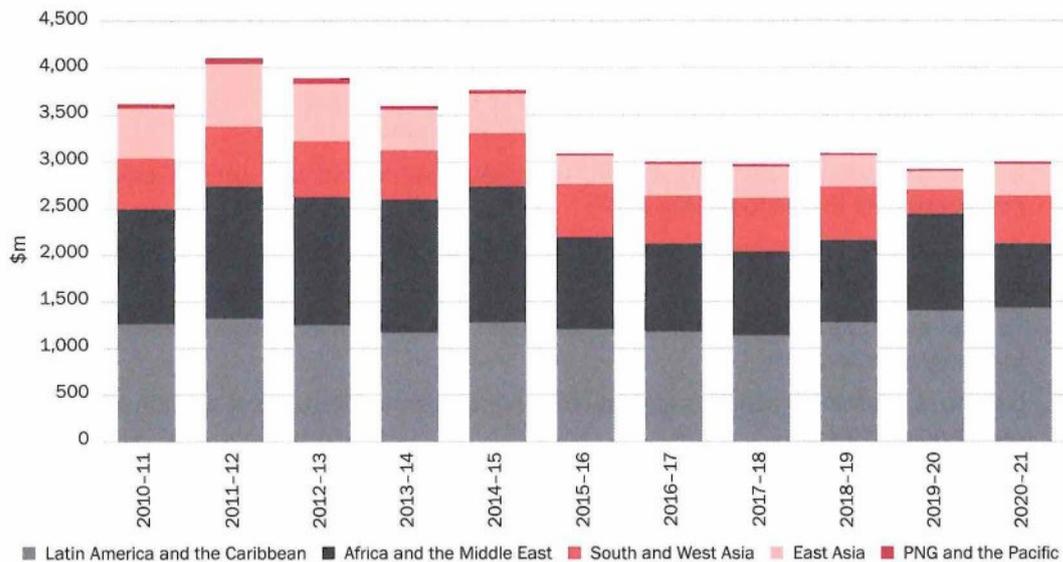
Since 1970, the UN has maintained a 0.7 per cent gross national product target for global foreign aid spending. That is, wealthy member states commit to contributing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product annually to be managed and distributed by the UN in order to achieve its development goals – decreasing poverty and inequality across the globe. States, including Australia, repeatedly fail to meet this global benchmark, as is shown in Figures 4.1.12 and 4.1.13.

Figure 4.1.12 – Australia's official development assistance to gross national income ratio, 1972–73 to 2020–21

Figure 4.1.13 – Australian bilateral aid flows by region, 2010–11 to 2020–21

Latin America and the Caribbean ▪ Africa and the Middle East ▪ South and West Asia ▪ East Asia ▪ PNG and the Pacific

The ethical issue that arises with states providing aid directly to the development programs of other states is that they often do so with their own national interests in mind. By bypassing the processes of the UN, states are able to place conditions on the provision of development aid, which creates the following questions:

- Are developing states subject to the whims of developed states in regard to aid?

- Does the provision of aid, which often involves long-term loans with interest payable, continue the cycle of disadvantage and poverty in the developing state?

- Can the donor state contribute to undemocratic or corrupt decision-making within the state they wish to assist?

- How sustainable are the practices involved when states provide development aid directly to other states?

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Australia has exhibited a realist approach towards development, emphasising the importance of the self-interest of the state over the provision of overseas development assistance. This can be seen through the Australian Government's repeated failings to provide the UN-mandated 0.7 per cent of gross national product for global aid spending over the past 50 years.

For the past decade, Australia's aid spending has sat between 0.2 and 0.3 per cent of gross national product. According to OECD data, Sweden donates 1.4 per cent of its gross national product to aid, which is approximately six times more than Australia.

Following the release of the 2016 Federal Budget, which detailed further cuts to Australia's foreign aid spending, Oxfam budget spokesperson, Joy Kyriacou, stated that the non-government organisation had 'already had to scale back life-saving work in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Sub- Saharan Africa, due to unprecedented aid cuts' (*The Guardian*, 2016).

Australia's response to this ethical debate highlights the Australian Government's prioritisation of realism over respecting and fulfilling their international obligations and humanitarian assistance to those who need it most.

Activity 4.1.28 - Discussion points

1. Do states have more important or more pressing aspects of the national interest to consider than providing overseas development assistance?

2. Is there any evidence that not providing overseas development assistance hinders the achievement of the national interest?

3. To what extent does Australia have an obligation to meet the aid contribution levels outlined by the UN?

4. To what extent could Australia's failure to meet UN benchmarks be viewed as unethical? Explain your response.

5. How does Australia's current approach towards overseas development aid constitute a realist point of view?

Activity 4.1.29 - States and aid

Using online research, create a summary table which details aspects of the self-interested approaches made by Australia when providing overseas development assistance. These headings will assist you in organising your research:

- 'Factors that have influenced the state to provide overseas development assistance and the ways that this relates to the national interest'

- 'Key statistics regarding the overseas development assistance contributed by the state'

- 'Evidence of contribution of overseas development assistance by the state and whether it is realist or cosmopolitan in its approach'

- 'Criticisms and challenges faced by the state in providing this overseas development assistance'

- 'Quotes from relevant individuals associated with the state and its actions'.

Economic growth versus sustainable development

Since the end of World War 2, states have come together to find ways to reduce poverty through economic growth. However, the extent to which these efforts have been successful is debatable. As we have seen throughout this chapter, global actors have attempted to address the challenges of development and inequality in a number of ways: through official development aid, trade and investment, money lending, and through their commitment to the goals of the UN (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2015).

The ethical debate about economic growth versus sustainable development considers whether economic growth, as a key tool in promoting development, is beneficial and, ultimately, sustainable into the future. Consideration needs to be given to whether the current mechanisms used to assist economic growth – such as the mining of natural resources like coal – are sustainable and equitable in the short and long term. Another consideration is whether models such as the Washington Consensus and the trickle-down theory are justifiable.

Supporters of economic growth take a realist position, as they are focused on the national interest of economic prosperity within their state without consideration of global ramifications. Many middle income states, including India, take this stance on the basis that the environmental damage caused by developed states should not be a barrier to their own development through industrialisation. This realist viewpoint is further justified by the sequential nature of development and that economic growth is required to assist investment in more sustainable measures later.

Conversely, the cosmopolitan perspective supports sustainable development as driven by the UN and Sustainable Development Goals. This perspective is justified via consideration for the long term and irreversible impact of environmental damage on living standards should development occur too quickly. The cosmopolitan perspective believes that sustainable development needs to be viewed holistically and realistically. Indicators outside of economic growth – such as education, gender equality, standard of government, the environment and healthcare – all need to be considered as vital aspects in the development process.

Activity 4.1.30 - Practice tasks and bringing it all together

Practice tasks

1. Outline two sides to one ethical debate that has arisen in relation to the global ethical issue of development.

2. Using a different ethical debate than the one you chose above, discuss how this issue can challenge the national interest of a state.

Bringing it all together

1. Define the term 'ethics' as it relates to the study of Global Politics.

2. Identify one debate associated with the ethical issue of development.

3. Describe one international law related to the ethical issue of development.

4. Explain the response of one global actor to the issue of development in the twenty-first century.

5. Discuss the responses of two global actors to the ethical issue of development.

6. Evaluate the response of one global actor to one ethical debate related to the ethical issue of development.

Arms control

What is arms control? What key international laws relate to arms control? How have global actors responded to the ethical issue of arms control? Which theoretical concepts inform an understanding of the ethical issue of arms control? What debates surround the ethical issue of arms control? What are the differing approaches regarding non-state **proliferation**? How can international security concerns be reconciled with state security interests? How important is arms control compared to disarmament in advancing peace and security?

> **Proliferation** is the rapid increase in the spread of weapons (nuclear, chemical or conventional).

Arms control and ethics

The ethical issue of **arms control** as a feature of the global arena was seen most prominently during the Cold War period (1945 to 1991). The rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was driven by the view that the more weapons you had, both conventional and nuclear, the more powerful you were. The build-up of their weapons stockpiles involved not just an increase in the quantity of their weapons but also in the quality or capacity of their weapons.

> **Arms control** refers to the restrictions upon the development, production, stockpiling, proliferation and usage of weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction, for the purposes of containing conflict and ensuring global security.

At their peak in 1986, the United States and the Soviet Union had 63,476 out of the world's total nuclear weapons at 64,449 – with the United States stockpiling 23,317 and the Soviet Union stockpiling 40,159.

Out of the top six states with the most weapons at this time, France and the United Kingdom followed with 355 and 350 each. By 2014, the total number of nuclear weapons globally had dropped to 10,145. The United States was highest with a total of 4,700 weapons, followed by Russia with 4,300, France with 300 and the United Kingdom with 225. The other nuclear weapons states at this time were China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea (Roser and Nagdy, 2017).

The **hegemonic** rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War period provided the impetus for the arms race but, by the 1960s, also the need for an international arms control treaty system.

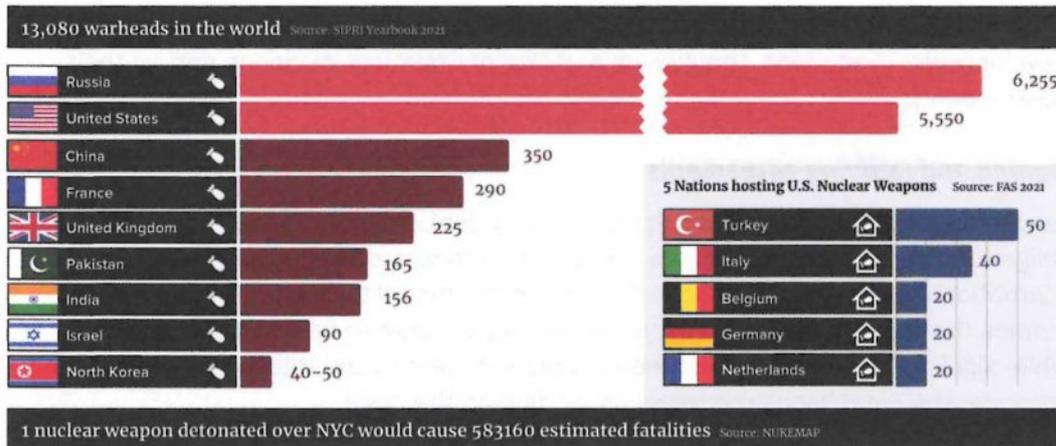> **Hegemony** is the strongest or most powerful among states.

The reduction in Cold War nuclear weapons continued in the post-Cold War period in conjunction with initiatives to move towards the elimination of other types of weapons such as biological, chemical, small arms and conventional weapons.

The international attention around North Korea's nuclear weapons program since 2003 and the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons against its own people since 2012 are prominent examples of the ethical issue of arms control in relation to weapons of mass destruction. Yet, conventional weapons are equally concerning and the regulation of international trade in conventional weapons or completion of landmine clearance needs to be accomplished.

In 2019 the United Nations of Disarmament Affairs reported global military expenditure of US $1.9 trillion, the highest it has been since the Cold War. With this level of access to weapons, the magnitude of the issue remains evident and the need for continued focus on ensuring how best to protect people from harm is as significant as ever before. (See Figure 4.1.14 for information on the world's nuclear-armed states.)

To understand arms control as an issue of ethical concern, it is important to consider the developments in the arms control treaty system and global actor responses in the twenty-first century.

Figure 4.1.14 – The world's nuclear-armed states possess a combined total of over 13,000 nuclear warheads in the world

13,080 warheads in the world Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2021

Country	Warheads
Russia	6,255
United States	5,550
China	350
France	290
United Kingdom	225
Pakistan	165
India	156
Israel	90
North Korea	40–50

5 Nations hosting U.S. Nuclear Weapons Source: FAS 2021

Country	Weapons
Turkey	50
Italy	40
Belgium	20
Germany	20
Netherlands	20

1 nuclear weapon detonated over NYC would cause 583160 estimated fatalities Source: NUKEMAP

Source: https://www.icanw.org/nuclear_arsenals.

Activity 4.1.31 - Concept learning

Create a chart with four subheadings as shown in the model below to help build your understanding of key terms related to Global Politics.

The model is intended to help you select and organise information relating to the key concepts you are learning as a visual reference.

Draw up a copy of the model organiser (as seen below) in your notes for each of the following terms: arms control, ethics, justice, realism, international law.

Concept	
Essential characteristics	Other characteristics
Examples	Non-examples

International laws relating to arms control

The VCE study design says: 'International law encompasses a wide range of rules that might be seen to govern the actions of states in international relations such as treaties, declarations, bilateral and multilateral agreements and even decisions made by bodies such as the UN Security Council' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 34).

The key skill in this area, according to the VCE study design is to 'analyse international law relating to TWO ethical issues' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

International laws relating to arms control consist of the treaties, declarations, conventions and agreements adopted following the two atomic bombs that were dropped on Japan in 1945.

International law on arms control establishes the obligations that states have unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally negotiated to limit the proliferation of weapons that states might use to pursue their security interests.

Cold War arms control treaties, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, sought to bring about reductions in the numbers of nuclear weapons. A range of other agreements reached since 1990 have extended to non-nuclear weapons, including the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993 (officially the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction').

Signing and ratifying agreements

As with the international human rights treaty system, states undertake their obligations under international law through the process of signing and ratifying international arms agreements. States sign international treaties, then pass the treaties through domestic processes to formally consent to be bound by the treaty. While signing a treaty does not mean a state is bound by the treaty, ratifying it into domestic law establishes the treaty as binding on the state.

* Australia's commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty

Australia has implemented its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty through its commitment to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond the five so-called 'nuclear-weapon states' (Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and China). To this end, it has been an active proponent of sanctions against North Korea in response to its nuclear program.

While the majority of member states have signed and ratified the various arms agreements of the UN, there are also many states that have not signed, not ratified, or signed but later withdrawn from significant arms control instruments. For example, North Korea withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003 to 'enhance its security and dignity' as a state, according to a government spokesperson (*The Guardian*, 2003). (See the case study on page 209 later in this chapter.)

The Syrian government also received international attention in 2013 for its chemical weapons attacks on civilians in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta. Syria was one of five nations that did not sign the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993. However, the United States and Russia pressured the Assad Government to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that oversees the convention in 2013, as well as to give up its stockpile of weapons.

A joint OPCW-UN mission was established on 16 October 2013, under recommendations from the OPCW's Executive Council and UN Security Council, to oversee the elimination of the Syrian government's chemical weapons program (OPCW, 2022). The OPCW reported that they had removed 92 per cent of the Syrian government's stockpile by 24 April 2014, by which time 18 shipments of chemical weapons had left the country (Arms Control Association, 2021). However, despite the declared stockpile, allegations that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against the Syrian population have persisted. (See the case study on page 213 later in this chapter.)

The effectiveness of international arms control

The extent to which the international arms control treaty system is effective can be assessed against a range of measures. These include the number of parties to a treaty, the implementation of treaty obligations, compliance with treaty obligations and enforcement measures in place.

With regards to the Non-Proliferation Treaty:

- The treaty is implemented and verified through the International Atomic Energy Agency.

- Implementation is further undertaken through the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, which commits states to the eventual goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

- Non-compliance can be referred to the UN Security Council by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

- Compliance measures pursued by the UN Security Council can include resolutions that impose UN Charter Chapter VII military and financial sanctions on non-compliant states.

- Enforcement measures can be undertaken through the authorisation of the use of force against states that violate NPT provisions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to 'maintain or restore international peace and security' (Council on Foreign Relations, 2014).

With regards to the **Chemical Weapons Convention**:

- The convention is implemented and verified through the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

- Compliance can be ensured through a mechanism of inspections.

- Compliance can be pursued in specific cases by referral to the UN Security Council.

- Compliance measures pursued by the UN Security Council can include resolutions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to respond to states that contravene their obligations under Article 1 of the convention, including situations in which states have used chemical weapons (OPCW, 2017).

> The **Chemical Weapons Convention** is a multilateral arms control convention that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time. The Convention has 24 Articles and 3 Annexes.

The compliance of member states (under UN Charter Chapter VII in relation to weapons proliferation by non-state actors) has been implemented by the 1540 Committee (2004). This has the capacity to impose binding obligations on states to establish controls to prevent non-state actors from 'developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems' (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2017).

* 1540 Committee (2004)

The 1540 Committee is a subsidiary body of the UN Security Council and is composed of the 15 current members of the council. The mandate and scope of activities are derived from UN Security Council Resolution 1540:

In resolution 1540 the Security Council decided that all States shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes. The resolution requires all States to adopt and enforce appropriate laws to this effect as well as other effective measures to prevent the proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery to non-state actors, in particular for terrorist purposes.

Source: UN Security Council 1540, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Resolution 1540 available from www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/sc1540.

✱ Core international arms-control instruments of the United Nations

PTBT   Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963)

NPT   Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1 July 1968)

BWC   Biological Weapons Convention (10 April 1972)

CWC   Chemical Weapons Convention (13 January 1993)

CTBT   Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (24 September 1996)

MBT   Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Treaty) (3 December 1997)

CCM   Convention on Cluster Munitions (OsloTreaty) (3 December 2008)

ATT   Arms Trade Treaty (3 June 2013)

Core treaty provisions

The Non-Proliferation Treaty

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (formally the 'Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons') was opened for signature in 1968

Parties: 191 (as of November 2021)
Non-state parties: India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and South Sudan

The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty has 11 articles in total. The scope of the treaty includes stopping the spread of nuclear weapons by promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The preamble says:

> ... the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples [required a commitment to] the prevention of wider dissemination of nuclear weapons,
>
> ...
>
> [and thereby would seek] to facilitate the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery pursuant to a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.
>
> Source: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, United Nations, 1968, available at www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text.

The key provisions in the treaty are shown below.

Article I

Each nuclear weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; and not in any way to

assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices.

Article II

Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Article III

1   Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes to accept safeguards, as set forth in an agreement to be negotiated and concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency ...

...

Article IV

1   Nothing in this treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles 1 and 2 of this Treaty.

2   All the Parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Parties to the Treaty in a position to do so shall also co-operate in contributing alone or together with other States or international organizations to the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world.

...

Article VI

Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

...

Article IX

...

3 ... For the purposes of this Treaty, a nuclear-weapon State is one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967.

...

Article X

1   Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. ...

Source: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, United Nations, 1968, available at www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text.

Activity 4.1.32 – Review questions

1. Consider the selected key provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and answer the questions below.

   a. Give reasons for the significance of articles 1 and 2, which establish the obligations of nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear-weapons states.

   b. The five nuclear weapon states officially recognised by the Non-Proliferation Treaty are Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and China. Yet, Article 9 determines that a nuclear weapon state is one that has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967. Explain how the treaty's legitimisation of these states' nuclear weapons as against non- Non-Proliferation Treaty nuclear weapons states impacts the arms control treaty regime.

2. Consider Figure 4.1.14 above and answer the questions below.

   a. Compare the number of nuclear warheads held by the United States and Russia and explain what their possession of these weapons suggests about their power.

   b. The non-nuclear weapons states (Israel, Pakistan, India and North Korea) possess over 400 warheads between them. Explain what their possession of these weapons suggests about their power.

   c. Analyse the implications of non-nuclear weapons states' possession of nuclear weapons for the international community.

   d. Analyse the significance of nations hosting US nuclear weapons. Explain what these arrangements indicate about the hosting nations and what it says about US power.

The Chemical Weapons Convention

The Chemical Weapons Convention (formally 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction') is a multilateral arms control convention that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time. It came into force on 29 April 1997.

Parties: 193 (as of November 2021)
Non-state parties: Israel (has signed but not ratified the convention), Egypt, North Korea and South Sudan (have neither signed nor ratified the convention)

The convention has 24 Articles and 3 Annexes. In outlines the following in its preamble:

... to act with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

Source: Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, United Nations, 29 April 1997, available from: www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/CWC/CWC_en.pdf.

The key provisions in the treaty are below.

Article I: General obligations
1 Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never under any circumstances:

   a To develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons to anyone;

   b To use chemical weapons;

c   To engage in any military preparations to use chemical weapons;

d   To assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention.

2   Each state party undertakes to destroy chemical weapons it owns or possesses, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control, in accordance with the provisions of this convention.

3   Each state party undertakes to destroy all chemical weapons it abandoned on the territory of another state party, in accordance with the provisions of this convention.

4   Each state party undertakes to destroy any chemical weapons production facilities it owns or possesses, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control, in accordance with the provisions of this convention.

5   Each state party undertakes not to use riot control agents as a method of warfare.

Article 2: Definitions and criteria

For the purposes of this convention:

1   'Chemical weapons' means the following, together or separately:

a   Toxic chemicals and their precursors, except where intended for purposes not prohibited under this convention, as long as the types and quantities are consistent with such purposes;

b   Munitions and devices, specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals specified in subparagraph (a), which would be released as a result of the employment of such munitions and devices;

c   Any equipment specifically designed for use directly in connection with the employment of munitions and devices specified in subparagraph (b).

...

Article 3: Declarations

1   Each state party shall submit to the organisation, not later than 30 days after this convention enters into force for it, the following declarations, in which it shall:

a   With respect to chemical weapons:

i   Declare whether it owns or possesses any chemical weapons, or whether there are any chemical weapons located in any place under its jurisdiction or control;

ii   Specify the precise location, aggregate quantity and detailed inventory of chemical weapons it owns or possesses, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control, in accordance with Part IV (A), paragraphs 1 to 3, of the Verification Annex, except for those chemical weapons referred to in sub-subparagraph (iii);

iii   Report any chemical weapons on its territory that are owned and possessed by another state and located in any place under the jurisdiction or control of another State, in accordance with Part IV (A), paragraph 4, of the Verification Annex;

iv   Declare whether it has transferred or received, directly or indirectly, any chemical weapons since 1 January 1946 and specify the transfer or receipt of such weapons, in accordance with Part IV (A), paragraph 5, of the Verification Annex;

v   Provide its general plan for destruction of chemical weapons that it owns or possesses, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control, in accordance with Part IV (A), paragraph 6, of the Verification Annex:

Source: www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/download-the-cwc.

Figure 4.1.15 – Use of chemical weapons and international constraints on chemical weapons

Use of chemical weapons
(estimated fatalities)

*To 6th April 2017
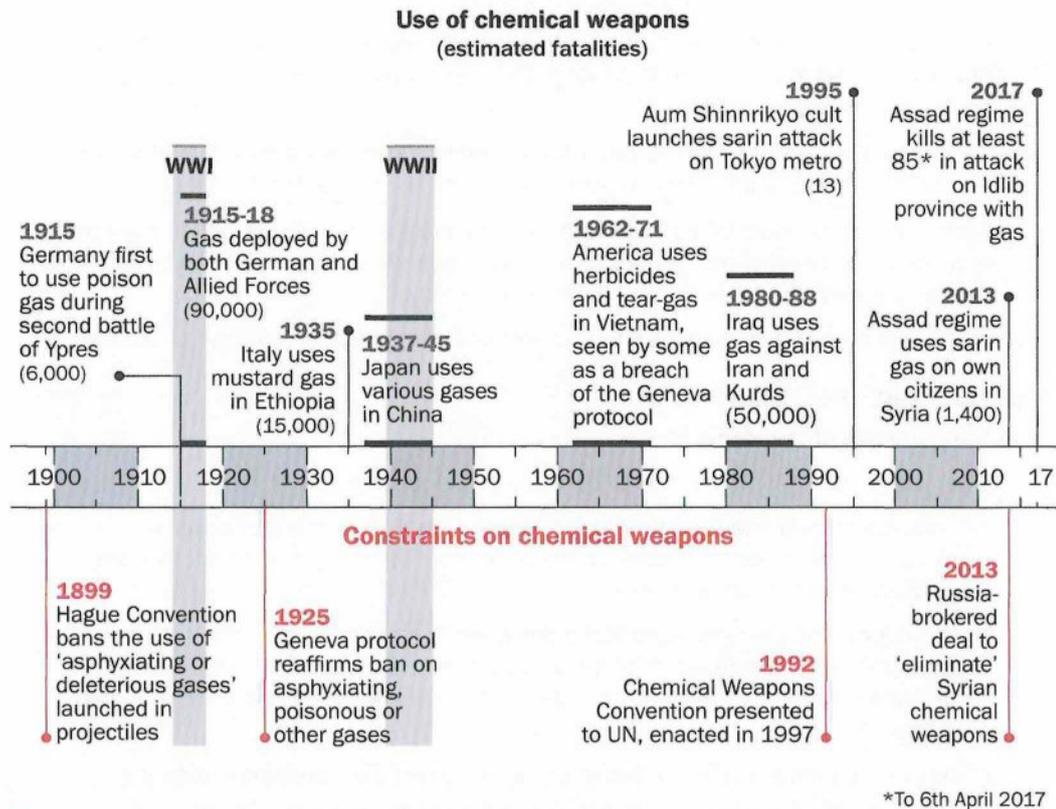
Source: Adapted from www.economist.com/news/21720252-dictator-defies-world-bashar-al-assad-kills-least-72-chemical.

Activity 4.1.33 – Review questions

Consider the selected key provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention to answer the following questions.

1. Outline the obligations states have in relation to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

2. Analyse the impact of the Chemical Weapons Convention on arms control as an ethical issue.

Cosmopolitan and realist responses from global actors

The VCE study design says the key skills in this area are to 'evaluate the effectiveness of responses by global actors to TWO ethical issues' and 'use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments' (*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35).

The term 'global actors' refers to the various entities that play a role in the global political arena. These entities include:

- states
- intergovernmental organisations such as the UN, the International Monetary Fund and the International Criminal Court

- non-state actors such as non-government organisations and global terrorist movements

- transnational corporations.

Global actor responses in relation to arms control have involved states acting unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally. Bilateral agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union had the most prominent impact on the issue of arms control during the Cold War – although a range of multilateral agreements to limit the proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons followed.

The recognition that arms control is still important in the twenty-first century has given rise to a range of global actor responses including military intervention – for example, unilateral US airstrikes on a Syrian government airbase in April 2017 – and through UN Security Council economic sanctions against North Korea in June 2017.

The responses to both Syria and North Korea are designed to compel the respective governments to meet their arms control treaty obligations in the interests of international security.

However, the effectiveness of global responses has been moderated by individual states. For example, between 2011 and 2020 Russia and China have both vetoed or separately vetoed 16 proposed resolutions in relation to the situation in Syria that impact the Syrian government's sovereignty or have the potential to bring about a regime change.

When considering the case studies below reflect on whether the global actor responses have been realist (prioritising their specific interests) or cosmopolitan (cooperating to reach common goals) in nature.

## Case study: North Korea and the UN nuclear proliferation regime

North Korea, officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), became a state party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985 and is considered a non-nuclear weapons state because it is not one of the nuclear weapon states officially recognised by the treaty. As a state party to the treaty North Korea agreed to the treaty's provisions to 'not manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons' and 'to accept safeguards in agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency'.

North Korea's withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003 in an exercise of its sovereignty presents a key challenge to the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime and to the arms control treaty system. After North Korea's withdrawal, there was an increase in North Korean missile launches and advances in its nuclear weapons program, with the regime conducting its first nuclear test in 2006, which drew international condemnation.

The Center for Nonproliferation Studies' North Korea missile test database has captured advances in North Korea's missile program over a period of time (see Figure 4.1.16). The most recent recorded test took place on 24 March 2021, with a total number of 156 tests since the first one in 1984. North Korea's latest and largest nuclear test was on 3 September 2017.

The international community sanctioned North Korea when it withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty to become non-compliant. North Korea's ability to not comply might suggest the failure of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to enforce obligations on states, but it could be argued that the treaty is not irrelevant given the UN Security Council imposes sanctions on North Korea as part of the broad arms control at the disposal of the international community. The system may not fully reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, but it is an essential response to monitor and moderate the action of states, reminding them to act ethically and responsibly.

Figure 4.1.16 – Graphs from the North Korea Missile Test Database, capturing advances in North Korea's missile program

Test Results
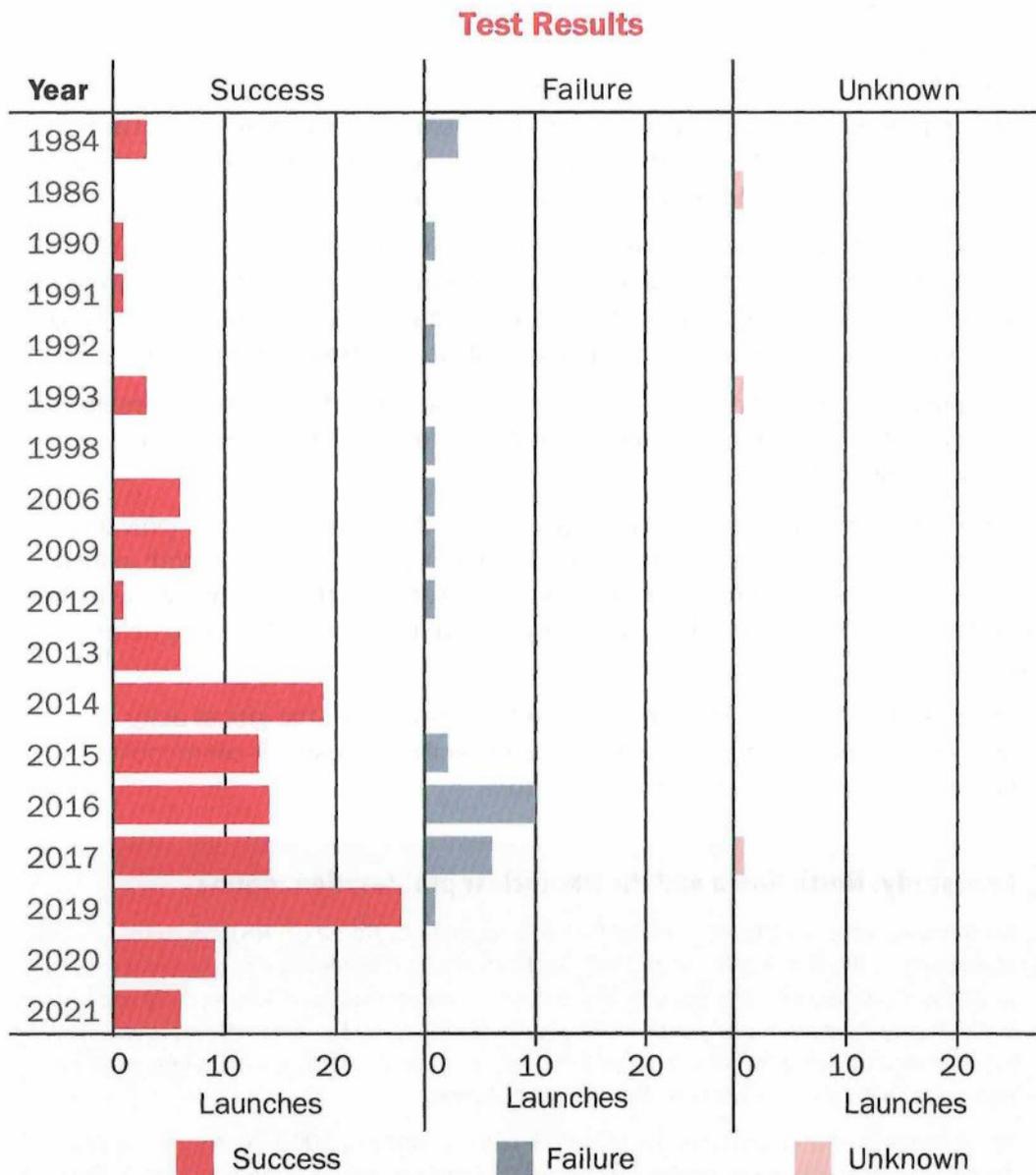
Source: The CNS North Korea Missile Test Database, available at www.nti.org/analysis/articles/cns-north-korea-missile-test-database.

When North Korea withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the UN Security Council responded by passing Resolution 1718 in 2006. This was done under the jurisdiction of Chapter VII of the UN Charter to condemn the test. UN Security Council mandated that:

All member states shall prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to North Korea of any materials relating to weapons of mass destruction programs, including the immediate freezing of funds or other financial assets and economic resources which are being engaged in or providing support for, including through other illicit means, DPRK's nuclear-related, other weapons of mass destruction-related and ballistic missile related programs.

Source: United Nations Security Council, *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, 2017, available at www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/un-security-council.

Below is an overview of the UN's response to North Korea's lack of compliance to the treaty obligations. There were nine major sanctions resolutions between 2006 and 2017. The last resolution of 2017, Resolution 2397, saw the international community's tightening of sanctions on North Korea.

- 22 December 2017: The UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2397 in response to North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile launch on November 29. The resolution extended economic sanctions and added further monitoring mechanisms.

- The four sanctions that followed have effectively extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee for a further 12 months:

  - 21 March 2018, Resolution 2407 (until 24 April 2019)

  - 10 April 2019, Resolution 2464 (until 24 April 2020)

  - 30 March 2020, Resolution 2515 (until 30 April 2021)

  - 26 March 2021, Resolution 2569 (until 30 April 2022).

Sources: Arms Control Association, UN Security Resolutions on North Korea, April 2018, available at www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/UN-Security-Council-Resolutions-on-North-Korea#res2379; and Security Council Report, UN Documents for DPRK (North Korea): Security Council Resolutions, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/?ctype=DPRK%20 %28North%20Korea%29&cbtype=dprk-north-korea.

Case study: North Korea and the United States

The United States has responded to North Korea's nuclear weapons program multilaterally through the UN Security Council and through the six-party talks that began in 2003 between China (which chaired the talks), Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea and the United States. The aim of the six-party talks is to peacefully dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons. North Korea withdrew from the six-party process in 2009 and there has been no resumption of the process despite continued calls from China to continue.

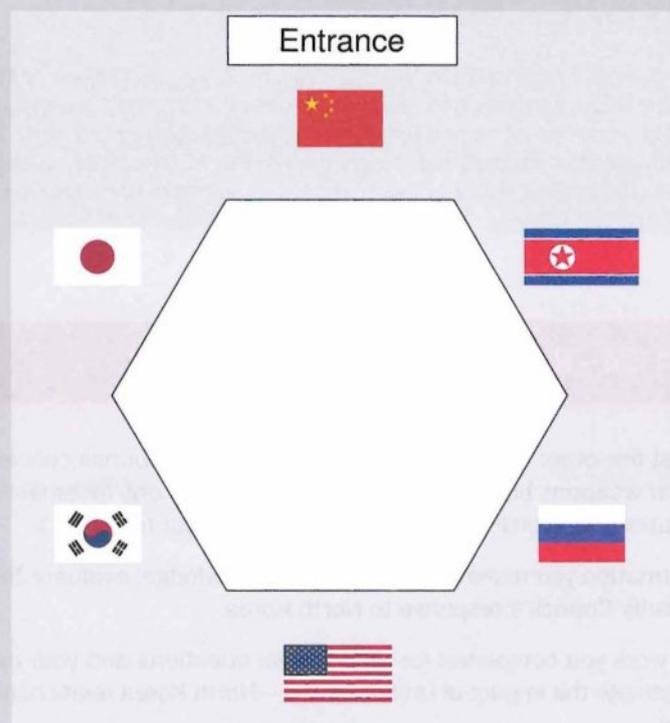*Fig 4.1.17 – Table layout for the six-party talks*

Photo: Denelson83

The United States' condemnation of the North Korean regime extended to the twittersphere, with former US president Donald Trump posting regular foreign policy updates on Twitter during his time in office. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) referred to Kim Jong Un as 'Little Rocket Man' and said 'Kim Jong Un of North Korea, who is obviously a madman who doesn't mind starving or killing his people, will be tested like never before!' Trump did this while suggesting that if the United States was 'forced to defend itself or its allies' it would have 'no choice but to totally destroy #NoKo'.

Trump's foreign policy approach shifted in 2018. He held three meetings with Kim Jong Un to negotiate arms control. The North Korea – United States Singapore Summit, held in Pyongyang on 12 June 2018, resulted in a joint statement from the United States and North Korea committed to 'work toward complete denuclearization on the Korean peninsula' (*New York Times*, 2020).

At the second meeting, the North Korea – United States Hanoi Summit held on 27–28 February 2019, the states failed to reach an agreement on the regime's weapons program and the sanctions program against North Korea.

The third meeting on 30 June 2019 saw Trump step over the border of the Demilitarised Zone onto North Korean soil, becoming the first US president to do so. However, no agreement was reached on North Korea's nuclear program and de-nuclearisation of the peninsula.

Trump's approach to North Korea through high-profile meetings with Kim Jong Un was swiftly rejected by President Joe Biden. In May 2021, Biden announced at a joint press conference with South Korean President Moon Jae-in that his goal as president was to achieve a 'total denuclearization' of the Korean Peninsula. He emphasised that he would not give Kim Jong Un what he's looking for, that is, 'international recognition as legitimate' (CNBC, 2021).

Despite this hard-line approach from Biden, the challenge from North Korea remains. Kim Jong Un reaffirmed in January 2021 at a Party Congress that: 'establishing a nuclear force' has been 'a strategic and predominant goal' and 'the exploit of greatest significance in the history of the Korean nation' (*New York Times*, 2020). Looking to the future for the next five years, Kim Jong Un has vowed to 'further strengthen our nuclear deterrence' (*New York Times*, 2020).

Sources: North Korea Vows to Boost Nuclear Program, Saying US Diplomacy Failed, New York Times, 11 June 2020, available from www.nytimes.com/2021/01/13/world/asia/north-korea-kim-jong-un-nuclear.html; and Biden rejects Trump's approach to North Korea, says he won't give Kim Jong-Un 'international recognition', CNBC, 21 May 2021, available from www.cnbc.com/2021/05/21/biden-rejects-trumps-approach-to-north-korea.html.

Activity 4.1.34 – Review questions

1. Identify at least five other responses from the UN Security Council concerning North Korea's nuclear weapons program. (See www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/UN-Security-Council-Resolutions-on-North-Korea#res2379 to start your research.)

2. Using the information you research and your own knowledge, evaluate the effectiveness of the UN Security Council's response to North Korea.

3. Based on the work you completed for the first two questions and your own knowledge, evaluate the impact of United States – North Korea relationship on the issue of arms control.

4. Investigate new developments in the United States and global responses to North Korea.

Case study: Syria and the United Nations Chemical Weapons regime

Background information

Syria presents a key challenge to the UN's Chemical Weapons regime, particularly since the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against its own people in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta on 21 August 2013. Below is a timeline of the UN's response to Syria's use of chemical weapons in 2013.

- **24 August 2013** – UN weapons inspectors are allowed to visit Damascus sites to investigate for the incidents of chemical-weapons use.

- **August to September 2013** – International pressure for Syria to join the Chemical Weapons Convention gathers momentum, with calls for the regime to destroy all of its chemical weapon stocks and production facilities, and to ban the use of any toxic chemicals in warfare.

- **10 September 2013** – President Assad agrees for Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and therefore the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that oversees the convention.

- **16 September 2013** – The UN Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons report is published. It concludes that surface-to-surface rockets containing the nerve agent sarin were used in the Ghouta area of Damascus against civilians on a 'relatively large scale'.

- **27 September 2013** – The UNSC passes Resolution 2118 in relation to the Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons during the Syrian Civil War.

- **1 October 2013** – The joint mission of UN and OPCW personnel monitors and facilitates Syrian chemical weapons disarmament.

- **Late October 2013** – The OPCW reports that Syria had met its disarmament targets to destroy its stockpile as required by mid-2014.

Despite international pressure and Assad's decision to join the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Syrian regime resumed its use of chemical weapons with major attacks between 2014 and 2019. This included:

- 21 April 2014 – chlorine gas in Talmenes, Idlib

- 16 March 2015 – chlorine gas attack in Sarmin, Idlib

- 10 August 2016 – chlorine gas attack in Saraqueb near Aleppo

- 4 April 2017 – sarin gas attack in Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib (Assad said that reports of a chemical attack by government forces was '100 per cent fabrication')

- 7 April 2018 – chemical attack in Douma in eastern Ghouta

- 19 May 2019 – alleged chlorine attack in northwest Syria on the border of the Idlib province in Kabana, Latakia.

Syria and the UN

The United Nations condemned Syria's lack of compliance to its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations following its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013.

The disapproval shown by the international community resulted in UN members voting in favour of the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 2209 on 6 March 2015. This resolution requested the UN Secretary-General and Chemical Weapons Conventions' Director-General to recommend the establishment and operation of a UN–OPCW joint investigative mechanism to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Resolution 2314, adopted by the United National Security Council on 31 October 2016, extended the mandate of the UN–OPCW joint investigative mechanism to 18 November 2016. Then Resolution 2319 renewed the mandate on 17 June 2016 for another year.

With Syria's continued flouting of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, the state parties to the convention attempted to hold Syria accountable for its repeated use of chemical weapons. The state parties voted at the Chemical Weapons Convention on 21 April 2021 for Syria to be banned from voting at Chemical Weapons Convention conferences.

However, the United Nations Security Council has been prevented from taking broader decisive action against the Assad regime in Syria. This is because China and Russia have exercised their veto power on at least 16 occasions and specifically in relation to arms control on three major draft resolutions:

- draft resolution S/2017/172 on chemical weapons, proposed on 28 February 2017

- draft resolution S/2017/315 on the 4 April 2017 chemical weapons attack on civilians in Khan Shaykhun in Syria's northern Idlib province, proposed on 12 April 2017

- draft resolution S/2014/348, put forward by the French government to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for 'serious international crimes', proposed on 22 May 2014.

The use of the veto in the United Nations Security Council illustrates the division amongst the member states as to how best to respond to the situation in Syria. The vetoes made demonstrates China and Russia's resistance to so-called 'Western pressure on Syria', which they called out in response to the first United Nations Security Council resolution on Syria in 2011. Both China and Russia firmly believe the international community 'exceeded the mandate in Libya' and that they would be against any prospect of 'military intervention' in Syria.

The United Nations Security Council is essentially deadlocked on Syria's use of chemical weapons, which opponents of the Syrian regime see as the UN's passive response in the face of mass atrocity. The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its civilians has intensified and prolonged the Syrian civil war. Ultimately, the emphasis on and prioritisation of the principles of non-interference and state sovereignty represents a challenge to arms control efforts, whether the efforts are made through international law or other global efforts.

Case study: Syria and the United States

The United States implemented Executive Orders 13572 and 13573, which froze the US property of several high-ranking Syrian and Iranian officials, including President Assad. The aim was to impose political pressure on the regime in response to its human rights violations in Syria and to prevent Syrian government officials accessing US funds so that their properties could be 'transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt'.

In August 2011, then-president Barack Obama called for Assad's resignation in August 2011 and signed Executive Order 13582, which froze all assets of the Syrian government, prohibited US persons from doing business with the regime, and banned imports of Syrian petroleum products. The United States closed its embassy in Damascus and withdrew Ambassador Ford in February 2012, following the escalating assault on Homs.

In August of 2012, Obama made clear in a public speech that the Assad regime would be held accountable if reports were true that it was planning to use chemical weapons. Obama said it would be 'a red line for us' which could lead to the administration using military force in Syria. Obama made clear to Assad that 'the world is watching' and that Assad would be held accountable by the international community should he use chemical weapons (The White House, 2012). The intention was to denounce the regime

and send a clear warning with Obama saying: 'I have, at this point, not ordered military engagement in the situation ... We have been very clear to the Assad regime,' he said, 'that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus' (The White House, 2012).

Under Obama there was a lack of support from within the US government for any military action against the Syrian regime for its use of chemical weapons. However, on 7 April 2017, the Trump administration launched 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the Mediterranean Sea into Syria. The missiles were aimed at the Shayrat Airbase following claims that aircraft from the airbase were used in the Khan Sheikhoun attack on 4 April 2017. Later, the United States, United Kingdom and France launched 100 missiles on Syrian chemical-weapons facilities on 14 April 2018, in response to the Douma chemical weapons attacks of 7 April 2018.

With the Syrian civil war yet to be resolved, the United States can largely be seen to reflect a deliberate policy of non-engagement and isolationism, which has limited the opportunity to bring an end to the armed conflict. The US approach shows the limitations this kind of response has to arms control and the crisis.

Figure 4.1.18 – Use of chemical weapons during the Syrian conflict

19 March 2013
Khan Al Assal, Aleppo province
26 people are killed, including more than a dozen government soldiers. The United Nations finds that sarin nerve gas was used but does not identify a culprit. The Syrian government is the only party in the conflict known to have sarin.

23 June 2014
Latakia, Latakia province
The last 100 tonnes of the total 1,300 tonnes of toxic material Syria declared to the Organisation for the prohibition of Chemical Weapons leaves the port of Latakia, to be destroyed at sea.

4 April 2017
Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib province
At least 72 people are killed in what doctors say could be a nerve-gas attack on this rebel-held town. Witnesses say the attack was carried out by either Russian or Syrian Sukhoi jets but Moscow and Damascus deny responsibility.

Between 10 April 2014 and 1 September 2015
Northern Idlib province
The OPCW and UN last year determined that the Syrian government used chlorine gas against its opponents in civilian areas at least three times during these years. They also find ISIL used mustard gas.

Source: Adapted from www.thenational.ae/world/chemical-weapons-attacks-in-syria-map-1.14585.

Activity 4.1.35 – Review questions

1. Create your own timeline of significant activity of Syrian chemical weapons activity between 2012 and now. (Visit the following website to help you with your research: www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity.)

2. Research online to identify at least five other responses from the UN Security Council concerning Syria's chemical weapons use.

3. Using the information you collected in the first two questions and your own knowledge, evaluate the effectiveness of the UN Security Council's response to Syria.

4. Investigate the UN's response to Syria concerning its use of chemical weapons. Outline new developments in global responses to Syria.

Ethical debates around the issue of arms control

The VCE study design says the key skill in this area is to 'analyse ethical debates surrounding TWO ethical issues, including the concepts of realism and cosmopolitanism'. It advises that the ethical debates for development are:

- 'differing approaches regarding non-state proliferation
- international security versus state security
- arms control versus disarmament'

(*VCE Australian and Global Politics Study Design: Accreditation Period 2018–2023*, p. 35.)

Ethical debates can be described as differing perspectives on the ethical issues we face today, including questions about the nature of security in the global arena. Global security is certainly a significant concern in the twenty-first century. The debate that arises around the issue of arms control demonstrates the dichotomy between the realist approach and the cosmopolitan perspective on how best to achieve global security and protect state security interests.

Below are several debates on the ethical issue of arms control.

Differing approaches regarding non-state proliferation

Proliferation involves the rapid increase of weapons capacity, for example, nuclear proliferation, chemical weapons proliferation or small arms proliferation.

The international community has a range of measures in place to deal with states' proliferation, such as international law (like the Mine Ban Treaty or the Chemical Weapons Convention), ad hoc diplomatic talks and the work of non-government organisations.

However, the growing proliferation by non-state actors in weapons of mass destruction is posing a range of security threats to states and their populations. This has required the international community to develop a stronger international framework to prevent non-state actors from acquiring nuclear or chemical weapons of mass destruction, or conventional weapons such as anti-personnel devices.

The military approach is broadly realist in nature. An example is the airstrikes made by United States and allied forces on Islamic State strongholds in Syria and Northern Iraq. These strikes began in June 2014 to 'degrade, defeat and destroy' Islamic State. This military approach has been the main objective in the international community's response to Islamic State as a terrorist organisation, but also as a non-state group that has considerable weapons capacity to pursue its stated interests in the region.

The United Nations Security Council (that is, UN diplomacy) has tried to counter the proliferation activities of non-state state actors by obliging states to combat international terrorism. The United Nations Security Council has voiced its concerns about nuclear proliferation and organised crime. Through a largely cosmopolitan approach, it has called for the coordination at all levels of governance to prevent terrorism via weapons of mass destruction.

International security versus state security

The concept of the security dilemma is as follows: one state seeks to increase its security by building alliances or its military capacity but doing so can lead to other states or groups undertaking the same measures to increase their security.

North Korea's nuclear weapons program and nuclear testing has challenged the international community's efforts to have international peace and security. The North Korean regime has remained steadfast in its 'right to national sovereignty', which it sees as needed for its own security. In building its nuclear program, North Korea wants to keep interference by external states, such as the United States, at bay, while it ensures its territorial integrity in relation to its contested border with South Korea. In the case study on pages 209–11, it is evident that North Korea is taking a realist approach to its state security concerns.

Cosmopolitan proponents, led by the United Nations and the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, see the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear activities as unacceptable. The North Korean regime has been subjected to a range of multilateral diplomatic pressures as well as economic sanctions to compel it to stop its nuclear testing program and denuclearise, but the measures have been without success.

The United Nations is founded on the principle of traditional notions of state sovereignty, where states' national interests are front and centre. As this is the case, it remains a delicate balance as to whose priorities are given greater weight, to ensure the collective security interests of the international community are protected and upheld.

Arms control versus disarmament

Arms control refers to restrictions upon the development, production, stockpiling, proliferation, and use of weapons for the purposes of pursuing global security.

The Chemical Weapons Convention outlines arms control provisions to restrict the use of chemical weapons. Syria's elimination of its declared stockpile of chemical weapons in 2013 highlights this approach. Despite arms control confining a state's capability, realists favour this approach because the emphasis is not on abolition.

Disarmament refers to the act of abolishing weapons to eliminate specific threats to global security. Disarmament measures best satisfy the cosmopolitan approach as disarmament involves the complete elimination of weapons. No weapons would be the end-state of the process to ensure international peace and security. For example, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention promotes the universalisation of the destruction of landmines. The convention pursues the abolition of this category of weapons globally.

Analysing ethical debates

When analysing ethical debates, you might want to consider which side of the debate is:

- more defensible (that is, doing most to protect a state's security interests)
- justified on the basis of national interest
- reliable in ensuring that state sovereignty is not subsumed by one view for political or economic gain
- legitimate in relation to balancing state interests and global concerns.

Activity 4.1.36 – Review questions

Analyse two perspectives on one debate on the ethical issue of arms control. (This requires you to reach a justified decision. Ethical issues are complex, and there is usually no 'right' answer. However, ethical deliberation can help you make informed, justified responses.)

Using the following prompts to form your answer, explain why you have reached a particular response to an ethical issue and justify your approach. Compare your response with other students in the class when you are finished:

- What do you think?
- The reason for my decision is ...
- The ethical approach I have given priority to is ...
- Three reasons why others might not agree with me are ...
- The ethical approaches they may be using are ...

Activity 4.1.37 – Bringing it all together

Complete notes in your workbook under the headings in the figure below to bring together the essential elements for your study notes on the respective ethical issues you select.

Remember to have notes for all three ethical debates. Your notes need to be flexible as you may need different case examples for each debate on the selected issue.

Analytical flow chart for an ethical issue
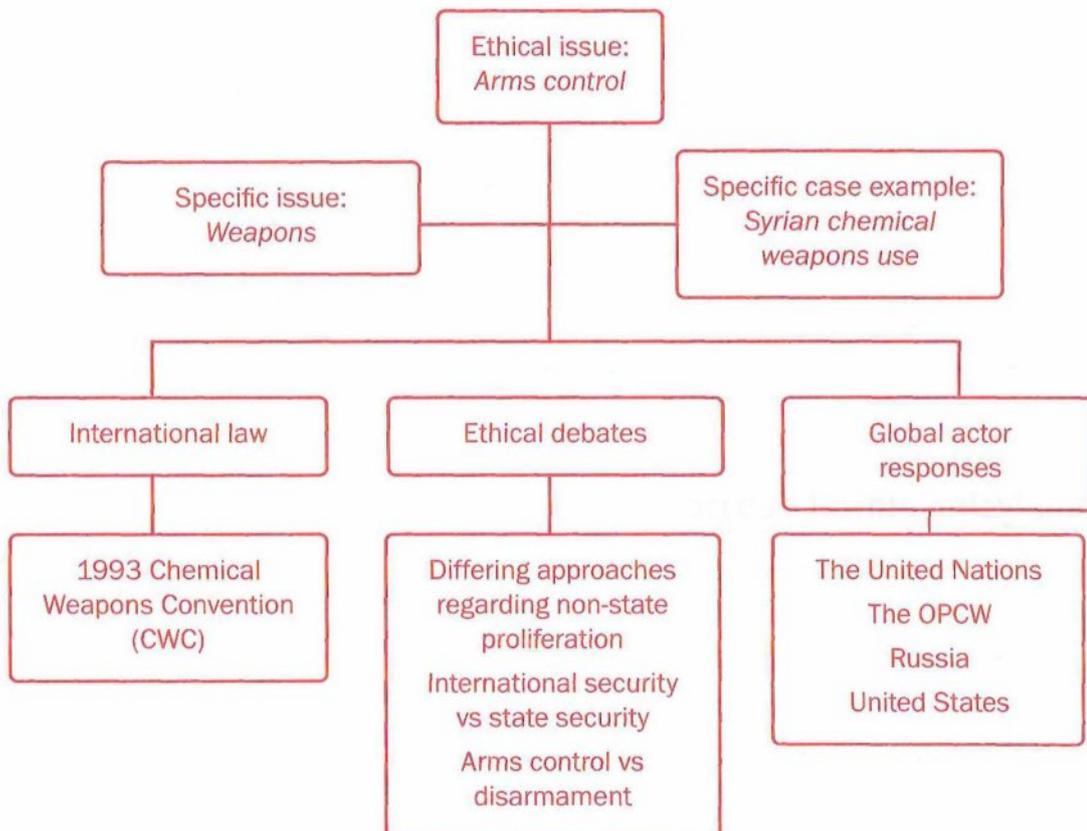
Activity 4.1.38 – Short-answer questions

Complete the following questions in preparation for your SAC or exam.

1. Question 1:

    a. Select one ethical issue you have studied this year. Outline the provisions of one international law relating to the ethical issue you have studied.

    b. Using a specific example, explain the effectiveness of this international law in responding to the ethical issue.

2. Select one ethical issue that you have studied this year and outline two perspectives of one debate on this issue.

3. Using a specific example, describe one global actor response to this ethical issue. The ethical issues selected must be different from the one selected in Question 2.

Activity 4.1.39 – Essay prompts

Select one of the following essay prompts and complete it in preparation for your written assessments.

1. 'Armed interventions to protect human rights are justified.' Discuss this statement by analysing the debates surrounding the responsibility to protect and the concept of state sovereignty.

2. 'It is impossible to gain consensus in the international community, as we have seen on so many occasions.' Discuss this statement with reference to one or more recent international laws.

3. 'Idealism has no place in the international political arena.' Evaluate this statement with reference to ethical issues and debates you have studied this year.

4. 'The national interest of states will always trump the ideals of universality in ethical issues and debates.' Discuss.

5. 'Cultural and religious norms should not modify the universality of human rights.' Discuss.

6. 'The national interest of states impacts the effectiveness of global actor responses to ethical issues.' Discuss.

A model for organising an essay

Introduction

- Present a broad statement about the topic, engaging with the big ideas or key concepts

- Interpret the topic

- Outline the contention which will be developed throughout the essay

- Gives a brief overview of the arguments that will support the contention

Body paragraphs

- Develop the respective arguments outlined in the introduction in support of the contention

- Each argument has its own paragraph

- Each argument should be supported with specific evidence, including quotes, dates, events, statistics, documents
- Follows the TEEAS structure:
  - Topic sentence – establishes the supporting argument
  - Elaboration – expands, explains and explores the supporting argument
  - Evidence – incorporates specific evidence
  - Analysis – explanation of the evidence directly responding to the parameters of the prompt (that is, evaluate, analyse or discuss)
  - Synthesis – draws conclusions to address the topic in support of the contention
- Three to five body paragraphs

Conclusion

- Restate how the arguments in the body of the essay support the contention
- Explain the significance of your conclusions
- Final point about the topic in relation to future implications
- The structure could follow the following form to include further specific evidence or contrasting specific evidence TEEAS

Media centre

- UN disarmament meter for daily military expenditure and comparison with development expenditure: www.un.org/disarmament/over-armed/index.html
- A time-lapse map of every nuclear explosion since 1945 by Isao Hashimoto: www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=135&v=LLCF7vPanrY

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Glossary of terms

Arms control refers to the restrictions upon the development, production, stockpiling, proliferation and usage of weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction, for the purposes of containing conflict and ensuring global security.

Cosmopolitanism reflects a desire among global actors to cooperate to reach common goals and outcomes to meet challenges that are presented to the global community.

Cultural relativism. The principle of viewing the beliefs, values, traditions and practices of a culture from the perspective of the culture itself.

Ethics. Moral principles that govern a state's behaviour or their conduct of an activity

Gross domestic product (GDP). A measure of a state's economy, assessed through the total value of all goods and services produced within the state.

Gross national income (GNI). The total value of the GDP of a state, plus any other income obtained by the state such as interest or dividends but not including the income earned by foreigners living in the state.

Hegemony. The strongest or most powerful among states.

Human Development Index (HDI). A measure of a state's development, assessed through criteria such as life expectancy, literacy levels and income of the population.

International law. Traditionally only relating to states, international law is a body of rules established by custom or written legal agreements that are accepted as binding upon the international community. Customary international law applies to all global actors. Written legal agreements, such as treaties, are only binding on those who consent to them through explicit ratification. Some international laws may apply only to states, such as the UN Convention against Torture, while others may apply directly to citizens, such as war crimes.

Justice refers to the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, law, fairness and equity that, importantly, also seeks punishment when these ethics are breached. This concept extends to global politics through international systems of justice, such as the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice, which seek to uphold international law and deter future violations.

People trafficking. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people for the purposes of exploitation, financial gain or both.

Proliferation. The rapid increase in the spread of weapons (nuclear, chemical or conventional).

Purchasing power parity (PPP). A method of comparison for the value of currency between states.

Realism involves states (and other global actors) prioritising their specific interest and needs over those of the global community.

Washington Consensus refers to a set of neoliberal ideals supported by prominent economists and intergovernmental organisations, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which advocate for economic reform through trade liberalisation, floating of exchange rates and deregulation.
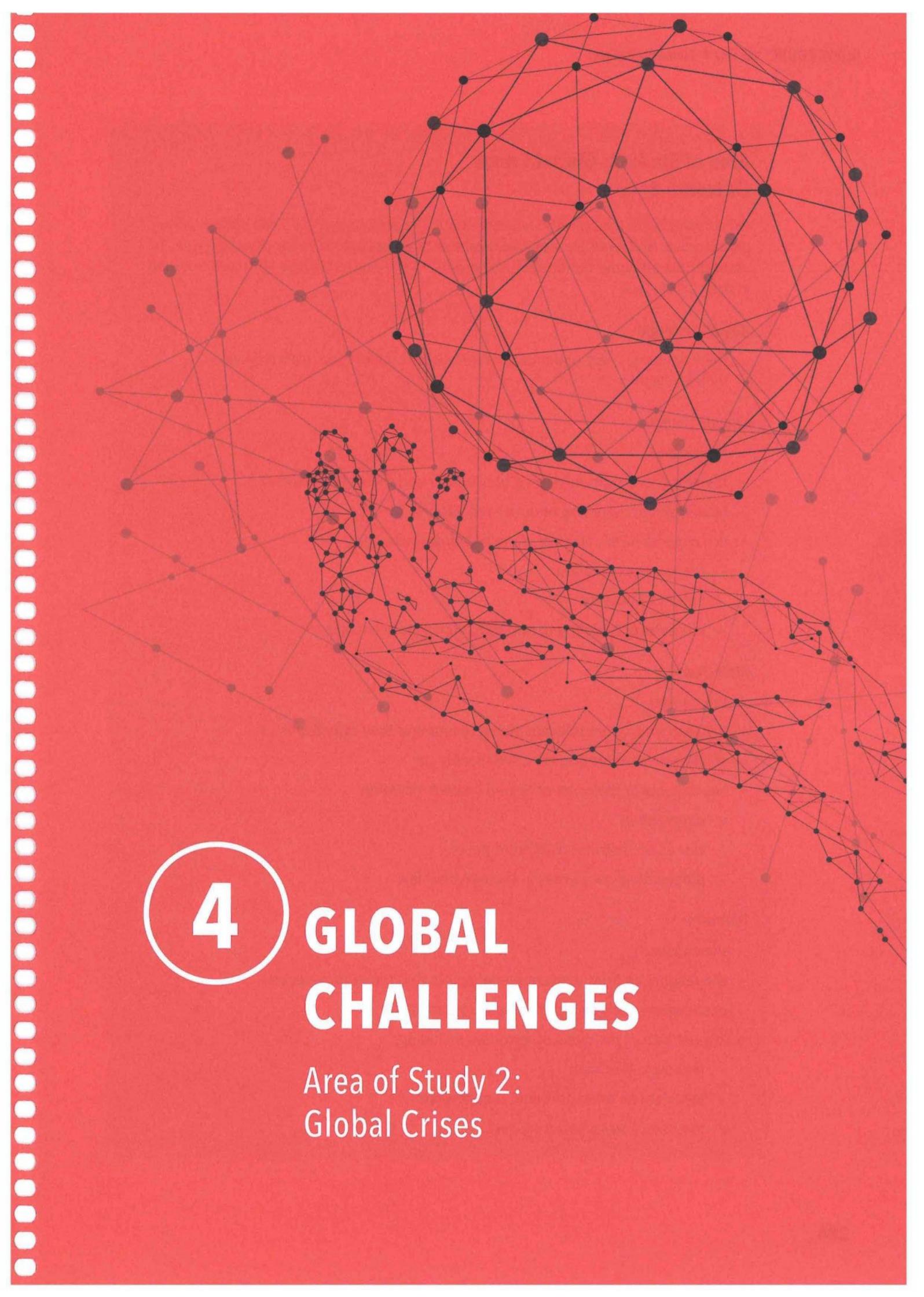
4 GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Area of Study 2:
Global Crises

Area of Study 2: Global Crises
Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse TWO contemporary global crises and evaluate the effectiveness of global actors' responses to these. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

- the key terms: crisis diplomacy, international cooperation, globalisation, unilateralism

Climate change

- the causes
- the responses from relevant global actors and their effectiveness
- challenges to achieving effective resolutions
- key aspects of the crisis of climate change including:
  - resource exploitation
  - national interests
  - methods of adapting to and reducing climate change

Armed conflict

- the causes
- the responses from relevant global actors and their effectiveness
- challenges to achieving effective resolutions
- key aspects of the crisis of armed conflict including:
  - intervention
  - war as an instrument of state policy
  - prosecuting war crimes in international law

Terrorism

- the causes
- the responses from relevant global actors and their effectiveness
- challenges to achieving effective resolutions
- key aspects of the crisis of terrorism including:
  - non-state terrorism
  - terrorism as an instrument of state policy
  - the role of asymmetric warfare

Economic instability

- the causes
- the responses from relevant global actors and their effectiveness
- challenges to achieving effective resolutions
- key aspects of the crisis of economic instability including:
  - globalisation
  - capitalism's boom-bust cycle
  - the role of key global actors as stabilisers of the global economy.

Key skills

- define and explain key global politics terms and use them in the appropriate context
- explain the causes of, and responses to, TWO global crises
- analyse the key aspects of TWO global crises
- evaluate the effectiveness of responses to TWO global crises by relevant global actors
- analyse the challenges to achieving effective resolution to TWO global crises
- use contemporary examples and case studies to support explanations, points of view and arguments.

4 Global Challenges

Area of Study 2: Global Crises

Global crises

This area of study focuses on investigating two of the following global crises: climate change, armed conflict, terrorism, and economic instability.

At the heart of this chapter are five 'big picture' questions to consider: Why are climate change, armed conflict, terrorism and economic instability regarded as contemporary global crises? What are the causes of these global crises? How have global actors responded to these global crises and how effective are their responses? What challenges do global actors face in achieving resolutions to global crises? What are the key aspects of climate change, armed conflict, terrorism and economic instability?

This chapter covers climate change, armed conflict and terrorism; the economic instability section can be found online.

Key knowledge and skills in relation to global crises

Key terms

The following key terms are fundamental to the study of global crises.

Note that the definitions of Study Design key terms for this area of study can be found in the VCAA Units 3 and 4 Global Politics glossary.

https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/advice-for-teachers/Pages/Units3and4GlobalPoliticsGlossary.aspx

Crisis diplomacy

Crisis diplomacy refers to negotiations between relevant global actors in response to an abrupt change. The change itself creates a situation that is considered urgent and dangerous, with a strong likelihood of rapid escalation, therefore demanding an immediate response.

Traditionally, crisis diplomacy has been associated with professional diplomats and politicians as representatives or agents of states engaged in emergency sitting sessions, round-the-clock negotiations and signalling or bargaining efforts, focused on avoiding or limiting the escalation of armed conflict. Examples include the historical case of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, and ongoing talks throughout the twenty-first century regarding the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Crisis diplomacy is also commonly associated with the planning efforts and negotiations undertaken by states, intergovernmental organisations and non-government organisations to enter a territory in order to assist with a humanitarian response after a natural or human-induced disaster. One example is the international humanitarian aid effort organised in response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Crisis diplomacy is increasingly associated with interactions between states, regional institutions and global governance bodies in response to economic collapses such as the 2007–2008 global financial crisis, the European sovereign debt crisis, which began in 2009–2010, and public health emergencies such as the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa and more recently the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Taken together, these examples suggest the distinguishing feature of crisis diplomacy is ultimately a sense of reactiveness to an imminent threat or after a significant shock, as opposed to the more planned diplomacy intended to facilitate ongoing regional and international cooperation. This is an important point to keep in mind, particularly regarding climate change. Even though climate change is an urgent and potentially catastrophic crisis, the annual United Nations (UN) Climate Change conferences are conventionally understood as examples of international cooperation rather than crisis diplomacy.

International cooperation

International cooperation is a process that brings together multiple global actors that are willing to collaborate by aligning their policy actions in order to advance mutual interests and pursue common aims.

International cooperation implies a process that is *deliberate* and *ongoing*, but also *dynamic* and *transitory*, with global actors formalising agreements to coordinate their efforts towards a particular issue through scheduled forums that facilitate negotiations and dialogues. The implementation of the coordinated efforts is subject to change, and the interests of the different actors involved adapt and evolve over time.

Globalisation

Globalisation refers to one of the most significant factors shaping the contemporary global political arena.

To paraphrase Anthony McGrew, globalisation is a historical process characterised by:

- **'Stretching'**, whereby social, political and economic activities transcend state borders, which can (and often do) lead to 'spill over' effects. In turn, events, decisions and actions that play out in one part of the world, also have the ability to potentially impact directly or indirectly another (seemingly unrelated) part of the world.

- **'Intensification'**, whereby virtually all aspects of contemporary life are now interconnected.

- **'Acceleration'**, whereby cross-border flows of ideas, news, goods, information, capital and technology take place at an unprecedented speed.

- **'Deepening ties'**, whereby the local (domestic sphere) and the global (international sphere) are enmeshed, leading to the 'collision of "over here" with "over there"' and perhaps even with the emergence of an existence better understood as 'glocalization', which implies a 'hybrid realm' where local matters become globalised, and global matters become localised (McGrew 2020).

Unilateralism

Unilateralism refers to one of three approaches (along with bilateralism and multilateralism) by which states can advance their foreign policy.

To paraphrase Atsushi Tago from Waseda University, Japan, the foreign policy approaches of states can be visualised as sitting on a spectrum. At one end is multilateralism, which aims to 'tame' the anarchic nature of the global political arena by establishing and sustaining a predictable rules-based order through international norms, laws and institutions that ultimately encourage and facilitate cooperative action.

At the other end of the spectrum is unilateralism, whereby some states instead decide to 'go it alone' (realistically, this option is only available to powerful or hegemonic states). They pursue their own path by deciding to act (or not to act) on certain measures, and disregard or defy the established norms and rules of the international community. It is worth noting that unilateral action brings political costs, particularly to a state's international standing as a responsible global citizen and its overall projection of soft power, precisely because unilateral responses are generally interpreted by the international community as illegitimate and selfish.

Activity 4.2.1 – Exam style-short-answer questions

Test your key knowledge by attempting the questions below.

You should aim to craft clear and comprehensive responses that address the specific demands of each question by drawing on detailed, relevant and accurate information.

Pay attention to the command term (also known as the task word or the instructional verb).

1. With reference to climate change, armed conflict, terrorism or economic instability, explain the difference between crisis diplomacy and international cooperation.

2. Discuss the impact of globalisation and unilateralism on climate change, armed conflict, terrorism or economic instability.

Advice on studying confronting topics

Investigating global crises can be confronting. At times, it may even seem grim and apocalyptic. However, this also represents an opportunity to be part of a historically defining moment. By contemplating the issues at stake and being willing to wrestle with the complexity of the content in this part of the VCE Global Politics course, we are ultimately able to consider possible solutions and ways forward. This in itself is an important step towards building a better future in which we hope these crises can finally be resolved.

In those moments when studying global crises gets you down, consider taking a moment to return and reflect upon the words below. May they give you hope and inspire you with the strength and courage to persist. Now more than ever, the understanding gained from a course such as VCE Global Politics really matters. Seize the opportunity!

'When the history of our times is written, will we be remembered as the generation that turned our backs in a moment of global crisis, or will it be recorded that we did the right thing?'

—Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president

'We may not have chosen the time, but the time has chosen us.'

—John Lewis, US politician and civil rights movement leader

'Another world is not only possible, She is on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.'

—Arundhati Roy, Indian author and Man Booker Prize winner

Over-arching 'big picture' idea

In this Area of Study students **investigate** the causes of **climate change**. Students also **investigate the effectiveness of the responses of relevant global actors** and **the main challenges to the effective resolution of climate change**. Students also engage with the **key apsects/ideas that relate to climate change**.

'Big picture' ideas	Outcome 2
• Why is **climate change** regarded as a contemporary global crisis? • What are the causes of **climate change**? • How have global actors responded to **climate change** and how effective are their responses? • What challenges do global actors face in achieving resolutions to **climate change**?	On completion of this unit the student should be able to: • *analyse* the contemporary global crisis of **climate change** • *evaluate* the effectiveness of global actors' responses to **climate change**

Key knowledge	Key skills
Key terms crisis diplomacy, international cooperation, globalisation, unilateralism	*define* and *explain* key **global politics terms** and use them in the **appropriate context**
Causes of climate change	*explain* the **causes of** and responses to climate change
Responses from relevant global actors to climate change and their effectiveness	*evaluate* the **effectiveness of responses** to climate change by relevant global actors
Challenges to achieving effective resolutions to climate change	*analyse* the **challenges to achieving effective resolution** to climate change
Key aspects of climate change resource exploitation, national interests, methods of adapting to and reducing climate change	*analyse* the **key aspects** of climate change

Figure 4.2.1 – Study Design information for climate change
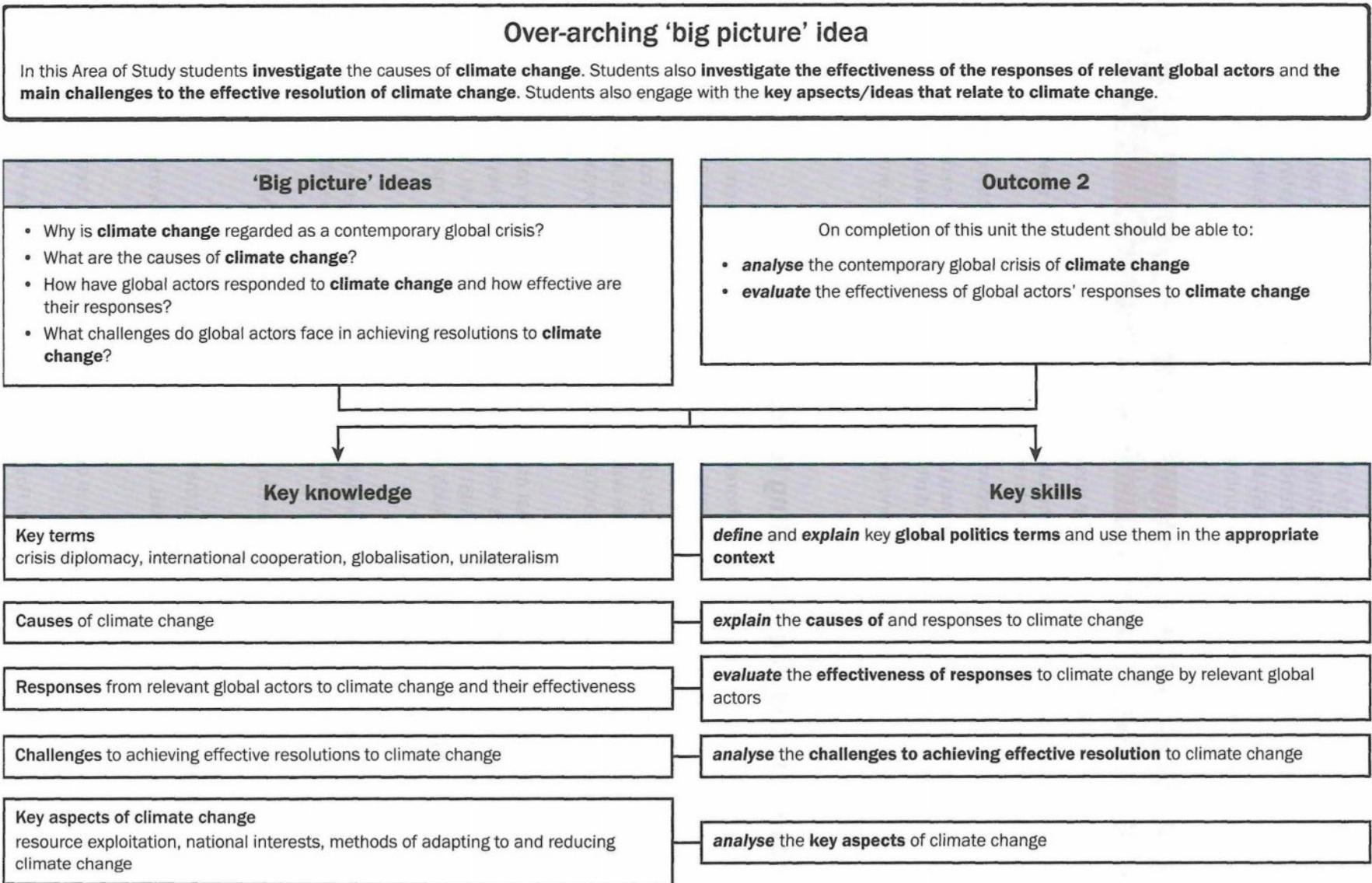
Climate change

At the heart of this section are five 'big picture' questions:

- Why is climate change regarded as a contemporary global crisis?
- What are the causes of climate change?
- How have global actors responded to climate change and how effective are their responses?
- What challenges do global actors face in achieving resolutions to climate change?
- What are the key aspects of the global crisis of climate change?

Essentially, you can organise this area of study into five 'bite-size chunks':

1. Defining and explaining the following **key terms** within the context of climate change – 'crisis diplomacy', 'international cooperation', 'globalisation' and 'unilateralism' (see page 227).

2. Investigating the **causes** of climate change and considering whether these causes are cyclical, and why this may or may not be so.

3. Investigating the effectiveness of the **responses** from relevant global actors to climate change and considering whether some of these responses at times exacerbate the original crisis (and why this may or may not be so).

4. Investigating the main **challenges** to an effective resolution of climate change.

5. Engaging with the key **aspects** that relate to climate change – specifically resource exploitation, national interests and methods of adapting to and mitigating climate change.

Specialist vocabulary

To help you understand the crisis of climate change, there is an online vocabulary explainer which unpacks some of the technical language that consistently features in discussions of climate change.

Please note that the climate change terminology in this online resource is distinct from the Study Design key terms for this area of study.

Potential future risks and impacts of climate change

The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a UN body whose role is to assess the science related to climate change, in order to provide governments with expert scientific knowledge to assist in developing climate policies. IPCC reports inform international climate change negotiations.

The following table contains extracts from the IPCC's 'Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report Summary', part of its *Fifth Assessment Report* (AR5), which informed the landmark Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. These extracts discuss the future risks and possible impacts of a changing climate.

*Table 4.2.1 Extract from IPCC 'Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report Summary'*

Risks & impacts	IPCC's Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers (SPM) – SPM 2.3: Future risks and impacts caused by a changing climate
Species extinction	'A large fraction of species faces increased extinction risk due to climate change during and beyond the 21st century, especially as climate change interacts with other stressors (high confidence) ... Coral reefs and polar ecosystems are highly vulnerable. Coastal systems and low-lying areas are at risk from sea level rise, which will continue for centuries even if the global mean temperature is stabilized (high confidence).'
Food insecurity & competition over scarce resources	'Climate change is projected to undermine food security ... Due to projected climate change by the mid-21st century and beyond, global marine species redistribution and marine biodiversity reduction in sensitive regions will challenge the sustained provision of fisheries productivity and other ecosystem services (high confidence) ... Climate change is projected to reduce renewable surface water and groundwater resources in most dry subtropical regions (robust evidence, high agreement), intensifying competition for water among sectors (limited evidence, medium agreement).'
Human health	'Until mid-century, projected climate change will impact human health mainly by exacerbating health problems that already exist (very high confidence). Throughout the 21st century, climate change is expected to lead to increases in ill-health in many regions and especially in developing countries with low income ... (high confidence).'
Risks to urban areas	'In urban areas climate change is projected to increase risks for people, assets, economies and ecosystems, including risks from heat stress, storms and extreme precipitation, inland and coastal flooding, landslides, air pollution, drought, water scarcity, sea level rise and storm surges (very high confidence). These risks are amplified for those lacking essential infrastructure and services or living in exposed areas.'
Impacts to rural areas	'Rural areas are expected to experience major impacts on water availability and supply, food security, infrastructure and agricultural incomes, including shifts in the production areas of food and non-food crops around the world (high confidence).'
Economic loss & poverty	'Aggregate economic losses accelerate with increasing temperature (limited evidence, high agreement) ... From a poverty perspective, climate change impacts are projected to slow down economic growth, make poverty reduction more difficult, further erode food security and prolong existing and create new poverty traps, the latter particularly in urban areas and emerging hotspots of hunger (medium confidence). International dimensions such as trade and relations among states are also important for understanding the risks of climate change at regional scales.'
People movement & armed conflict	'Climate change is projected to increase displacement of people (medium evidence, high agreement). Populations that lack the resources for planned migration experience higher exposure to extreme weather events, particularly in developing countries with low income. Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks (medium confidence).'

What makes climate change a contemporary global crisis?

As the IPCC findings above suggest, climate change is a global crisis because it is characterised by:

- **regional and international reach** Because all humanity shares the one common atmosphere, climate change transcends national borders. Likewise, the contributing causes of climate change, as well as the global actors responding to it, the challenges that prevent its effective resolution and the actual or anticipated consequences that stem from it, either already are or can easily become regionalised and internationalised affairs, or 'cross-border' issues.

- **likelihood of harm** Climate change poses a clear and present danger, with the possibility of widespread damage and devastation and the potential to develop into a humanitarian disaster that will require a response from the global community.

- **urgency** The threat posed by climate change is imminent, with a limited response time to mitigate or adapt to the actual or expected impacts, leaving many states (particularly developing states and low-lying states) and their citizens extremely vulnerable.

Figure 4.2.2 – Projected global temperature increases
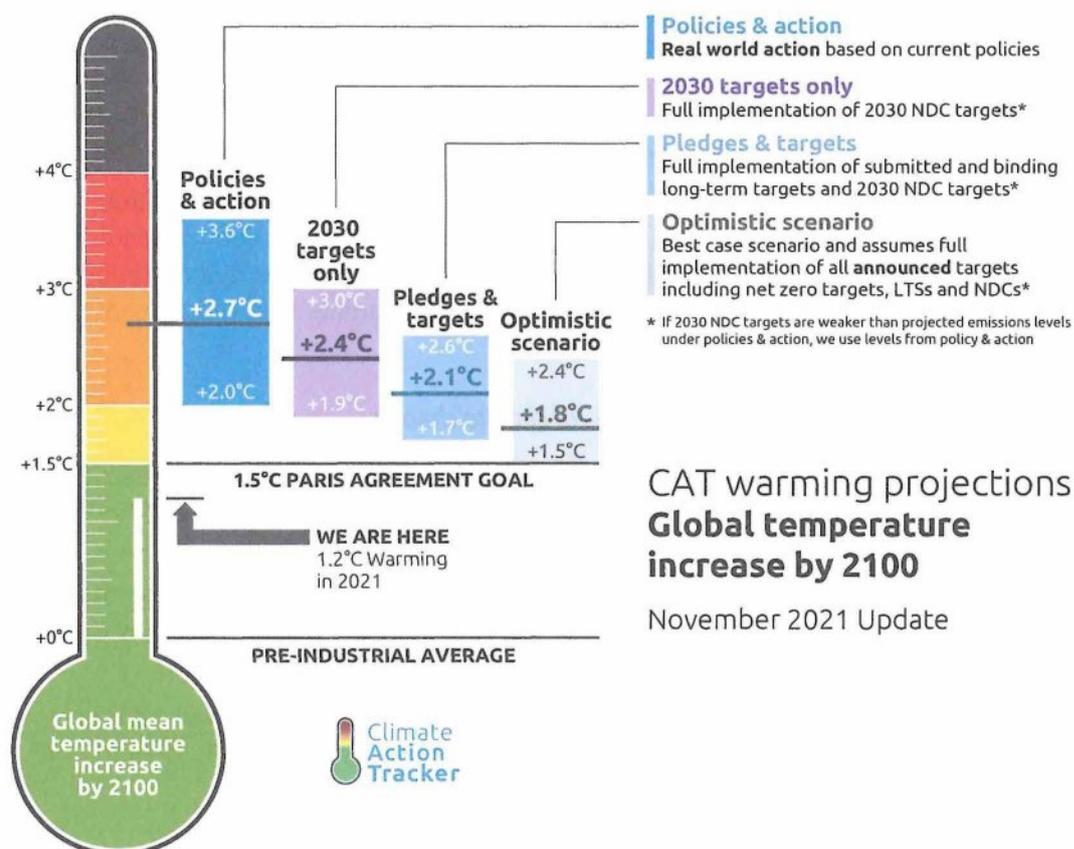
The security dimensions of climate change

Climate change is also a 'threat multiplier': it has the potential to further aggravate already fragile situations and exacerbate existing tensions both *between* states and *within* states. Hence, what may begin as an environmental problem can fast develop

into a situation with major social, political and economic ramifications, negatively affecting the national security and economic prosperity of states and the human security and humanitarian needs of individual citizens and local communities.

Put another way, climate change is not *just* another global crisis. Arguably, it is the 'crisis of crises' because if left unchecked, it could pose catastrophic challenges to the natural world, itself the foundation upon which *all* life – including human civilisation – ultimately rests.

The causes of climate change

Ultimately, the long-term and ongoing cause of climate change is human activity associated with modern industrial civilisation. Hence, the crisis is human-induced – also known as anthropogenic. In effect, climate change has resulted from a combination of factors including greenhouse-gas-intensive lifestyles, a fossil-fuel-reliant global economy, deforestation and global population demands, which together increase the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, in particular carbon dioxide (CO_2). In turn, this enhances the greenhouse effect: less heat is able to escape the atmosphere and go back into space and more heat is absorbed by the Earth, which leads to a change in the world's overall climate, namely the gradual increase of Earth's surface temperature, otherwise known as global warming. This heating is likely to have multiple detrimental consequences for the future of humankind.

On 9 August 2021, humanity's culpability was further reinforced with the release of the first part of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), titled *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*, the Working Group 1 contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Secretary-General of the UN António Guterres said, 'Today's IPCC Working Group 1 Report is a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk. Global heating is affecting every region on Earth'.

Advice for tackling questions on the causes of climate change

The Study Design key skill asks you to 'explain the causes of'; in other words, you are investigating the what, the how and the why regarding the contributing factors that have ultimately led to the current climate change situation.

Be aware that although you must use case studies and examples of a global crisis from the last 10 years, your explanation of the causes of the global crisis may extend beyond the 10-year limit.

The Study Design also notes that 'the causes of these crises may be cyclical and the responses can at times exacerbate the original crisis' *(VCAA VCE Australian and Global Politics 2018–2023 Study Design, p. 36)*.

Activity 4.2.2 – Exam-style short-answer questions

1. Identify four causes contributing to anthropogenic climate change.
2. Explain two causes of anthropogenic climate change. Provide an example for each.
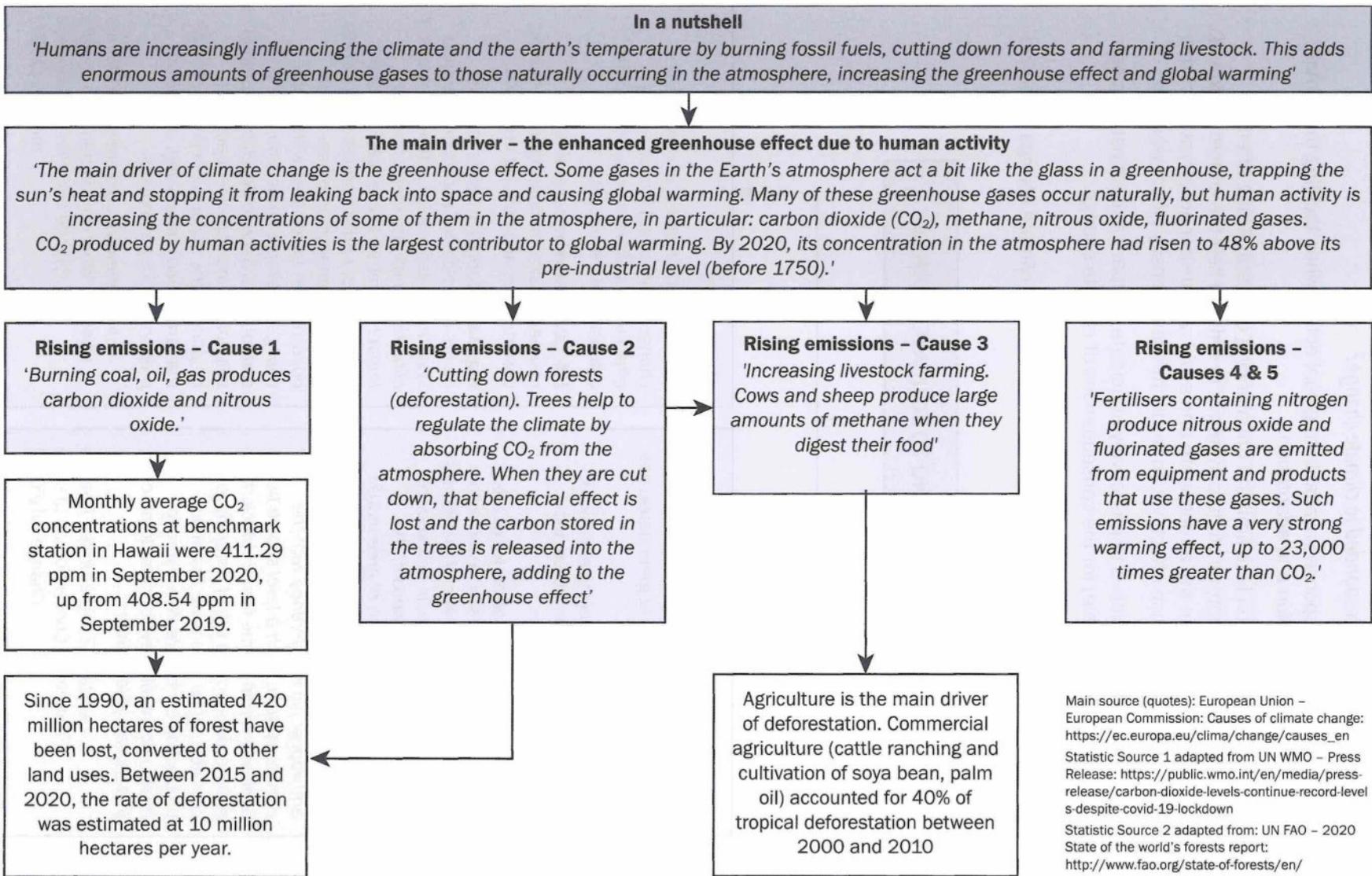
Figure 4.2.3 – The causes of anthropogenic climate change

In a nutshell

'Humans are increasingly influencing the climate and the earth's temperature by burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests and farming livestock. This adds enormous amounts of greenhouse gases to those naturally occurring in the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effect and global warming'

The main driver – the enhanced greenhouse effect due to human activity

'The main driver of climate change is the greenhouse effect. Some gases in the Earth's atmosphere act a bit like the glass in a greenhouse, trapping the sun's heat and stopping it from leaking back into space and causing global warming. Many of these greenhouse gases occur naturally, but human activity is increasing the concentrations of some of them in the atmosphere, in particular: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, fluorinated gases. CO_2 produced by human activities is the largest contributor to global warming. By 2020, its concentration in the atmosphere had risen to 48% above its pre-industrial level (before 1750).'

Rising emissions – Cause 1

'Burning coal, oil, gas produces carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide.'

Monthly average CO_2 concentrations at benchmark station in Hawaii were 411.29 ppm in September 2020, up from 408.54 ppm in September 2019.

Since 1990, an estimated 420 million hectares of forest have been lost, converted to other land uses. Between 2015 and 2020, the rate of deforestation was estimated at 10 million hectares per year.

Rising emissions – Cause 2

'Cutting down forests (deforestation). Trees help to regulate the climate by absorbing CO_2 from the atmosphere. When they are cut down, that beneficial effect is lost and the carbon stored in the trees is released into the atmosphere, adding to the greenhouse effect'

Rising emissions – Cause 3

'Increasing livestock farming. Cows and sheep produce large amounts of methane when they digest their food'

Agriculture is the main driver of deforestation. Commercial agriculture (cattle ranching and cultivation of soya bean, palm oil) accounted for 40% of tropical deforestation between 2000 and 2010

Rising emissions – Causes 4 & 5

'Fertilisers containing nitrogen produce nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases are emitted from equipment and products that use these gases. Such emissions have a very strong warming effect, up to 23,000 times greater than CO_2.'

Main source (quotes): European Union – European Commission: Causes of climate change: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/change/causes_en

Statistic Source 1 adapted from UN WMO – Press Release: https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/carbon-dioxide-levels-continue-record-levels-despite-covid-19-lockdown

Statistic Source 2 adapted from: UN FAO – 2020 State of the world's forests report: http://www.fao.org/state-of-forests/en/
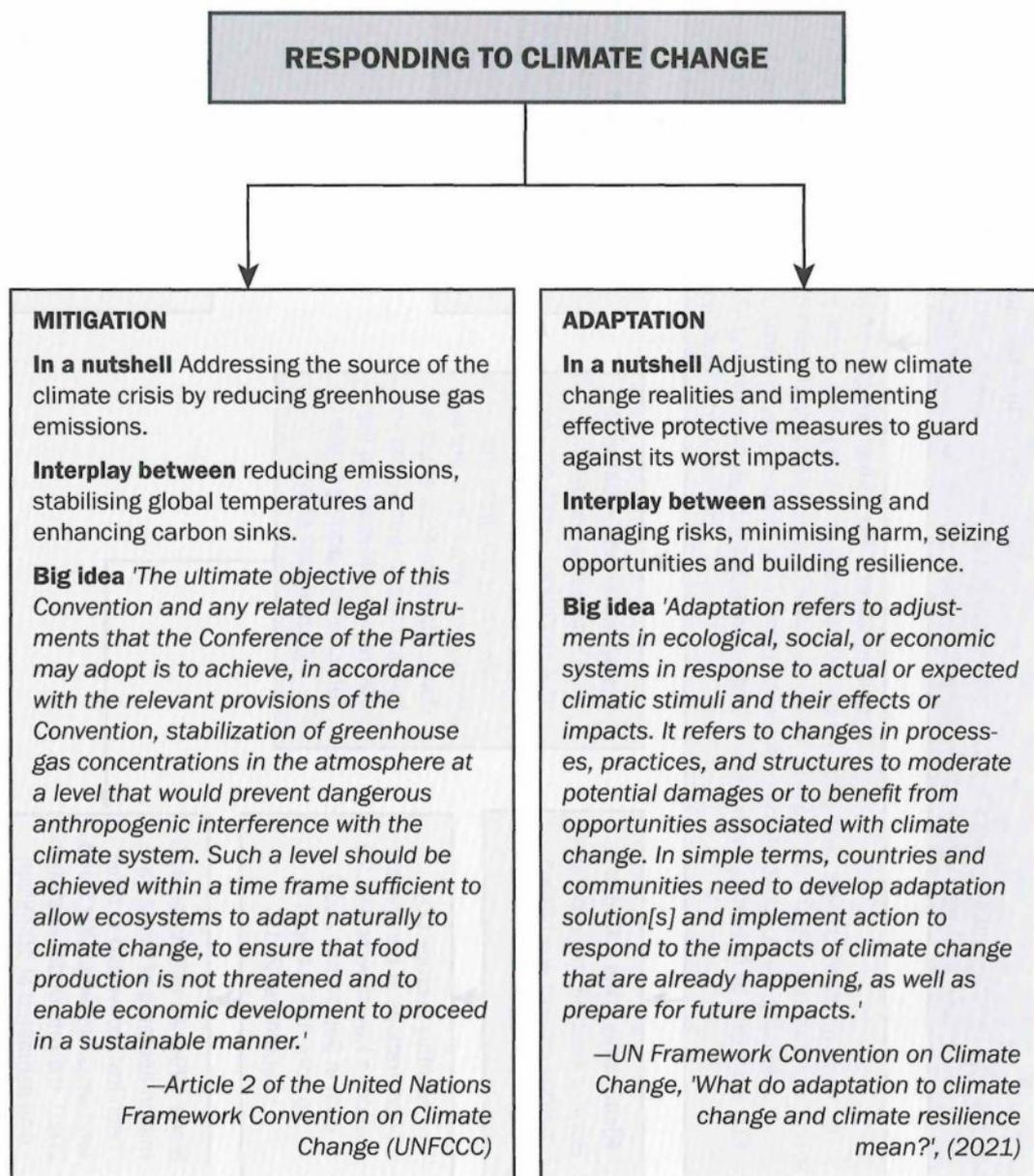
The responses to climate change by relevant global actors and their effectiveness

How have global actors responded to climate change?

There are two main responses available to global actors when tackling the climate change crisis – *mitigation* and *adaptation*.

- The goal of mitigation is to limit the unbalancing or destabilising effect of human activity on natural climate systems, in order to halt the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and avoid any further acceleration of the enhanced greenhouse effect, which would further intensify global warming.

- The goal of adaptation is to proactively anticipate, prepare and adjust (as cost-effectively as possible) for the consequences of climate change.

Figure 4.2.4 – Mitigation versus adaptation strategies of climate change response

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

MITIGATION

In a nutshell Addressing the source of the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Interplay between reducing emissions, stabilising global temperatures and enhancing carbon sinks.

Big idea *'The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.'*

—Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

ADAPTATION

In a nutshell Adjusting to new climate change realities and implementing effective protective measures to guard against its worst impacts.

Interplay between assessing and managing risks, minimising harm, seizing opportunities and building resilience.

Big idea *'Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change. In simple terms, countries and communities need to develop adaptation solution[s] and implement action to respond to the impacts of climate change that are already happening, as well as prepare for future impacts.'*

—UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 'What do adaptation to climate change and climate resilience mean?', (2021)

Mitigation involves:

- reducing emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere
- stabilising the global average temperature rise below 1.5° to 2° Celsius to avoid the worst impacts of climate change
- enhancing the 'sinks' (such as the oceans, forests and soil) that absorb and store greenhouse gases.

Adaptation involves:

- risk assessment, management and harm minimisation to identify and understand the risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change, in order to best prepare for and respond to any actual or expected impacts. According to the UNFCCC this is achieved through the process of an adaptation cycle structured around four components: assessing impacts, vulnerability and risks; planning for adaptations; implementing adaptation measures; and monitoring and evaluating adaptation. (This is an established part of the UN's climate regime.)
- seizing opportunities by making the most of any potential benefits that may result from climate change, for example, increased crop yields or longer growing seasons in some regions. However, this does not mean anthropogenic climate change is an overall 'positive'; rather, it is an appeal to the pragmatism of states.
- transformation and resilience.

According to NASA's 'The Causes of Climate Change':

> Outside of a greenhouse, higher atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels can have both positive and negative effects on crop yields. Some laboratory experiments suggest that elevated CO_2 levels can increase plant growth. However, other factors, such as changing temperatures, ozone, and water and nutrient constraints, may more than counteract any potential increase in yield. If optimal temperature ranges for some crops are exceeded, earlier possible gains in yield may be reduced or reversed altogether (NASA, 2021).
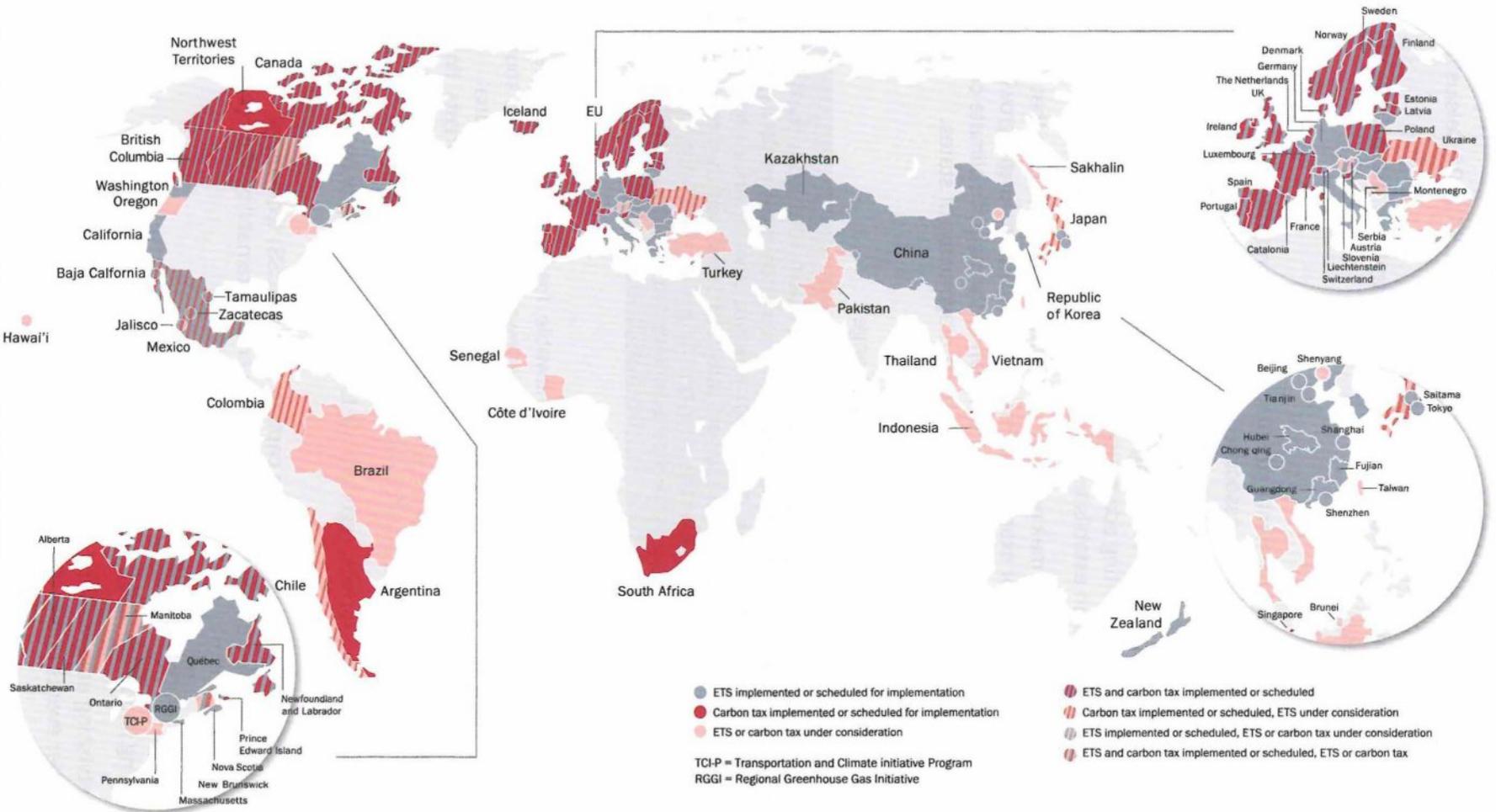
Specific methods of mitigation include:

- decoupling human activities from non-renewable, fossil-fuel-intensive energy resources and transitioning towards more renewable and sustainable sources. This is in turn associated with actions such as states and transnational corporations (TNCs) working towards net-zero carbon emission targets, financially disincentivising carbon emissions either through fossil fuel divestment or carbon pricing mechanisms, and a shift towards an overall decarbonised global economy.
- protecting existing forests, regenerating forests and limiting or halting land clearing.
- developing and advancing carbon capture storage (CSS) technology – however, opinion is divided on the feasibility, viability and sustainability of proposed CSS initiatives.

Specific methods of adaptation include:

- building flood defences
- establishing early warning systems for potential natural disasters and severe weather events due to climate change

Figure 4.2.5 – Map of carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (national and sub-national)

Legend:

- ETS implemented or scheduled for implementation
- Carbon tax implemented or scheduled for implementation
- ETS or carbon tax under consideration

- ETS and carbon tax implemented or scheduled
- Carbon tax implemented or scheduled, ETS under consideration
- ETS implemented or scheduled, ETS or carbon tax under consideration
- ETS and carbon tax implemented or scheduled, ETS or carbon tax

TCI-P = Transportation and Climate Initiative Program
RGGI = Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

- rethinking agricultural practices and, shifting to more sustainable and environmentally friendly farming techniques and planting crops that are more drought resistant

- particularly for low-lying locations, devising inundation and submergence strategies, which may require novel and unconventional approaches towards evacuation, relocation and migration plans.

However, there is no 'one size fits all' solution to adaptation.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change website:

> Successful adaptation not only depends on governments but also on the active and sustained engagement of stakeholders including national, regional, multilateral and international organizations, the public and private sectors, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, as well as effective management of knowledge. Adaptation to the impacts of climate change may be undertaken across various regions, and sectors, and at various levels (UNFCCC, 2022).

Activity 4.2.3 – Independent inquiry research task

1. Read the following list of global actors and their responses to climate change. Select at least three (or other global actors' responses of your own choice) to independently research and investigate.

- States

  - China and the debate over whether China is a 'climate culprit' or a 'climate champion', contrasting its impact as the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter and the direct and indirect environmental and climate change impacts of the country's flagship policy, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), versus China's investment in a more sustainable energy sector, sometimes dubbed the 'Green Leap Forward', as well as China's pledges to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.

  - Germany and the role of renewable energy sources within Germany's energy mix, as well as its 2020 law phasing out coal-powered energy by 2038 (the *Act to Reduce and End Coal-Powered Energy and Amend Other Laws*, otherwise known as the Coal Phase-Out Act).

  - Kiribati as a low-lying Pacific state, confronted with the very real possibility of being submerged by 2050 due to rising sea levels. As a result, it has to seriously consider various adaptation measures, including relocation strategies such as the Migration with Dignity program; New Zealand's Pacific Access Ballot, whereby 75 Kiribati citizens per year are given the opportunity to resettle in New Zealand; the purchase of 6000 acres on Fiji in 2014 to better safeguard food security against the effects of climate change; and plans to use dredging to raise its islands above the rising sea level.

- Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs)

  - The UN's attempts to address climate change through the work and initiatives of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat (UN Climate Change) and its annual Conference of the Parties (COPs), as well as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

- Non-state actors

  - The climate and environmental activism and lobbying initiatives of NGOs like Greenpeace

  - The climate and environmental advocacy of organised religions, like the Catholic Church, in particular the effect of Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical '*Laudato Si*' (Praise Be To You): On care for our common home'.
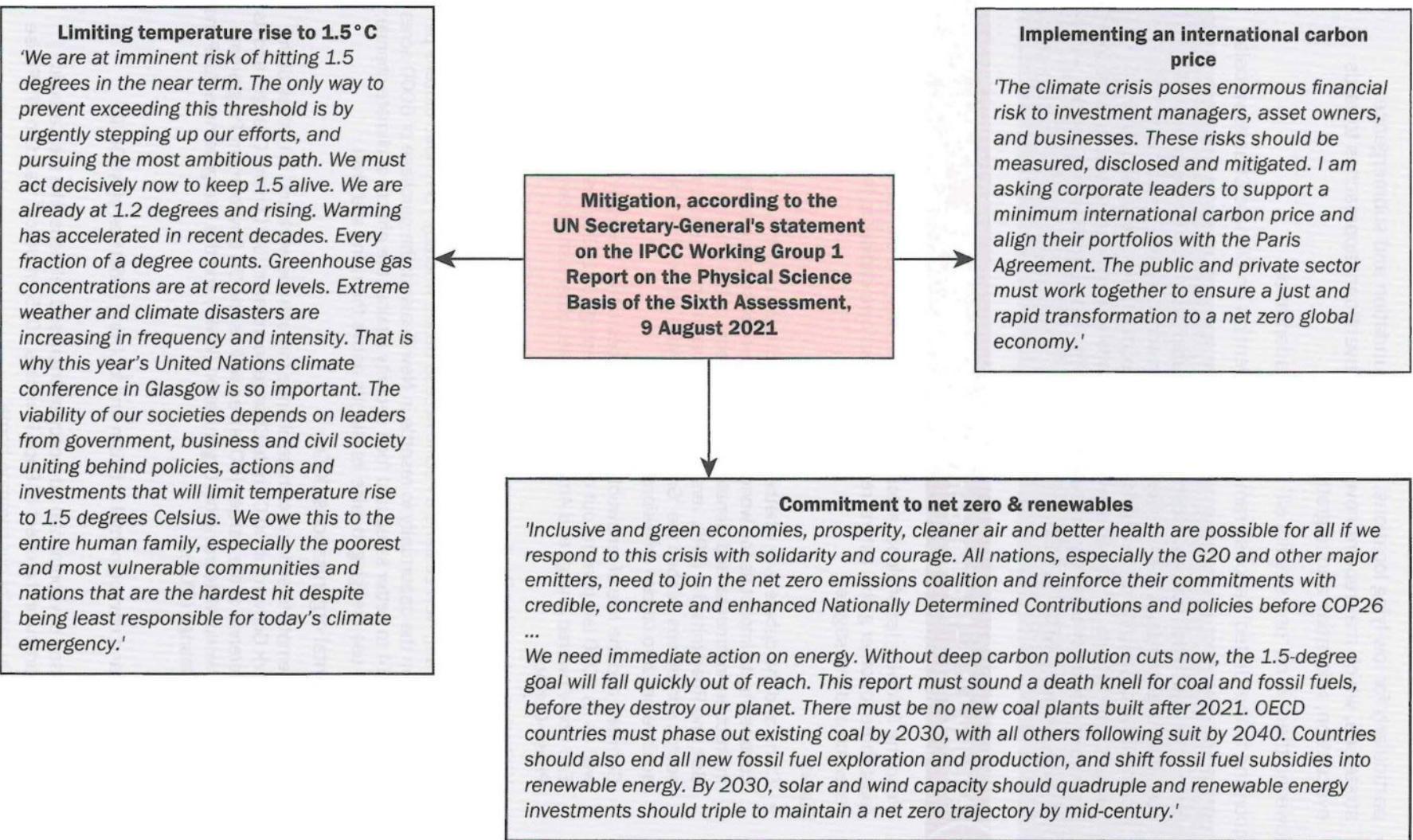
Limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C

'We are at imminent risk of hitting 1.5 degrees in the near term. The only way to prevent exceeding this threshold is by urgently stepping up our efforts, and pursuing the most ambitious path. We must act decisively now to keep 1.5 alive. We are already at 1.2 degrees and rising. Warming has accelerated in recent decades. Every fraction of a degree counts. Greenhouse gas concentrations are at record levels. Extreme weather and climate disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity. That is why this year's United Nations climate conference in Glasgow is so important. The viability of our societies depends on leaders from government, business and civil society uniting behind policies, actions and investments that will limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We owe this to the entire human family, especially the poorest and most vulnerable communities and nations that are the hardest hit despite being least responsible for today's climate emergency.'

Mitigation, according to the UN Secretary-General's statement on the IPCC Working Group 1 Report on the Physical Science Basis of the Sixth Assessment, 9 August 2021

Implementing an international carbon price

'The climate crisis poses enormous financial risk to investment managers, asset owners, and businesses. These risks should be measured, disclosed and mitigated. I am asking corporate leaders to support a minimum international carbon price and align their portfolios with the Paris Agreement. The public and private sector must work together to ensure a just and rapid transformation to a net zero global economy.'

Commitment to net zero & renewables

'Inclusive and green economies, prosperity, cleaner air and better health are possible for all if we respond to this crisis with solidarity and courage. All nations, especially the G20 and other major emitters, need to join the net zero emissions coalition and reinforce their commitments with credible, concrete and enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions and policies before COP26 ...

We need immediate action on energy. Without deep carbon pollution cuts now, the 1.5-degree goal will fall quickly out of reach. This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet. There must be no new coal plants built after 2021. OECD countries must phase out existing coal by 2030, with all others following suit by 2040. Countries should also end all new fossil fuel exploration and production, and shift fossil fuel subsidies into renewable energy. By 2030, solar and wind capacity should quadruple and renewable energy investments should triple to maintain a net zero trajectory by mid-century.'

Figure 4.2.6 – Mitigation responses mentioned by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in his statement on the IPCC Working Group 1 Report (August 2021)

Increase finance for adaptation and resilience

'Climate impacts will undoubtedly worsen. There is a clear moral and economic imperative to protect the lives and livelihoods of those on the front lines of the climate crisis. Adaptation and resilience finance must cease being the neglected half of the climate equation. Only 21 per cent of climate support is directed towards adaptation. I again call on donors and the multilateral development banks to allocate at least 50 per cent of all public climate finance to protecting people, especially women and vulnerable groups.'

Adaptation, according to the UN Secretary-General's statement on the IPCC Working Group 1 Report on the Physical Science Basis of the Sixth Assessment, 9 August 2021

Commitment to financial support of developing countries

'And the decade-old promise to mobilize $100 billion annually to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries must be met.'

Alignment between COVID-19 recovery and the Paris Climate Agreement
'COVID-19 recovery spending must be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement.'

Figure 4.2.7 – Adaptation responses mentioned by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in his statement on the IPCC Working Group 1 Report (August 2021)

- Transnational corporations (TNCs)
  - TNCs such as Walmart, Hewlett Packard and Apple joining the 'We Are Still In' alliance, a joint declaration of support for action on climate change signed by more than 3900 CEOs, mayors, governors, tribal leaders, college presidents and faith leaders. 'We Are Still In' formed in 2017 in response to then President Trump's announcement that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement.
  - 'Project Gigaton', an initiative between Walmart, environmental groups and over 1000 suppliers to cut a billion tons of greenhouse gas pollution from Walmart's global supply chain.

2. Using the revision note template below, write up your research findings for each global actor.

Revision template

Global actor:	Key global actor category:
Overview – who, what, when, where, how and why	
Aims of the response	
Effectiveness of the response	
Ineffectiveness of the response	

Note that the Study Design key skill here asks you to 'explain responses to' and 'evaluate the effectiveness of responses ... by relevant global actors'. You are investigating the what, the how and the why of specific actions taken by several global actors to address climate change. It is worth explicitly interrogating and justifying why your selected responses qualify as attempts at mitigation or adaptation. You need to make an informed judgement call by weighing up evidence that compares the extent to which these actions reflect the ability (or inability) of the global actor to achieve its aim in addressing climate change.

'Effectiveness' is ultimately an exploration of whether or not the actor's intentions (aims, goals) align with some type of concrete achievement (result, outcome) in addressing a part of the crisis, or trying to resolve the crisis entirely. If evidence of such an achievement exists, whereby stated aims materialise into achieved results, then a response is effective. Alternatively, to borrow a line from the Study Design back in Unit 3 Area of Study 2, if there is 'a marked difference between the intentions and results', this implies an actor's response has been ineffective, because they have been unable to bridge the gap between what they want (intentions) and what they end up with (results).

Aim to have a spread of relevant global actors across the key categories: states, regional groupings, IGOs, non-state actors and TNCs. The word 'relevant' here is crucial, as you must examine the responses of contemporary key global actors as per the Study Design. Unfortunately, there is no scope to explore sub-national actors, even though they are very active in responding to climate change.

It is also worth noting the following comment from the Study Design: 'Students discover that … the responses can at times exacerbate the original crisis.' This is particularly true of some states and TNCs.

Activity 4.2.4 – Exam-style short-answer questions

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of two responses from different global actors to the global crisis of climate change.

2. Explain how a global actor's response has exacerbated the global crisis of climate change, either deliberately or inadvertently.

What challenges do global actors face in achieving resolutions to climate change?

Climate change is a 'wicked problem' because effective responses and an overall resolution to this crisis are complex and remain elusive. As the Study Design states:

> Climate change presents policy makers with significant difficulties, some of which stem from responses requiring global cooperation by states at an unprecedented level. Students consider whether national interests prevail over global climate challenges, and how other economic priorities and political factors play a role. (VCAA VCE Australian and Global Politics 2018–2023 Study Design, p. 36)

Mindset

Climate change continues to accelerate because of the prevailing 'extractive value' paradigm: a collective mindset where nature is viewed as property to be owned. This commodification of the natural world means that it is often valued for its potential to create profit, and it is thus reduced to the status of an exploitable resource. In turn, this breeds a culture of economic short-termism that enables relevant global actors (in particular, states and TNCs) to continue emitting greenhouse gases in the short term, which further contributes to long-term global warming.

From the Industrial Revolution (1750 to 1918) onwards, humankind's relationship with nature has increasingly been understood through an anthropocentric, individualistic and exploitative lens. Many individuals, organisations, companies and states treat nature as a product that exists to serve and satisfy our demands. Consider the ways in which fossil-fuel-intensive lifestyles and consumption practices are enmeshed with domestic legal systems and global economic models that enshrine and encourage the idea of human dominance over nature.

By contrast, consider the traditional relationship with nature of some indigenous cultures, which is instead kincentric, collective and regenerative, whereby humanity is

part of nature, not apart from nature, with a collective responsibility to act as stewards (guardians) of the Earth to sustain the natural world.

Yet it is the 'extractive value' paradigm that dominates. In the name of the national interest, states pursue economic prosperity by continuing to exploit natural resources within their sovereign jurisdiction. For example, Australia's single largest export is iron ore, which is part of a very intensive greenhouse-gas-emitting mining process. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia exported a record $14 billion of iron ore in March 2021; Treasury, as at the time of writing, was predicting the value of the iron ore market to increase from $103 billion in 2020 to $136 billion in 2021. It is worth considering that these export figures follow Australia's 2019–2020 Black Summer bushfire season. At the height of those catastrophic fires, 400 climate and fire experts from across the world signed an open letter warning of the ways climate change is increasing bushfire risk in Australia. Similarly, in Brazil, its space agency (INPE; in English The National Institute for Space Research) stated that, deforestation of the Amazon rainforest has increased to its highest level since 2008. The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest and a crucial carbon sink that can slow down global warming. The BBC reported in 2020 that a total of 11,088 square kilometres of the Amazon rainforest was destroyed from August 2019 to July 2020, a 9.5 per cent increase from the previous year. This occurred during the presidency of Jair Bolsanaro (referred to as the 'Trump of the Tropics'), who has openly encouraged agriculture and mining activities in the Amazon.

In the name of profit maximisation, corporations such as fossil fuel companies (whose business model is based on the exploitation of coal, oil and gas reserves) and other large greenhouse-gas-emitting firms continued to participate in practices that further degrade the planet – and are permitted by governments to do so. According to a 2019 *Guardian* report, 20 fossil fuel companies (a mix of shareholder- and state-owned firms) were behind a third of all carbon emissions since 1965, totalling 480 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent ($GtCO_2e$). It is also worth noting that in the years 2016, 2019 and 2020 – which according to the UN's World Meteorological Organization were the warmest years on record – fossil fuel and other large greenhouse-gas-emitting companies dominated the Fortune Global 500's top 10 (an annual ranking of the top 500 corporations worldwide according to revenue).

Because the extractive value paradigm has become so normalised, any alternative form of thinking appears too radical and impractical to implement. However, there is evidence a shift in mindset is underway. The extractive value paradigm is giving way to an indigenous-inspired, moral-based thinking that instead places emphasis on a stewardship and sustainability approach to the natural world, which demands and actively seeks opportunities to halt climate change and protect carbon sinks. Consider the following examples.

- **Fossil-fuel divestment** The *Laudato Si'* Movement (LSM) has been at the forefront of fossil fuel divestment within the Catholic Church, with its divest-reinvest campaign playing a significant role in encouraging approximately 250 Catholic institutions to commit to ending investments in coal, oil and gas industries. Catholic institutions have a strong presence in the divestment movement, and have so far moved an estimated $14.5 trillion away from fossil fuels.

- **The Rights of Nature movement** Rights of Nature promotes the idea that nature should be granted legal personhood and be entitled to its own set of 'human rights' to ensure it is able 'to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles' (from Ecuador's 2008 constitution), rather than be treated as property.

- In 2008, Ecuador became the first state to grant legal rights to nature in the country's constitution. Similar actions have been taken by other state actors.

- Between 2009 and 2012, Bolivia passed a set of Pachamama Laws (The Laws of Mother Earth), which included the right of nature 'to not be affected by mega-infrastructure and development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and the local inhabitant communities'.

- In 2014, the Te Urewera park became the first natural feature to be recognised by New Zealand as a legal person, followed by the Whanganui River in 2017 and Mount Taranaki in 2018.

- In 2019, all rivers in Bangladesh received legal rights.

Activity 4.2.5 - Wider reading structured inquiry task

1. Read the articles about challenges to combating climate change (see links below).

2. Summarise your findings as revision notes, using your preferred summary format.

Axios, 'Why climate change is so hard to tackle: The global problem', 19 August 2019,
www.axios.com/why-climate-change-is-so-hard-to-tackle-the-global-problem-5035a6ec-2d92-4cf9-9926-f763d4481bb4.html

Axios, 'Why climate change is so hard to tackle: Our stubborn energy system', 26 August 2019,
www.axios.com/why-climate-change-is-so-hard-to-tackle-our-stubborn-energy-system-6c8fc596-3c47-477a-82aa-cd00f063c9a0.html

The Brookings Institution, 'The challenging politics of climate change', 23 September 2019,
www.brookings.edu/research/the-challenging-politics-of-climate-change/

Harvard Business Review, 'Why people aren't motivated to address climate change', 11 October 2018,
hbr.org/2018/10/why-people-arent-motivated-to-address-climate-change

MIT Sloan School of Management, 'The 5 greatest challenges to fighting climate change', 27 December 2019,
mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/5-greatest-challenges-to-fighting-climate-change

Project Syndicate, 'The real obstacle to climate action', 20 August 2019,
www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/
climate-rapid-green-transition-losers-by-kemal-dervis-and-sebastian-strauss-2019-08

Project Syndicate, 'Is global climate solidarity impossible?', 10 February 2020,
www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/
global-climate-solidarity-impossible-by-willem-h-buiter-1-2020-02

Vox, '12 excuses for climate inaction and how to refute them', 20 September 2019,
www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/5/17/18626825/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-greta-thunberg-climate-change

Managing change

Climate change cannot be resolved without fundamentally rethinking the interplay between the global economic order, modern industrial societies, and the deep dependence of both on fossil fuels. Any wide-scale decarbonisation stands to create (and aggravate) some short-term 'losers' among those that benefit from the status quo, leading these groups to exert political pressure to protect their interests, which in turn can block and stymie the wholesale reforms and rapid actions required to mitigate climate change.

However, there is evidence that some states are able to effectively manage the transition to a decarbonised economy and compensate any short-term losers of such a transition process, as well as providing a financial incentive for the uptake of sustainable energy sources. Consider the example of Spain's Transicion Justa (Just Transition).

In 2018, the Spanish government negotiated an agreement to close down the country's coal industry. The government negotiated with energy companies and workers' unions, agreeing to invest in replacement industries and fund early retirement for workers.

Spain's renewables industry is flourishing. In May 2021, over 50 per cent of Spain's electricity came from renewables, with the government setting a further target of 74 per cent green electricity by 2030. At the same time Spain's government negotiated Transicion Justa, it also ended the 'sun tax', where Spanish households with solar panels had been paying a 7 per cent tax to stay connected to the grid, resulting in a greater uptake of solar.

Encouraging and enforcing climate compliance

Serious obstacles to mitigating climate change include the quasi-anarchic nature of the global political arena itself and the self-interests of global actors, particularly the national interests of states and the corporate interests of major companies. Because there is no overriding supreme authority that can enforce global climate compliance, large greenhouse-gas-emitting states and companies continue to prioritise their own short-term fossil-fuel-driven economic growth above all other considerations.

The fundamental cause of climate change – namely, human-induced greenhouse gas emissions – and the truly global scale of the crisis mean that an effective resolution will require a level of multilateralism in good faith unlike anything that has been asked of global actors before. Climate change resolutions demand that large greenhouse-gas-emitting states and companies significantly alter their operations, even to the detriment of their own self-interests, for the benefit of a global common good. It requires vast amounts of goodwill and altruism that run counter to the prevailing importance that most states place on realist self-interest and that companies place on the maximisation of profits.

The inability to reconcile the self-interest of individual global actors with a larger cosmopolitan common good that we all have a stake in gives rise to the dilemma of climate 'free riders' versus 'forced riders'. Climate free riders are predominantly responsible for the climate crisis, but do not face (or are better able to adapt to) the immediate climate impacts. Climate forced riders are the actors on the front lines of climate change, even though their contribution to the crisis is minimal. Free rider states and TNCs rationalise that it is in their self-interest to delay decarbonising, letting other actors – the forced riders – do the work of cutting emissions and bearing any short-term economic hits. This rationale is counterproductive in the long term, because these global actors will eventually have to address the consequences of the climate change crisis they themselves have exacerbated. It is also considered by many as unethical, particularly against those low-emitting states that nevertheless find themselves dealing with climate change's consequences. The notion of climate justice demands that developed states and major emitters should shoulder a greater burden in tackling climate change.

As at the time of writing, momentum for meaningful and substantive international cooperation seems to be growing on the issue of emissions reduction targets. Consider the following examples.

- Up to 120 countries have committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.
- As the two largest emitters, China and the United States have found some common ground in their joint global leadership role of addressing climate change. China's President Xi Jinping announced to the UN General Assembly on

22 September 2020 that China would aim to become carbon neutral before 2060. Likewise, at US President Joe Biden's climate summit in April 2021, the United States committed to a 50–52% cut in greenhouse gas emissions on 2005 levels by 2030.

Political will

At the heart of this challenge is whether enough people genuinely care about climate change to come together and compel their governments to do something about it.

Recently, there seems to be a groundswell of motivation among individual citizens to address climate change. Consider how the climate crisis is becoming one of the main political agenda items at both a domestic and a global level. Subsequently, there seems to be a convergence of expert scientific advice, global public pressure and the political will of policymakers at the highest levels of government to undertake the necessary multilateralism to resolve climate change.

Consider the following examples.

- The Peoples' Climate Vote, the largest global opinion survey on climate change, found in late 2020 that 64 per cent of people consider the climate crisis a 'global emergency'.

- Climate change is becoming a key election issue, evidenced by the rise in climate activism in many established democracies, such as the youth-led movement School Strikes for Climate/Fridays for Future, and the pushback by indigenous groups defending their traditional lands from the impacts of climate change. Examples include the Amazonian tribes in Brazil resisting deforestation from illegal logging and land clearing, and the First Nations protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline in the United States.

- In China, there is growing dissatisfaction over environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change on the country. There have been protests in major cities: in 2013, 712 abrupt environmental incidents took place, up 31 per cent from 2012, while citizen petitions related to environmental issues rose from 1.05 million in 2011 to 1.77 million in 2015. Climate change is increasingly being recognised as a crisis that threatens the legitimacy and regime security of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As a result, President Xi Jinping's signature slogan the 'Chinese Dream' includes the notion of 'Beautiful China', which suggests the improvement of China's environmental record.

  A high-profile example of citizen dissatisfaction occurred in March 2015, with the release of *Under the Dome*, produced by Chai Jing, a former Chinese state television reporter. This documentary investigating pollution and air quality went viral, with 100 million views in 48 hours and 280 million posts on China's social media platform Sino Weibo. Just over a week after its release, *Under the Dome* was censored by authorities and removed from video sites, as was an interview with Chai on the website of central news organisation People's Daily. Chinese media were prohibited from reporting on the film. Although the CCP's censorship may suggest a lack of political will for action on climate change, it is precisely this type of silencing that shows the kind of pressure the CCP is under to take urgent climate action.

Activity 4.2.6 – Structured inquiry research task

1. Read the articles about aspects of climate change (see links below).

2. Summarise your findings as revision notes, using your preferred summary format.

3. Use your research findings to attempt the following practice exam-style question: Using contemporary examples and/or case studies, analyse three key aspects of the global crisis of climate change.

Resource exploitation

CNBC, 'Inside the world's first diplomatic alliance to keep oil and gas in the ground', 20 September 2021,
www.cnbc.com/2021/09/20/oil-and-gas-inside-the-diplomatic-alliance-to-keep-fossil-fuels-in-the-ground.html

DW, 'Earth Overshoot Day moves forward by nearly a month', 29 July 2021,
www.dw.com/en/earth-overshoot-day-moves-forward-by-nearly-a-month/a-58612967

UN Environment Program, 'We're gobbling up the Earth's resources at an unsustainable rate', 3 April 2019,
www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/were-gobbling-earths-resources-unsustainable-rate

UN Water, 'Water and climate change', www.unwater.org/water-facts/climate-change/

National interests

Climate Council, 'Compound costs: How climate change is damaging Australia's economy', 14 May 2019,
www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/costs-of-climate-change-report-v3.pdf

DW, 'Climate change – India battles to balance economy and environment', 6 November 2017,
www.dw.com/en/climate-change-india-battles-to-balance-economy-and-environment/a-41222773

The Strategist, 'Climate change poses a "direct threat" to Australia's national security', Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 9 October 2019,
www.aspistrategist.org.au/climate-change-poses-a-direct-threat-to-australias-national-security/

Yale Climate Connections, 'Rejoining global fight against climate change: In the US's national interest', 23 October 2020,
yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/10/rejoining-the-global-fight-against-climate-change-in-the-u-s-national-interest/

Methods of adapting to and reducing climate change

BBC News, 'What is climate change mitigation?', 13 April 2014,
http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-26980837

NASA – Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 'Responding to climate change', 28 September 2021,
climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/

UN Climate Change, 'What do adaptation to climate change and climate resilience mean?'
unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/what-do-adaptation-to-climate-change-and-climate-resilience-mean

Exam-style short essays

4. 'Climate change remains a wicked problem, however, despite the challenges, effective responses prove a resolution to the crisis is possible.' Assess the accuracy of this statement.

5. 'International cooperation and globalisation remain both the biggest hurdles and the best hopes to resolving the crisis of climate change.' Discuss the accuracy of this statement.

Armed conflict

What are the causes of armed conflict? What are the key aspects of armed conflict? How have global actors responded to armed conflict and how effective are their responses? What challenges do global actors face in achieving resolutions to armed conflict?

Armed conflict in the twenty-first century

A cursory look at the news will tell us, in graphic and minute detail, that currently there are a number of significant armed conflicts occurring in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Nigeria and South Sudan.

Many of these armed conflicts have attracted significant global media attention. They are truly tragic events, with horrific acts occurring on a regular basis. Yet there are other armed conflicts, notably in Africa, that for various reasons attract very little attention from the international media. These under-reported armed conflicts also result in many casualties.

An examination of available data tells us that we actually find ourselves living in relatively peaceful times – at least in regards to the number of casualties from armed conflict, as shown in 4.2.8.

Yet despite these more 'peaceful times', armed conflict remains a significant instrument of state power. In fact, world history tells us that it is unlikely ever to be eradicated.

Another emerging trend has been that a society's tolerance or acceptance of military and civilian casualties in armed conflicts has diminished significantly. In the current media environment of rapid-cycle broadcasting and reporting, even smaller incidents and events garner significant coverage, leaving an indelible impression on the consciousness of many people around the world.

Figure 4.2.8– Estimates of battle-related deaths, 1946–2018
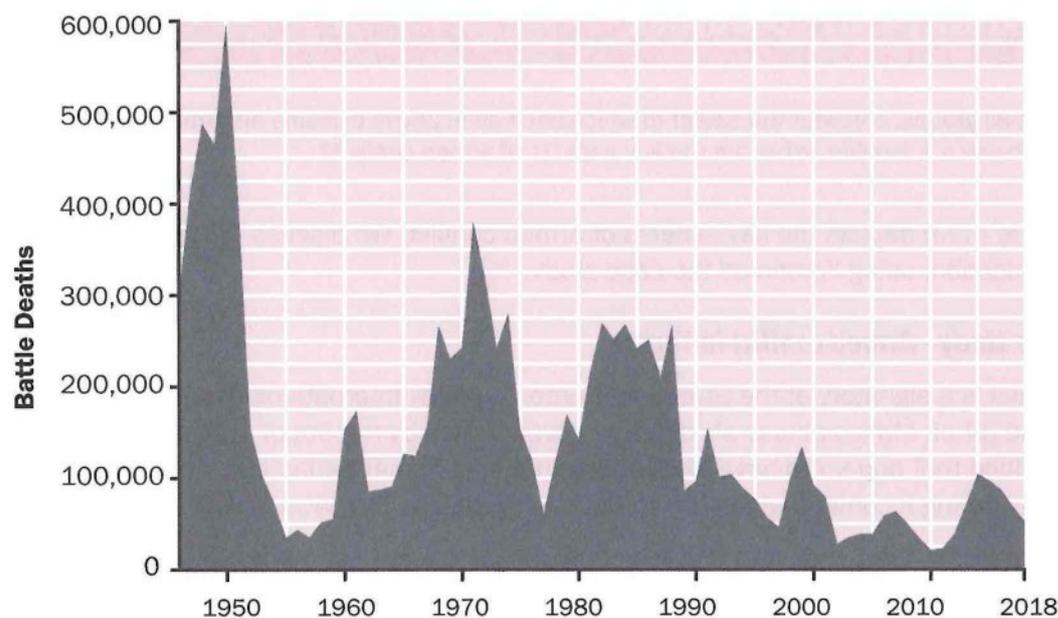
Source: Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO); https://www.prio.org/publications/11349

What are the causes of armed conflict?

On one level, this question is nearly impossible to answer. Despite there having been many hundreds of thousands of armed conflicts in recorded human history, there is no single coherent and consistent theory that adequately explains why armed conflict occurs. Instead, there are a number of different theories that explain the general causes of some armed conflicts.

Thomas Hobbes (Pinker, 2011, p. 56), the seventeenth-century English philosopher who is considered to be one of the founders of modern political philosophy, identified three principle causes of conflict:

- predatory raids (for gains)
- pre-emptive raids (for safety)
- retaliatory raids (for honour).

This short list is remarkably robust and has withstood the test of time quite well. This simple list has been expanded to now include:

- genetic and evolutionary biology theories: the idea that aggression has a genetic function within humans; a function that maximises our long-term changes of survival
- behaviourist theories: the idea that war is learned behaviour
- cost–benefit theories: the idea that we can profit from wars (up to a point)
- ecological theories: the idea that wars are fought over scarce resources or issues related to climate change
- social/cultural theories: the idea that differences of ethnicity or religion cause conflict.

Source: http://www.irenees.net/bdf_fiche-analyse-642_en.html

Activity 4.2.7 – Discussion

In small groups, consider the extent to which each point above explains an armed conflict with which you are familiar. What are the key aspects of armed conflict?

Figure 4.2.9 depicts the key aspects of armed conflict. We discuss these throughout this section, using Yemen as the case study.

Case study – Armed conflict in Yemen

Yemen is a signatory of the Statute of Rome. Amnesty International has documented some 34 air strikes across six different governorates by the Saudi Arabian–led coalition that appear to have violated international humanitarian law – the rules that apply during a conflict, which are sometimes known as the 'laws of war'.

Since 2015, the Saudi- and UAE-led coalition has carried out many indiscriminate and disproportionate air strikes on civilian targets, hitting homes, schools, hospitals, markets, mosques, weddings and funerals. Amnesty International documented 42 coalition air strikes that appear to have violated international humanitarian law, many of which amount to war crimes. These have resulted in 518 civilian deaths and 433 civilians injured.

Figure 4.2.9 – Conceptualising the key aspects of armed conflict

Study Design Key Skills
analyse key aspects of ...
Instructional verb – 'analyse' =
inquiry into something by putting it under the microscope, appreciating the detail of core components

Global Crisis: Armed Conflict

ASPECTS
Part of/feature of something
Synonyms: facets, characteristics, details, components

Aspect 1
Intervention

Aspect 2
War as an instrument of state policy

Aspect 3
Prosecuting war crimes under international law

On 28 June 2019, a precision-guided munition made in the United States was used in a coalition air strike on a residential home in the governorate of Taiz, killing six civilians. Among those killed were three children. On 1 September 2019, an air strike on a Houthi-controlled detention facility in the south-western city of Dhamar killed 130 detainees and injured 40 others.

Fighters from both sides have used imprecise weapons, such as artillery and mortar fire and Grad rocket launchers, in heavily populated civilian areas. They have also operated in residential neighbourhoods, launching attacks from or near homes, schools and hospitals. All these attacks are serious violations of international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes (Amnesty International, 2015).

In October 2016, a Saudi-led air attack killed 100 people and wounded several hundred others who were attending a funeral in Sana'a. According to Human Rights Watch (2016) this was an 'apparent war crime'. These accusations are very serious but verifying the acts during the ongoing conflict is very difficult due to significant security concerns. In the long term, the issues may centre around whether alleged perpetrators will ever be brought to justice. Amnesty, therefore, chose to make a representation to the UN Human Rights Council in February 2017 (Amnesty International, 2017).

There is a question as to whether the UN Security Council would ever refer alleged war crimes in Yemen to the International Criminal Court. If Amnesty's claims are to be believed, there is potential for a referral, even though Yemen has signed but not ratified the Rome Statute and so its status remains uncertain.

President Hadi's return to authority of government would be the preferred outcome for Saudi Arabia and its key Western allies, the United States and the United Kingdom. In this event, the prosecution of alleged war crimes by the government is unlikely to be referred to the ICC as the United States and the UK are both permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council, and therefore have the power to veto any Security

Council resolution. This would stall any action built upon the international rule of law and international cooperation.

Yemen has been afflicted with tribal and sectarian armed conflicts since unification in 1990. Situated on the south-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is the second largest state in the peninsula, occupying 527,970 km square, and has a population of more than 30.5 million people (worldometers.info). According to the World Bank, Yemen is also the poorest state in the Middle East.

Figure 4.2.10 – Administrative divisions of Yemen

Map of Yemen courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries.

Key dates in Yemen's history between 1918 and 2014

- October 1918 – Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the independent state of Yemen (which would later become North Yemen) is established.

- November 1967 – The British colony of Aden and the Aden Protectorate are united as South Yemen when the British withdraw as a result of a guerrilla war. South Yemen becomes a Marxist dictatorship.

- May 1990 – The unification of North and South Yemen is declared. Ali Abdullah Saleh, president of North Yemen since 1978, becomes president of the unified Republic of Yemen.

- May to July 1994 – Civil war begins with separatists from old South Yemen attempting to secede. Secession is short-lived and crushed by the Yemeni government.

- June to September 2004 – Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi leads an uprising of the Ansar Allah (Supporters of God) in response to what they describe as discrimination and aggression against their community. Hussein al-Houthi is killed in September.

- March 2005 to March 2006 – Fighting resumes between the government and Ansar Allah (by now generally referred to as Houthis). In March 2006, 600 captured Houthis are released under amnesty. The fighting ends, or at least pauses, before the presidential election.

- September 2006 – Ali Abdullah Saleh is re-elected for another presidential term with just over 77 per cent of the vote.

- January to June 2007 – Houthis and the government resume fighting – ending in a ceasefire, with rebels handing over heavy weaponry and their leaders going into exile.

- August 2009 to February 2010 – The government launches Operation Scorched Earth against the Houthis. Military casualties on both sides amount to about 1000, the civilian casualties to maybe 8000, and the number of displaced persons to perhaps as many as 250,000. A ceasefire is declared in February 2010. An Al-Jazeera correspondent states, 'It's a huge development – the opposition, the government, the Houthi seem all to agree this is a breakthrough, a turning point for Yemen'.

- January to June 2011 – As the Arab Spring takes hold across the region, large demonstrations are held in Yemen. President Saleh announces that neither he nor his son will stand for the next presidential election in 2013. A period of negotiations leads to fighting in Sana'a. On 3 June, an assassination attempt leaves Saleh badly injured and he is flown to Saudi Arabia for treatment. In his absence, Vice-President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi takes over temporarily. Protests and violence continue over the ensuing months. The Houthis are largely bystanders in these developments, although clashes continue in Houthi territory.

- November 2011 to February 2012 – Amid ongoing street violence, President Saleh, having returned to Yemen, agrees to hand over power to Hadi in return for immunity from prosecution for him and his family. Hadi is elected to the presidency in February 2012, unopposed.

- February 2014 – A presidential panel gives approval for Yemen to become a federation of six regions as part of its political transition.

Causes of the Yemen War

As in many other states in the Middle East, Yemen's current troubles are considered part of the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a set of protests in North Africa and the Middle East that occurred between December 2010 and the early months of 2011. The protests took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen, as well as on a smaller scale in Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

These political and social upheavals began in Tunisia as a series of protests against the long-standing authoritarian government of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. In an unexpected development, President Ben-Ali, realising his authority was diminished, abruptly stepped down on 11 January 2011.

The protests and successful revolution against Ben Ali in Tunisia sparked further protests elsewhere in the region. For example, Egyptian citizens were preparing their own protests against the authoritarian presidency of Hosni Mubarak (who had been in office since 1981), which subsequently collapsed when Mubarak resigned on 11 February. Similar and more violent revolts spread to Libya, and there were less-violent protests in Bahrain.

The unexpected and wide-reaching ramifications of the initial turmoil in Tunisia were events no one anticipated, spreading across many states and leading to political, economic and social tumult. So why did the Arab Spring happen? Ultimately, it was because of events and issues specific to each state, but some factors were common across several states in 2010 and 2011. These included:

- high rates of unemployment and poverty
- authoritarian regimes
- endemic corruption
- use of social media
- the role of state military.

The Arab Spring and Yemen

Popular protests spread to Yemen, where Ali Abdullah Saleh had been president since 1990. While President Saleh retained his tight grip on power, despite a mounting cycle of tribal violence, he was encouraged to sign a brokered peace plan which was negotiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and accepted by the Yemeni opposition (https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/yemen4.htm).

Former president Ali Abdullah Saleh

Under the peace plan, all parties were to agree to a ceasefire and Saleh and his family would be granted immunity and allowed to leave Yemen to live in exile. But Saleh asked for some modifications and then later refused to sign the agreement. The GCC suspended the peace plan and fighting resumed. Saleh was badly injured in a failed assassination attempt, which then saw Vice-President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi assuming operational control of the government.

Saleh returned to Yemen in 2012 but, under a new plan brokered with the GCC, he formally handed over power to President Hadi, which laid the groundwork for an election where Hadi was the only candidate. There would also have been the creation of a new constitution, which converted Yemen into a federation of six regions.

These actions were rejected by the main opposition group from the north, the Houthis, who claimed they would be disadvantaged by the changes. Soon after, the Houthis launched a strike against the government in Yemen's capital, Sana'a. In September 2014, the Houthi rebels aligned with former president Saleh and captured the capital in an attempt to overthrow the government.

Former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. Photo: www.kremlin.ru

The Houthis retook Sana'a in January 2015. By March 2015, as rebel forces pushed further south, President Hadi fled. The group had gained control over large swathes of western Yemen, the most populous region of the country. See Figure 4.2.11 for a geographical look at the territory held by Houthis as at October 2020.

Figure 4.2.11 – Zones of control in Yemen, October 2020
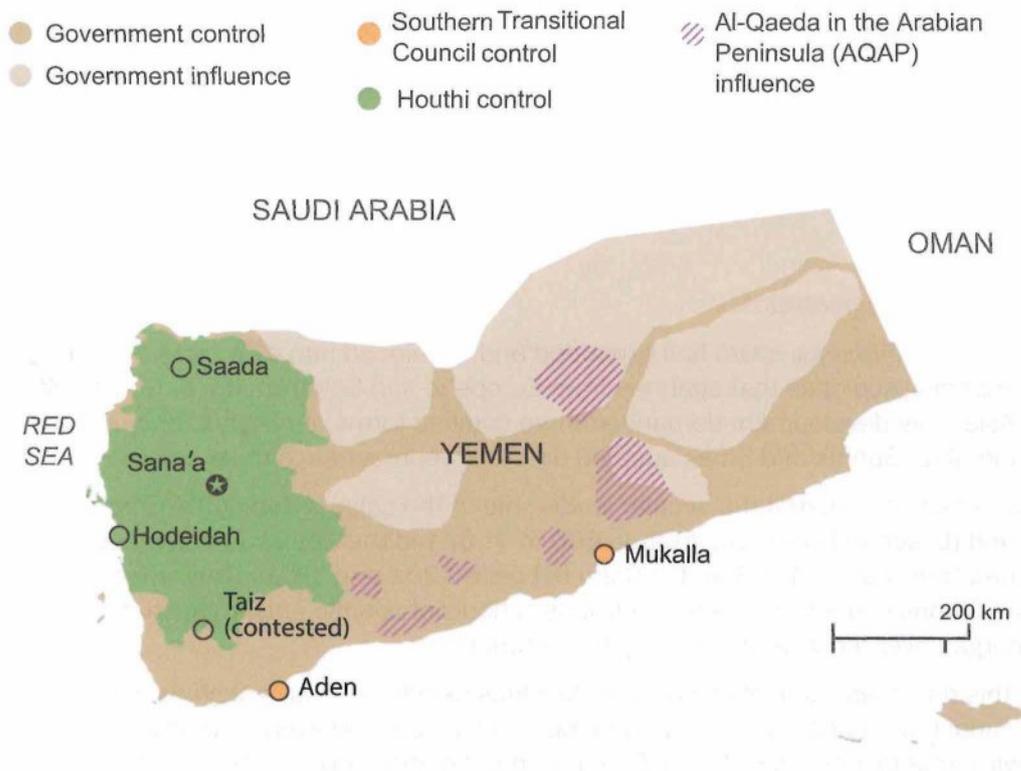
Source: www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen

For more maps relating to the Yemen conflict, see http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen.

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia formed a coalition with Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Senegal and Sudan to intervene on President Hadi's behalf. This coalition was supported indirectly by the United States and the United Kingdom. In March 2015 Operation Decisive Storm commenced (Al Arabiya News, 2015).

The Saudi Arabia–Iran struggle

One of the biggest drivers of conflict in Yemen is the ongoing tension and violence between the Sunni and Shia Islamic groups. The current wars in Syria and Yemen are split largely along Sunni and Shia lines.

But this 'conflict' isn't really about religion, even if the fault lines are primarily religious. Rather, it's driven by the struggle for influence between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both states are theocracies. Theocracy is government by divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided. In many theocracies, government leaders are members of the clergy and the state's legal system is based on religious law.

The tensions between these regional powers are further complicated because Iran claims to represent the world's Shia while Saudi Arabia claims to represent Sunnis – they have sought to fight one another on Sunni–Shia lines, making that religious division much more violent.

However, this description downplays the extent of Yemen's significant internal divisions. In weaker states, Iran and Saudi Arabia have tried to position themselves as the patrons of their respective religious clans so as to assert influence, and they have ramped up sectarianism to promote fear of the other side.

Sectarianism is just a tool. But sectarian violence has become a reality as militias and political parties are formed and then respond along sectarian lines.

The involvement of Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen plays into a larger struggle between the two regional powers for influence in the wider Muslim world. The two states have engaged in a cold war for decades, but the armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen are the closest they have come to open confrontation.

After seven years of horrific fighting, the conflict is, in essence, a mutually hurting stalemate. Neither side looks able to declare victory or completely overwhelm the other side.

Leadership disagreements

Since its beginnings, Islam has expanded and developed into ever more complex and overlapping societies that spanned from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa to Asia. This development demanded more codified forms of religious and political leadership. Sunnis and Shias adopted different approaches to these issues.

Sunni Muslims trusted the secular leadership of the caliphs during the Ummayad period (based in Damascus from AD 660 to 750) and the Abbasid period (based in Iraq from 750 to 1258 and in Cairo between 1261 and 1517). Their theological foundations came from the four religious schools of Islamic jurisprudence that emerged over the seventh and eighth centuries.

To this day, these schools help Sunni Muslims decide on issues such as worship, criminal law, gender and family, banking and finance, and even bioethical and environmental concerns. Today, Sunnis comprise about 80 to 90 per cent of the global Muslim population.

Shias instead relied on imams as their spiritual leaders, as they believed them to be divinely appointed leaders from among the prophet's family. Shia Muslims continue to maintain that the prophet's family are the sole genuine leaders. In the absence of the leadership of direct descendants, Shias appoint representatives to rule in their place (often called ayatollahs). Shias are a minority of the global Muslim population, although they have strong communities in Iraq, Pakistan, Albania, Yemen, Lebanon and Iran. There are also different sects within Shia Islam.

Other disputes that continue to exacerbate the divide include issues of theology, practice and geopolitics.

When it comes to theology Sunnis and Shias draw from different Hadith traditions. Hadith are the reports of the words and deeds of the prophet and are considered an authoritative source of revelation, second only to the Quran. They provide a biographical sketch of the prophet and context to Quranic verses, and are used by Muslims in the application of Islamic law to daily life. Shias favour those that come from the prophet's family and closest associates, while Sunnis cast a broader net for Hadith that includes a wide array of the prophet's companions.

Abu Bakr became the first caliph and Ali became the fourth caliph. However, Ali's leadership was challenged by Aisha, the prophet's wife and daughter of Abu Bakr. Aisha and Ali went to battle against each other near Basra, Iraq, in the Battle of the Camel in AD 656. Aisha was defeated, but the roots of division were deepened. Subsequently, Mu'awiya, the Muslim governor of Damascus, also went to battle against Ali, further exacerbating the divisions in the community.

Those Muslims who put their faith in Abu Bakr came to be called Sunni ('those who follow the Sunna': the sayings, deeds and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) and those who trusted in Ali came to be known as Shia (a contraction of 'Shiat Ali', meaning 'partisans of Ali').

Figure 4.2.12 – Where Sunnis and Shias live in the Middle East

WHERE SUNNIS & SHIAS
LIVE IN SOUTH ASIA &
THE MIDDLE EAST
☐ Mostly Sunni
■ Mostly Shia
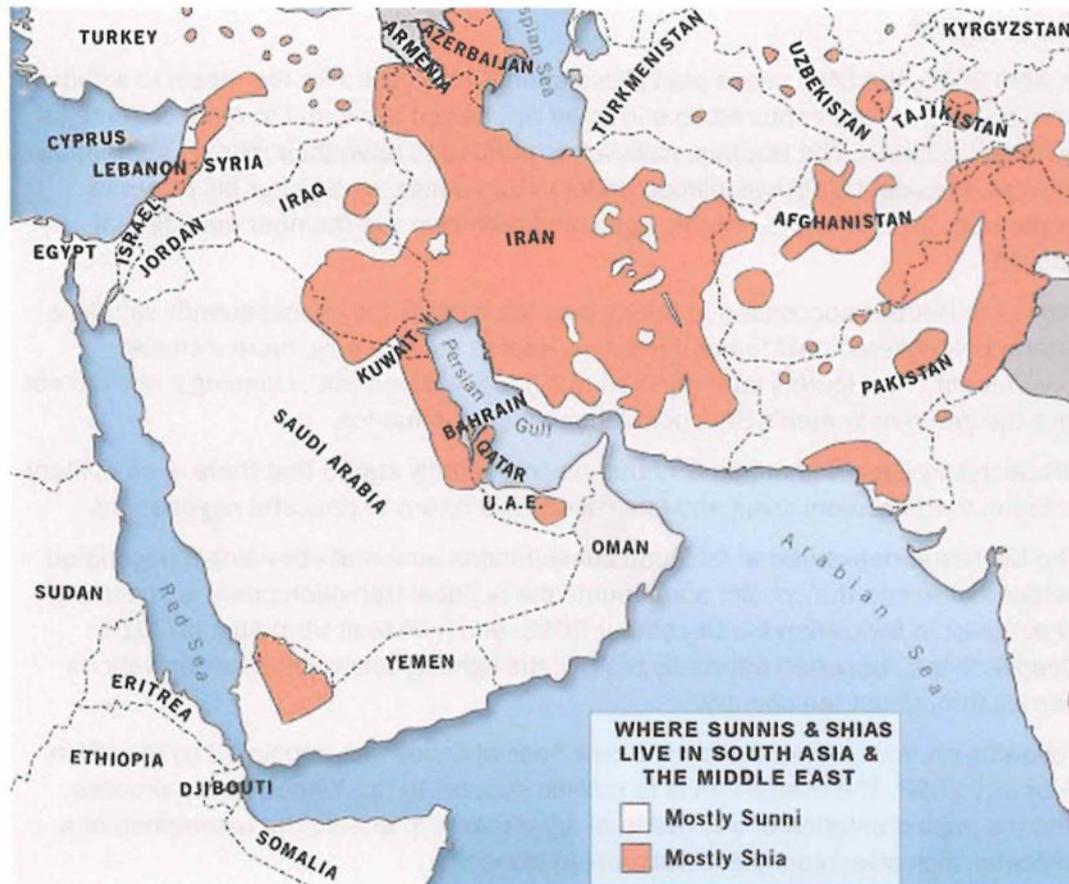
From Naser, V. 2007. 'The Shia Revival'. Retrieved from https://www.vox.com/a/maps-explain-the-middle-east

In the years that followed, Mu'awiya assumed the caliphate and founded the Ummayad Dynasty. Ali's youngest son, Hussein – born of Fatima, the prophet's daughter – led a group of partisans in Kufa, Iraq, against Mu'awiya's son Yazid. This battle, known as the Battle of Karbala, holds enormous historical and religious significance for the Shias.

Hussein was killed and his forces defeated. For the Shia community, Hussein became a martyr. The day of the battle is commemorated every year on the Day of Ashura, held on the tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic lunar calendar. Scores of pilgrims visit Hussein's shrine in Karbala and many Shia communities participate in symbolic acts of flagellation and suffering.

See Figure 4.2.12 for a geographical explanation of the divide between Shia and Sunni Muslims.

Activity 4.2.8 - Review question

Explain two causes of armed conflict or the conflict in Yemen.

Responses of global actors and their effectiveness

United Nations

In April 2015, the UN's peace plan (Resolution 2216) called for the rebels to withdraw from areas they had captured, to surrender any seized arms and to respect Yemen's political transition. The Houthis, however, continued to drive their military supremacy forward. President Hadi was placed under virtual house arrest after his return in September 2015 and the Houthis appointed their own five-member presidential council.

While the Houthis succeeded in taking over the capital, they subsequently withdrew after a UN-brokered deal forced President Hadi to name a new, more inclusive government. The Houthis later rejected this 'unity government', claiming it still did not give the group or Yemen's Shia population enough influence.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly stated that there is no military solution to the Yemeni crisis and has called for a return to peaceful negotiations.

The UN has endeavoured to facilitate consultations aimed at obtaining a negotiated settlement to end the conflict and resume the political transition process, including direct talks in Switzerland in December 2015, and in Kuwait from August 2016. Despite these concerted efforts by the UN, the fighting continues between various parties throughout the country.

Following on from previous efforts, a new Special Envoy was appointed by the UN in February 2018. The overall aim is to provide support to the Yemen peace process, and the implementation of any eventual agreements to enable the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led transition.

Conflict in Yemen today

The ongoing war in Yemen is driven by local grievances and competition for power among several Yemeni actors. The Houthis and former president Saleh want to overturn the political order that emerged after the uprisings of 2011. Saleh wants to return to power, having lost the presidency in the wake of popular protests, while the Houthis want a greater say in national affairs. In other words, the Houthis want in, Saleh wants back in and the groups supporting President Hadi want to keep them both out of power.

Many international observers describe the Yemen conflict as a sectarian proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, this narrow description downplays the extent of Yemen's significant internal divisions such as regional warlords, long-standing divisions between the former North Yemen and South Yemen, and the divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims. Nonetheless, the involvement of Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen plays into a larger struggle between the two regional powers.

Houthis

Also known as Ansar Allah (Partisans of God), Houthis are Zaydi Muslims and their homelands are in the northern province Saada. They take their name from former Yemeni parliamentarian Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, who launched a rebellion against President Saleh's government in 2004 (https://medium.com/@drabdoalbahesh/the-emergence-and-development-of-houthi-movement-in-yemen-22a18bcc7281).

The Houthis are a Shia group whose origins lie in the Shabab al-Mumanin (the Believing Youth) – a group that operated in the early 1990s. The Believing Youth

worked to raise awareness about the Zaydi branch of Shia Islam, which dominated Yemen for centuries but was sidelined after a civil war in the 1960s and repressed by the government.

After the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Hussein al-Houthi, one of the leaders of the Believing Youth, began staging anti-American protests and became a vocal critic of President Saleh. After clashes between his followers and the 'government, he was killed by Yemeni government forces.

Houthis carrying their weapons as they march to protest against Saudi-led air strikes, during a rally in Sana'a, Yemen; AP via AAP, photo: Hani Mohammed

Following his death, the group was renamed after him. The insurgency continued and was led by those related to Hussein al-Houthi. His younger brother Abdul-Malik al-Houthi is the current leader.

A lengthy armed conflict with the government turned many of the Houthis from activists to seasoned insurgents and the government's harsh tactics in the north gave the Houthis a broad set of allies. While they negotiated a ceasefire with the government in 2010, large protests against President Saleh in 2011 offered them a new opportunity. The group took advantage of this, consolidating their control in the north-west, and took part in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) after President Saleh stepped down from power.

The Houthi rebels have gained more influence and power in Yemen's conflict as a result of several political events and tactical military measures that have played out to their advantage. On the political side, the Houthis have benefited from the change of administration in Washington, which lifted the terrorism designation of their movement. They continue to engage in UN processes that acknowledge and respect their presence as an armed non-state actor, a status that they seem to enjoy. And because most attention in Yemen is focused on the humanitarian catastrophe created by the Saudi intervention, the Houthis want the latitude to continue committing humanitarian abuses against the local population with impunity. Most of the political privileges that the Houthis enjoy today will cease to exist if they are not in power.

On the military front, the Houthis have tightened their grip on the areas they control and they continue to go deeper into critical government-affiliated areas. This increased appetite for expansion can be traced back to the December 2018 UN-facilitated Stockholm Agreement. At that time, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths brokered a deal between the government of Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and the Houthi, which was centred on stopping Hadi's government and his backers from taking back the city of Hodeida from the insurgents.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, a Sunni Islamic state, constitutes the bulk of the Arab Peninsula (2,150,000 square km). It also shares a porous 1770 km border with Yemen in its south.
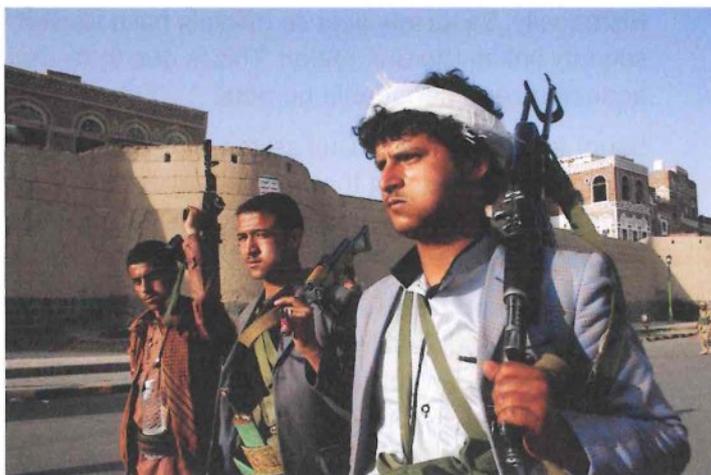
Historically, Saudi intelligence officials have viewed Yemen as being the weakest security link in the Gulf region. This is due to its state of internal conflict, a tribalised population and permeable borders.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states were strong backers of President Hadi's administration, fearing that the instability could threaten their own security. The Saudis feared the rise of a strong Shia influence in Yemen, especially as they were dealing with protests at home by their own oppressed Shia population.

The Saudis and exiled President Hadi have also claimed that the Houthi rebels are proxies for Saudi Arabia's regional rival, Iran. They've justified the intervention in Yemen as a means of preventing Iran from taking control of a government that is more or less in Saudi Arabia's backyard.

Yet despite Saudi Arabia's vast wealth, superior war machinery (purchased from the West), and significant support across the Middle East and in the West, the conflict has not gone well. In the past few years, the Saudi-backed government remains in exile and the Houthi retain control of the capital and the majority of the provinces where the population live.

Now the Saudis are very keen to talk of peace deals and to bring this awful humanitarian conflict to a conclusion. The Houthi, however, are in a superior position and so are less interested in compromising.

Saudi Arabia's Western allies

Saudi Arabia has been a key strategic ally for both the United Kingdom and the United States for purposes of security and prosperity. An essential source of Western oil reserves, Saudi Arabia has also been a staunch supporter of Western states in a region that has historically been hostile to them.

Saudi Arabia's 2016 defence spending was US$57.6 billion with much of that spent on state-of-the-art equipment from defence companies in the United States and the United Kingdom. In May 2017, Saudi Arabia signed a US$110 billion defence equipment and services deal with the United States (Caffrey, 2016).

This relationship is vital for all parties but has become more complicated in recent years due to Saudi Arabia's poor human rights record in Yemen, to being the home state of Osama Bin-Laden, and to its somewhat indifferent attitude to international law.

Arms sales to Saudi Arabia

Since the outbreak of the conflict in Yemen, both the United States and the United Kingdom have not only maintained but increased their military sales to Saudi Arabia. The United States has exported some US$20 billion worth of arms, while the United Kingdom has exported approximately £3 billion worth. These actions, while on one level pragmatic and realistic for both the United States and

US President Donald Trump and King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia sign a Joint Strategic Vision Statement in Saudi Arabia, photo: commons.wikimedia.org

the United Kingdom, have probably intensified the scale of the conflict in Yemen and led to more casualties.

In 2020, then UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said: 'In the light of all that information and analysis, I have concluded that ... Saudi Arabia has a genuine intent and the capacity to comply with international humanitarian law ... on that basis, I have assessed that there is not a clear risk that the export of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia might be used in the commission of a serious violation.' (www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-53324251)

In a written statement to parliament, then foreign minister Boris Johnson said:

> The key test for our continued arms exports to Saudi Arabia in relation to international humanitarian law is whether those weapons might be used in a commission of a serious breach of international humanitarian law. Having regard to all the information available to us, we assess this test has not been met. (Wintour, 2016)

In May 2017, then US President Donald Trump, on his first overseas trip as president, visited Saudi Arabia, publicly thanked the kingdom for its support, reiterated the strong relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia and signed a new arms sales agreement worth US$110 billion (David, 2017). Some commentators, such as Bruce Riedel, believe this announcement was an example of 'fake news' (Riedel, 2017). Saudi Arabia is the biggest buyer of US arms.

Nonetheless, this was a significant about-face from the position of the Obama administration, which in its last weeks (December 2016) blocked the sale of about 16,000 guided munitions kits to Saudi Arabia, valued at around US$350 million. These kits upgrade so-called 'dumb bombs' to smart bombs that can more accurately hit targets.

The non-state actor Human Rights Watch has campaigned for these sales to Saudi Arabia to be stopped until allegations of gross human rights violations in Yemen can be thoroughly investigated (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

In July 2017, the UK High Court ruled that Britain's multi-billion-pound arms sales to Saudi Arabia were lawful. The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) had sought an order to block the export licences for British-made bombs, fighter jets and other munitions.

The campaigners argued that these arms were being used by the Saudi-led Arab coalition in Yemen in violation of international humanitarian law. The court ruled that there had been extensive political and military engagement with Saudi Arabia regarding the conduct of operations in Yemen and the Saudis had 'sought positively to address concerns about international humanitarian law' (Al Jazeera, 2017).

The election of Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States of America appears to have ended the very friendly and positive relationship that Saudi Arabia enjoyed with the Trump administration. President Biden announced in February 2021 plans to suspend the sale of many offensive military weapons to Saudi Arabia approved under the Trump administration, but it will continue to allow the sale of other matériel that can be construed to have a defensive purpose only.

The new policy suspended the sale of air-to-ground offensive weapons used by fixed-wing aircraft — mainly fighter jets and drones — to Saudi Arabia. This includes guided munitions kits. The suspension is aimed at addressing one of the main concerns in the Yemen war: the killing of civilians, including many children, because of the use of such bombs by the Saudi-led coalition.

*Figure 4.2.13 – Value of US arms exports in 2021, by country (in million US dollars, *TIV)*
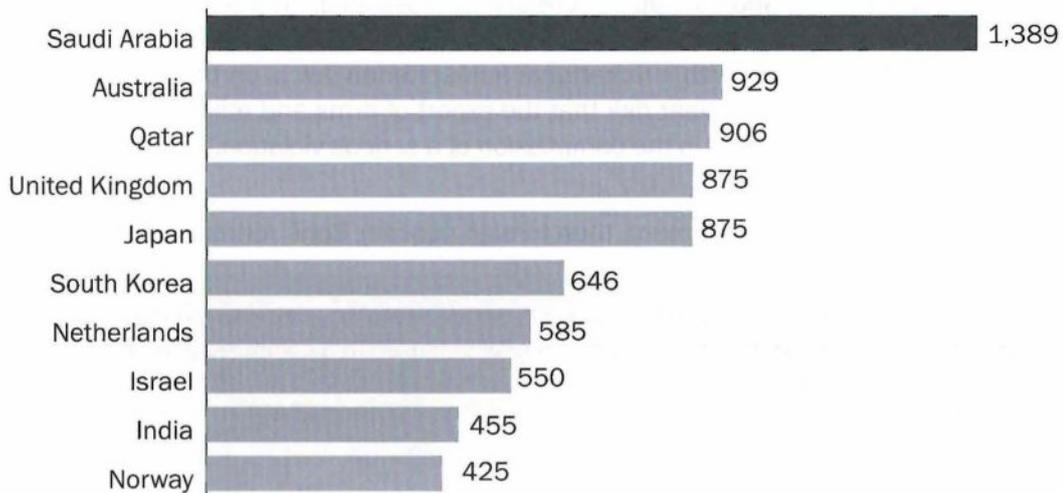
* TIV (trend-indicator value) is based on the known unit production costs
of weapons and represents the transfer of military resources rather than the
financial value of the transfer.

Adapted from Statista – https://www.statista.com/statistics/248552/us-arms-exports-by-country/

Iran

Iran is the Houthis' primary international backer and has reportedly provided them with military support, including weapons. This conflict has been a useful, low-cost way for Iran, the world's largest Shia Muslim state, to keep its main rival, Saudi Arabia, off-balance and under pressure in the regional power battle.

Iran wants to gain access in Yemen so that it can pressure its regional rivals to oppose the United States' Middle East interests. It also seeks to boost its deterrence capabilities by arming its partners so that they can retaliate against US interests or partners in the event of a future regional war. Iran uses these ties to build influence in the weak policies of more fragile states, aiming to position itself as an indispensable regional power (Saul, Hafezi and Georgy, 2017).

But many regional specialists say that Iran's influence is likely limited, especially since Iranians and Houthis adhere to different schools of Shia Islam. Still, Iran and the Houthis share geopolitical interests: Tehran seeks to challenge Saudi and US dominance in the region, and the Houthis oppose Hadi's US- and Saudi-backed government.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

The origin of al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY) dates to South Yemeni President Saleh's embrace of Yemeni mujahedin returning to the country in the 1980s after fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan. These forces resided for many years and were responsible for the attack on the USS *Cole*, which killed 17 American servicemen, and the bombing of the French oil tanker M/V *Limburg*.

In 2009, AQY formally joined with al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia to create al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). It is based primarily in Yemen in order to avoid reprisals from Saudi authorities.

AQAP has faced little resistance from the Saudi-led coalition during most of the current conflict. The militants held territory across southern Yemen until 2015 when the United Arab Emirates launched an offensive to dislodge them. AQAP seeks to establish an Islamic state by spreading the takfiri view that non-Sunni Muslims are apostates. This automatically puts AQAP in conflict with the Houthis.

AQAP is Yemen's most sophisticated militant network. Its several thousand fighters have repeatedly tried to bring down Western aircraft and have also claimed responsibility for the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in Paris in January 2015.

In 2015, AQAP captured the coastal city of Mukalla and released 300 inmates, many believed to be AQAP members, from the city's prison. The militant group expanded its control westward to Aden and seized parts of the city before coalition forces recovered much of the region in 2016. It has also provided Yemenis in some areas with security and public services unfulfilled by the state, which has built support for AQAP (https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis).

Islamic State

Islamic State (IS) evolved from the Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda and has at times controlled swathes of Iraq and Syria. It broke from al-Qaeda, a Sunni Muslim group founded by Osama bin Laden, and has declared a caliphate to rule over all Muslims.

Islamic State's influence and impact on the conflict in Yemen began in 2014. Thanks to significant funding from IS's violent activities in Syria and Iraq (including the sale of oil on black markets and proceeds gained from the kidnapping of Westerners for ransom), the Houthis were able to keep themselves armed and supplied for their ongoing battle against coalition forces. Al-Qaeda's inability to stage regular spectacular attacks on the Houthis and the killing of al-Qaeda leaders in US-led drone attacks discouraged some of its natural supporters and led to a series of defections to IS.

Figure 4.2.14 – Food insecurity in Yemen – key figures (of a total population 29 million)

PEOPLE IN NEED
2022 IPC Analysis

17.4 m	people food insecure
31,000	people in famine-like conditions
5.6 m	people in emergency
2.2 m	children under 5 suffering from moderate acute malnutrition
538,000	children under 5 suffering from severe acute malnutrition
1.3 m	pregnant and lactating women acutely malnourished
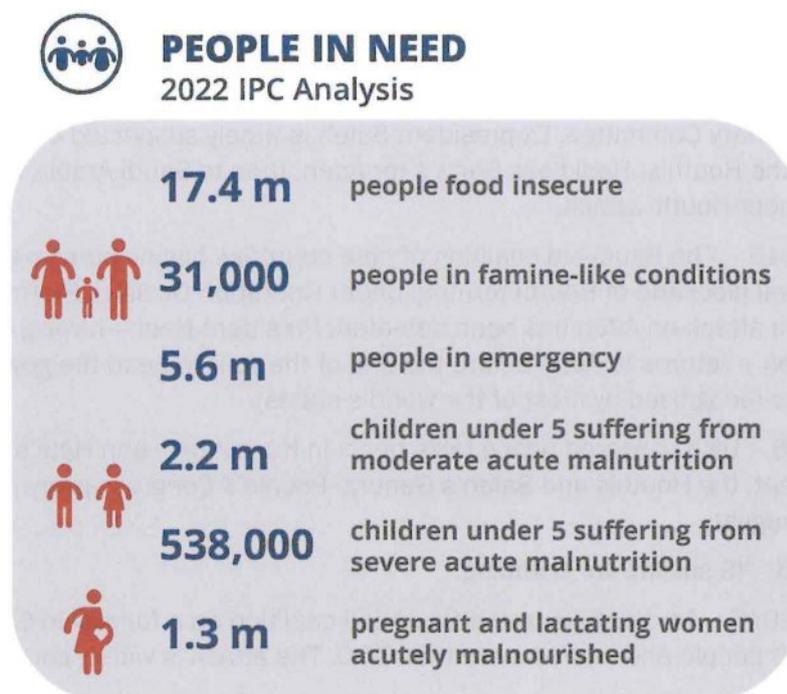
Source: World Food Program, Emergency Dashboard, Yemen. Retrieved from www.wfp.org/publications/yemen

The Islamic State marked its 2015 entrance into Yemen with suicide attacks on two Zaydi mosques in Sana'a, which killed close to 140 worshippers. Though the group has claimed other high-profile attacks, including the assassination of Aden's governor in late 2015, it has less support than AQAP. The UN estimates that IS's ranks in Yemen are in the hundreds. (Aboudi, 2015).

The current state of play in Yemen

In March 2017, Jamie McGoldrick of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said that more than 50,000 civilians have been killed, injured or maimed (2017). Atrocities, including at least 1540 children killed, 2450 children injured and more than 1550 children recruited to fight or to perform military-related duties, have been reported. Hundreds of people have been killed in mosques, markets, schools and hospitals and at funeral wakes.

The UN Development Programme found that '[i]n 2021, a Yemeni child under the age of five dies every nine minutes because of the conflict' (www.trtworld.com/middle-east/un-gives-chilling-estimates-on-the-human-cost-of-yemen-war-51935). Some seven million people in Yemen are currently experiencing malnutrition. Of that number, three million are facing acute malnourishment. This is due primarily to the Saudi naval blockade of Yemen which has significantly reduced the supply of food imports (WHO, 2017).

Activity 4.2.9 - Review question

Evaluate two challenges to achieving effective resolution of armed conflict.

Key dates in the Yemen conflict from 2014 to February 2021

- September 2014 to February 2015 – After five days of fighting, Houthi forces capture the Yemeni capital, Sana'a. President Hadi declares a ceasefire. After failed attempts by Hadi to form a unity government and to make peace, Houthi fighters capture the Presidential Palace in January. Hadi and his government resign. The Houthis shortly thereafter dissolve parliament and replace it with a Revolutionary Committee. Ex-president Saleh is widely suspected of having assisted the Houthis. Hadi flees Sana'a for Aden, then to Saudi Arabia when Aden comes under Houthi attack.

- March 2015 – The Saudi-led coalition of nine countries begins bombing Houthis and a naval blockade of Houthi territory under Operation Decisive Storm. By July, the Houthi attack on Aden has been defeated. President Hadi – having revoked his resignation – returns to Aden before the end of the year to head the government of Yemen (as recognised by most of the world's states).

- April 2016 – UN-sponsored peace talks begin in Kuwait between Hadi's government, the Houthis and Saleh's General People's Congress party. Talks break down in August.

- May 2016 – IS suicide car bombing.

- October 2016 – An air strike by the Saudi-led coalition on a funeral in Sana'a kills about 150 people and injures more than 500. The attack is widely condemned.

- January 2017 – A US raid into an area of al-Qaeda influence kills 14 militants, as many as 25 civilians (including children) and one US Navy SEAL. The raid is noteworthy as the US's first counter-terrorism operation authorised by President Trump.

- May 2017 – Houthis fire missiles into Saudi Arabia.

- September 2017 – The World Health Organization (WHO) announces that the cholera epidemic, which began in October 2016, has totalled 700,000 cases, with more than 2000 fatalities. UNICEF and the WHO describe it as 'the direct consequence of two years of heavy conflict'.

- November 2017 – It is reported that President Hadi, along with his sons, aides and military officials, has been barred by Saudi Arabia from returning to Yemen for several months. Reportedly this is due to hostility between Hadi and some members of the coalition.

- January 2018 – In a firefight, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a United Arab Emirates–backed separatist movement seeking a revival of the formerly independent South Yemen, seizes control of Aden, Yemen's main southern city and government headquarters. By March, 22 million Yemenis require humanitarian aid.

- February 2018 – The UN appoints long-time British diplomat Martin Griffiths as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.

- March to May 2018 – Fighting escalates along Yemen's western coast and dozens are killed in Saudi air strikes and security raids. A Saudi-led coalition drone strike kills Saleh Ali al-Sammad, president of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, making him the most senior Houthi casualty since the coalition began its activities in 2015. International opposition to the coalition's operations grows after an air raid kills more than 20 at a wedding party. In May, UAE forces take over the island of Socotra, occupying the airport and seaport and causing tensions with Yemeni government officials.

- June to July 2018 – President Hadi meets with UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. By July, the coalition launches an offensive on the port city of Hodeida.

- August to October 2018 – International furore over the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen grows after an air raid strikes a school bus, killing 40, mostly children. Public opinion in the United States of US support for the war effort plummets as it is reported that the bomb used in the air raid was US-supplied. In October, US resident and *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi is assassinated by Saudi agents in Istanbul, raising additional questions about US support for Riyadh's war on Yemen. UN efforts to mediate between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels in Geneva, Switzerland, are fruitless.

- November to December 2018 – The US political establishment begins to agitate for withdrawing US support from the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Former Obama administration officials sign an open letter expressing remorse for their support for the war and urging all sides to end the fighting. In December 2018, the US Senate, for the first time, votes to invoke the War Powers Resolution to force the US military to end its participation in the Yemen war.

- Later that month, after UN-mediated talks, the Yemeni government and the Houthis sign the Stockholm Agreement, which includes prisoner swaps, a mutual redeployment of forces away from Hodeida Port, and a committee to discuss the contested city of Taiz. The ceasefire is set to take effect on 18 December. Overall, the Stockholm Agreement fails to achieve its goals and neither side agrees to withdraw from Hodeida.

- January to June 2019 – Fighting continues. Houthis launch a drone attack on Al-Anad Air Base north of Aden, injuring dozens and killing the head of Yemeni intelligence. By June, the UAE unilaterally scales back its military presence in Yemen while continuing to support the STC, which has seized more power in Aden. Meanwhile, the Houthis step up efforts to attack Saudi territory, including launching missiles at oil installations and airports. Saudi and Yemeni forces capture Abu Osama al-Muhajer, leader of the so-called Islamic State-Yemen Province (IS-YP).

- February 2019 – In Washington, the resignation of Secretary of Defense James Mattis takes effect, marking an end to the Trump administration's efforts to engage in the Yemen peace process. In April, President Donald Trump vetos a bipartisan congressional measure that would force the US military to end its role in the Yemen war.

- July to September 2019 – The UAE announces it has completed its troop drawdown in Yemen, but by August the STC effectively assumes control of the southern governorates of Aden, Abyan and Shabwa. By the end of August, UAE forces conduct air raids against Yemen government forces headed to Aden to regain control. In August, the Houthis launch Operation Victory from God against Saudi-led forces and the group continues to escalate its attacks on Saudi oil installations. In September, the Houthis claim to have used drones to bomb oil-processing facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais in eastern Saudi Arabia. The attacks result in Saudi Arabia losing about half its output capacity. While the Houthis take credit for the aggression, the international community blames Iran because it was thought to have provided the technical expertise needed to carry out such attacks.

- November 2019 – In an effort to end the fighting between ostensible coalition partners in southern Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE broker a power-sharing agreement between their respective partners in the Yemen government forces and the STC. The Riyadh Agreement is signed in early November, but by December clashes between the two resume.

- January to February 2020 – Fighting between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis picks up. Houthi forces carry out missile attacks on military training camps and in Saudi Arabia's southern provinces. They claim to 'liberate' roughly 1550 square miles of territory in the al-Jawf and Marib governorates from Saudi-led forces, a claim the coalition denies.

- March 2020 – Houthi forces capture the strategic city of al-Hazm in the al-Jawf offensive and Saudi forces carry out a retaliatory air strike on Sana'a. This occurs as the UN urges maintaining the ceasefire during the coronavirus pandemic to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen.

- The Trump administration announces a freeze on $73 million in humanitarian aid to Yemen, fearing the Houthi rebels would control the assistance.

- April to May 2020 – In April, Saudi Arabia initiates a unilateral two-week ceasefire to mitigate the risks of the pandemic. Days later, Yemen records its first known case of COVID-19. Despite the ceasefire, the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition are accused of carrying out attacks. In the south, the STC once again demands self-rule, breaking its agreement with the national government.

- June to November 2020 – In June, the STC deposes the recognised government in Socotra, with government supporters decrying the move as a coup d'état. The following month, the STC says it has renounced its claim to self-rule and will return to the previously agreed upon power-sharing structure.

- In October, the warring sides in Yemen carry out the conflict's largest prisoner swap. By November, Saudi Arabia and the Houthis have reportedly initiated back-channel talks, with Saudi officials indicating their willingness to sign a ceasefire deal and end the Saudi air and sea blockade in exchange for the creation of a buffer zone between Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen and the kingdom's borders. The Houthis later claim to have fired a missile at the coastal Saudi city of Jeddah.

- December 2020 – The STC and the Hadi government formalise a new power-sharing agreement in Aden. Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed is reappointed as head of the Hadi government's new Cabinet, with seats going to both the STC and Yemen's Islah Party. Just weeks later, as the new Cabinet arrives in Aden from Saudi Arabia, an attack on the airport kills at least two dozen people, but no ministers. The Hadi government, the STC and much of the international community blame the Houthis for the attack, and Saudi warplanes conduct retaliatory raids on Sana'a.

- January 2021 – The Trump administration uses the December attack to justify designating the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organisation (FTO). The Houthis are still able to consolidate control over 70 to 80 per cent of the Yemeni population and threaten Marib, a stronghold near the north-east corner of their control zone.

- February 2021 – President Joe Biden announces changes to US policy towards Yemen, including revoking the Houthis' FTO designation, declaring an end to US support for the Saudi-led coalition's offensive operations in the conflict, appointing Timothy Lenderking as a special envoy for Yemen, supporting the UN-led peace process, and providing assurances to Saudi Arabia regarding the defence of its territory (Arab Center Washington DC, 2021).

Source: http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/a-timeline-of-the-yemen-crisis-from-the-1990s-to-the-present/)

Challenges to achieving effective resolutions

Six years into this catastrophic conflict, which has led to a major humanitarian crisis, there has been little change in regards to strategic military gains or meaningful discussions regarding substantive ceasefires and a brokered peace conference where not only all of the major protagonists in the conflict are not only invited but also actually attend.

What challenges have prevented this bloody conflict from being resolved?

- Saudi Arabia wants to end the conflict, but doesn't want to 'lose' it.

  Despite its wealth its relationship with major powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and its military capability (as discussed previously), Saudi Arabia has achieved few of its aims. The internationally recognised government is in exile and the Houthi have gained control over vast swathes of territory including the major population centres of Sana'a, Saada, Taiz and Hodeida. The Saudis have spent tens of billions of dollars to control the skies in Yemen, yet the coalition has not been able to regain control. Its alleged targeting of non-military targets and civilians has drawn significant condemnation from its Western allies and the international community (*The Economist,* 2021). How can it end the conflict and somehow present itself as being victorious?

- The Houthi are winning, so why would they want a negotiated peace now?

  A negotiated peace treaty could compel the Houthi to surrender many of their gains from the conflict and have to accept a government that would be representative of all of the major stakeholders in Yemen. The Houthis are in no mood for making

what they see as concessions. After six years of war against a stronger, wealthier foe, the Houthi control the capital and territory containing most of the population. The Houthi are also currently pushing ahead with an offensive to capture Marib, the seat of Marib province. It is the largest city controlled by the exiled Hadi government. Marib is also home to the country's largest oil and gas reserves and occupies a strategic position along a road that connects to the east of Yemen and the Saudi border. Their acquisition of drones (from Iran?) and the targeting of critical Saudi oil refineries and infrastructure has also expanded the conflict into areas where the Saudis are particularly vulnerable.

- United Nations: An anxious bystander

You will recall from work you did in Unit 3 AOS 1 that the UN is dependent on the commitments and support of its member-states, and has a limited capacity to directly intervene in conflicts such as the civil war in Yemen. Consequently, its peace negotiations have made limited progress. While the 2018 Stockholm Agreement averted a battle in the city of Hodeida, there has been little success in implementing the accord's other provisions, which includes the exchange of more than 15,000 prisoners and the creation of a joint committee to de-escalate violence in the city of Taiz. Even numerous Security Council Resolutions have been unable to bring all of the key parties to the negotiating table.

- The USA – Saudi Arabia's Friend or Foe?

Historically the strategic relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia has been one built on decades of shared interests. From 2010 to 2015 (under the Obama administration) US arms transfers to Saudi Arabia amounted to US$ 3 billion; between 2015 and 2020 (Obama/Trump administrations), the United States agreed to sell over US$ 64.1 billion worth of weapons to Riyadh, averaging US$ 10.7 billion per year. (Brookings Institute, 2021). In 2021, days before leaving office, President Trump designated the Houthi as a FTO which criminalised interactions with the Houthi, deterring other governments from pursuing peace talks with them and impeding deliveries of much-needed humanitarian aid. This designation was lifted by the newly elected President Joe Biden in February 2021, whose administration also decided to halt the sale of offensive military equipment to the Saudis.

Activity 4.2.10 – Short-answer questions

1. With reference to armed conflict, explain the difficulties of achieving effective international cooperation.
2. Analyse two challenges to achieving effective resolutions to armed conflict.

### Key aspects of the crisis of armed conflict

Intervention

Armed or military intervention, as shown in Figure 4.2.15, is quite unusual in the twenty-first century. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 stands out as an obvious exception. In more recent times, this list has included Russia's annexation of Crimea and its invasion of Ukraine, and Saudi Arabia's intervention in the civil war in Yemen.

What distinguishes intervention is that, for it to be successful, it requires a period of military occupation. It is perhaps occupation, rather than intervention, that poses significant issues for the intervening state in a conflict.

The intervention in Iraq by the United States in 2003 removed the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein relatively quickly, but the occupation that lasted another eight years was ultimately a failure which has limited the effectiveness of military power as a US foreign policy option (Lind, 2011).

It is the same in Yemen, as the Saudis believe they can win the conflict without the use of a large number of troops on the ground. History tells us, however, that this is unlikely to be the case.

Figure 4.2.15 Defining intervention
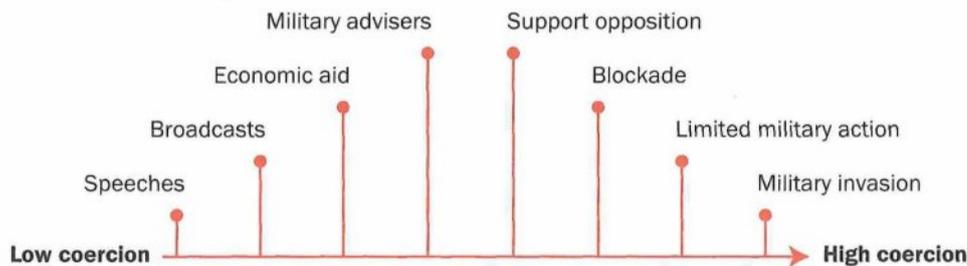
Activity 4.2.11 - Research and respond

1. Research one of the following military interventions:
   - Russian annexation of Crimea (2014–)
   - Syrian civil war (2011–)
   - Ethiopian civil war (2020–2021)
   - Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022)
   - An alternative case study you are investigating.

2. Draw up a table in your notes and respond to the following guiding inquiry questions, providing evidence:
   - What reasons were given for the military intervention?
   - How long did the intervention last?
   - What impact did the intervention have on the people living under military occupation?
   - Were the aims of the intervention achieved, in the short term or in the longer term?

What reasons were given for the military intervention?	How long did the intervention last?	What impact did the intervention have on the people living under military occupation?	Were the aims of the intervention achieved, in the short term or in the longer term?

How is war used as an instrument of state policy?

War differs from other acts of violence in that war is conducted as a deliberate use of violence by a state to achieve specific foreign policy objectives. This was famously described by the Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz as 'politics by other means'.

American sociologist Charles Tilly observed that:

> 'War has been the dominant activity of European states ... the central tragic fact is simple: coercion works; those who apply substantial force to their fellows get compliance, and from that compliance draw the multiple advantages of money, goods, deference, access to pleasures denied to less powerful people.'
>
> Source: http://www.guillaumenicaise.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/TILLY-TALLY.pd

Powerful states have long been able to use war as a means of achieving elements of their national interests but in the twenty-first century, especially since the US-led invasion of Iraq, the costs are becoming increasingly higher for those that choose to do so.

However, since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the utility of violence or the waging of war, considered by many historians to be the responsibility of the state, especially in the post-Westphalian world, was no longer the sole domain of states but available to many non-state actors and other groups.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the rise of global terrorism has demonstrated that terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda and IS have been able on many occasions to use violence effectively to achieve some of their aims.

Activity 4.2.12 - Research and respond

1. Research one contemporary trial in the ICC using at least four different news sources. Contemporary trials can be found at the link below:

   https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/cases.aspx

2. How do you believe this trial may deter future war crimes and crimes against humanity?

Activity 4.2.13 - Essay questions

1. 'To resolve a global crisis effectively, its causes must be addressed.' Discuss with reference to armed conflict.

2. 'The effective resolution of armed conflict is challenged by a lack of international cooperation.' Discuss.

3. 'Globalisation is both a cause of and a solution to global crises.' Discuss this statement with reference to armed conflict.

4. In spite of the significant decline in armed conflicts both interstate and intrastate being waged in the twenty-first century, this does not signal the end of conflict as either a feature of state policy or of international relations.

With this in mind, answer the following questions:

    a.   What is likely to change in the way wars are waged?

    b.   Who are the protagonists? Will there be less state-versus-state conflict perhaps, but maybe more instances of asymmetric (non-state actor versus a state) warfare?

    c.   Who is likely to be targeted and why? Civilians in several conflicts appear to be the main targets. Why?

5.   Using the information above and other resources, answer the following questions with regards to the war in Yemen.

    a.   Who are the major actors involved and what are their motivations?

    b.   Detail the major causes of the conflict.

    c.   Examine the responses from relevant global actors and their effectiveness in ending the conflict.

    d.   Discuss challenges to achieving effective resolution to the conflict.

    e.   What role have the United States and the United Kingdom played in the conflict?

    f.   Detail two arguments for and two arguments against intervention by the UN in the Yemen conflict.

    g.   Explain why UN-brokered peace talks have failed to date.

    h.   Discuss whether or not Saudi Arabia or the Houthis should be investigated by the ICC for alleged crimes against humanity.

Media analysis of the war in Yemen

In a sectarian conflict such as the one in Yemen, sourcing quality video that can be used to strengthen understanding of the causes, issues and specific events surrounding the conflict can be quite problematic.

Reporting from an active war zone is fraught with problems. Offers of protection and logistical support are critical, obviously. But this can lead to accusations of bias as to what is recorded, how it is reported and, just as importantly, what is not recorded or reported. In other words, whose story is being told?

The situation in Yemen has been further complicated by the fact that Saudi Arabia shut down the international airport in Sana'a on 28 March 2015. Despite a request by Saudi Arabia for the UN to take over the running of the airport in August 2017, it remains closed. With the airport closed, it is extremely difficult for independent journalists and news crews to enter Yemen.

Nonetheless, here are some examples of media coverage from a variety of news outlets covering the war in Yemen.

🔴 *Al Jazeera World*, 'Pulling the strings', youtu.be/PXdnLA1-ZNs

🔴 BBC News, 'The Rise of the Houthis', youtu.be/Y7HQRyJDTPo (Warning: this video contains graphic images and video of conflict – check with your teacher or guardian before accessing this video.)

🔴 *BBC News Night*, 'Yemen: An attempted whitewash?' youtu.be/1BTh3P4zD3Q

🔴 *Inside Story*, Al Jazeera, 2021, 'Are hopes of ending Yemen's civil war slipping away?', https://youtu.be/K6CtpGP_lIg

🔴 *Inside Story*, Al Jazeera, 'Is the Saudi-led coalition failing in Yemen?', youtu.be/uPGlOEdzlto

- *Foreign Correspondent*, ABC, 'The War on Children', youtu.be/2CxiNMN5EsM
- *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, HBO, 'Drones', www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4NRJoCNHIs
- *The Listening Post*, Al Jazeera, 'Yemen: The ongoing war and media divide', youtu.be/HWoWLmjwM0Y
- Middle East Explained, 'Yemen: The Basics', youtu.be/6hkiPkOyHFM
- *Planet America*, ABC, 'The War in Yemen explained', youtu.be/SyWJfqpx370
- *Start Here*, Al Jazeera, 'Why is Yemen at war?' youtu.be/FJzSwOQMPrI
- TRT World, 'Yemen's complicated war explained', youtu.be/AkyXDDXzPyw
- VICE News, 'Yemen: A Failed State', youtu.be/9ggen-595Ng
- Vox, 'The Middle East's cold war explained', youtu.be/veMFCFyOwFI

Activity 4.2.14 – Practice SAC questions

1. Define the following terms:
   - crisis diplomacy
   - unilateralism.
2. Describe the role of Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen.
3. Explain the difficulties in achieving effective resolutions to the war in Yemen.
4. Discuss two causes of the war in Yemen.

Extension question – Essay

Assess the effectiveness of international cooperation in regard to the Yemen civil war.

Terrorism

Terrorism has been present in society for centuries. Whether used as an instrument of the state or as an outlet of terrorist groups, terrorism has progressed from its emergence in 1793 during the French Revolution's 'Reign of Terror', and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, which triggered World War I.

At each step, new technologies and new methods of destruction and death have advanced the phenomenon. In the twenty-first century, we have seen this trend continue with the indiscriminate killing of civilians fuelled by the rise of globalisation, widespread use of the internet and mobile phones, improved methods of transportation, increased access to (and easier transfer of) finances, and the availability of weapons of mass destruction including chemical, biological and potentially nuclear arms.

The utility of violence has traditionally been reserved for organised, purposeful armed conflict between states. Yet non-state actors now challenge the power of the state and possess weapons suited for doing so. In addition, we increasingly see terrorism used as an instrument of the state in the pursuit of its own aims.

The definition of terrorism is a source of disagreement and contention among those who study Global Politics. It is argued that terrorism is difficult to define as its justifications and aims are not universal. Intergovernmental organisations such as the UN struggle to come to a consensus on a definition. However, when considered

broadly, the adage that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' can be considered to be somewhat true.

James D. Kiras (2015) maintains that definitions of terrorism vary widely but that:

> 'As with other forms of irregular warfare, terrorism is designed to achieve political change for the purposes of obtaining power in order to right a perceived wrong.'

Closer to home, Australia's terrorist act offences are contained in the *Criminal Code Act* 1995 where it states:

> 'A "terrorist act" is:
>
> An act, or threat to commit an act, that is done with the intention to coerce or influence the public or any government by intimidation to advance a political, religious or ideological cause, and the act causes:
>
> - Death, serious harm, or endangers a person;
> - Serious damage to property;
> - A serious risk to the health or safety of the public; or
> - Seriously interferes with, disrupts or destroys critical infrastructure such as a telecommunications or electricity network.'
>
> Source: https://www.ag.gov.au/NationalSecurity/Counterterrorismlaw/Documents/Australias%20counter%20terrorism%20laws.pdf.

Terrorism involves the use of violence and intimidation, which is often directed against the civilians of a state, to achieve particular outcomes and aims. These aims are political or centred around achieving some sort of societal or ideological change. The subject of terrorism has loomed large in the political and social psyche of the twenty-first century global community ever since the events of 9/11, and therefore it is a global crisis which requires a response.

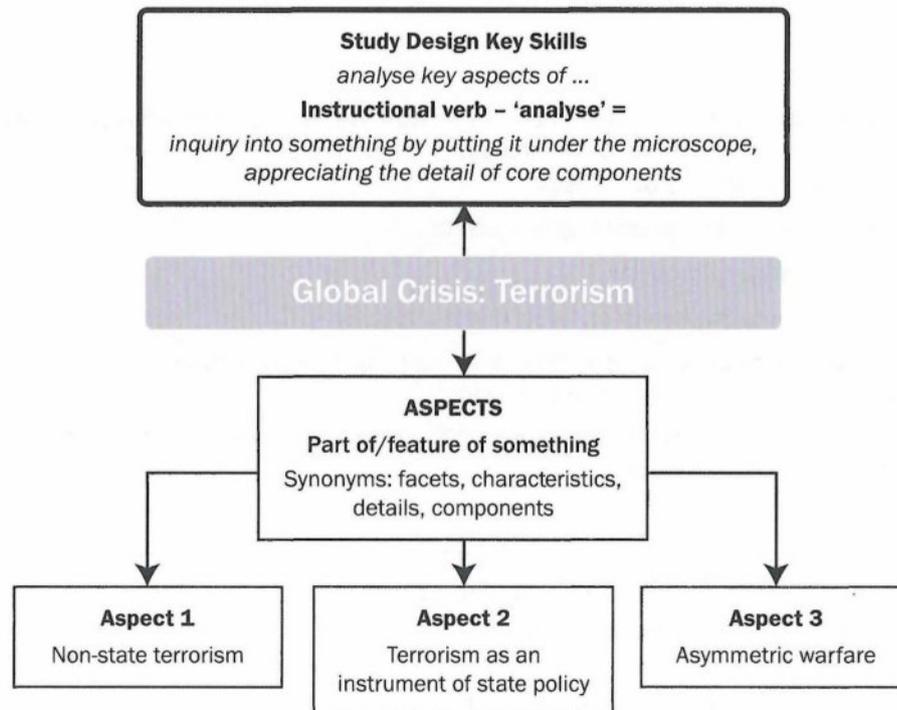*Figure 4.2.16 – Deaths from terrorism, 2000–2017*

Source: https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism
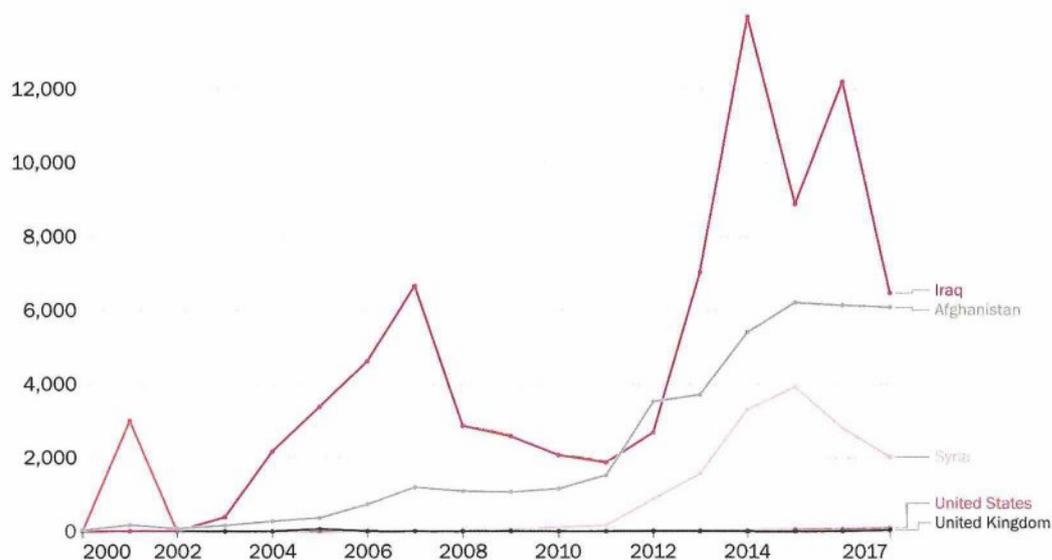
The causes of terrorism

Understanding the motivations behind terrorism is not a simple process. Terrorism has evolved with the pace of society across centuries, and therefore responses to it have varied with the political and social issues of the time. Motivations for terrorism remain complex but the actions are all underpinned by a desire for change.

The following diagram depicts the key aspects of terrorism.

Figure 4.2.17 – Conceptualising the key aspects of terrorism

Study Design Key Skills
analyse key aspects of ...
Instructional verb – 'analyse' =
inquiry into something by putting it under the microscope, appreciating the detail of core components

Global Crisis: Terrorism

ASPECTS
Part of/feature of something
Synonyms: facets, characteristics, details, components

Aspect 1
Non-state terrorism

Aspect 2
Terrorism as an instrument of state policy

Aspect 3
Asymmetric warfare

Activity 4.2.15 - Research exercise

Using online research, conduct research into the terrorist groups IS.

Include the following in your research:

1. A brief history of the terrorist group. (5 dot points)

2. The aims of the terrorist group. (3 dot points)

3. Methods used to achieve these aims. (3 dot points)

4. Two terrorist attacks carried out by IS since 2012 and their impacts (including weapons used and number of fatalities). (4 dot points)

5. An evaluation of whether IS has achieved its aims. (1 to 2 paragraphs).

Non-state terrorism

Non-state terrorist groups employ terrorism to achieve their political aims. This is the type of terrorism that has the greatest impact on Western civilians, as both victims and targets. Non-state terrorism has thrived due to the effects of globalisation, increased access to weapons and the networking of individuals across state borders.

In the twenty-first century, we can typify non-state terrorism as employing the following:

- a high frequency of attacks and a high level of death

- the use of media technologies to transmit messages

- the use of multiple types of weapons and forms of violence, as well as the increased use of suicide bombings and beheadings

- the creation of globally networked cell groups, as opposed to traditional hierarchical structures of leadership that see terrorist organisations contained within one or a few states.

The following four points provide an explanation for some of the motivations for non-state terrorism:

- identity and inequality

  - the desire to reorganise society for political, religious or economic reasons

  - the use of violence to express grievances

  - feelings of alienation, oppression and marginalisation (often towards the state, larger institutions or Western ideals)

- historical factors, including local grievances or nationalist aspirations

- religion.

Religion overlaps with identity and inequality. In the case of Islamic State (IS), it includes the achievement of an Islamic caliphate.

Figure 4.2.18 – Annual number of deaths from conflict and terrorism globally by country per 100,000 residents, 2019

Source: https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism
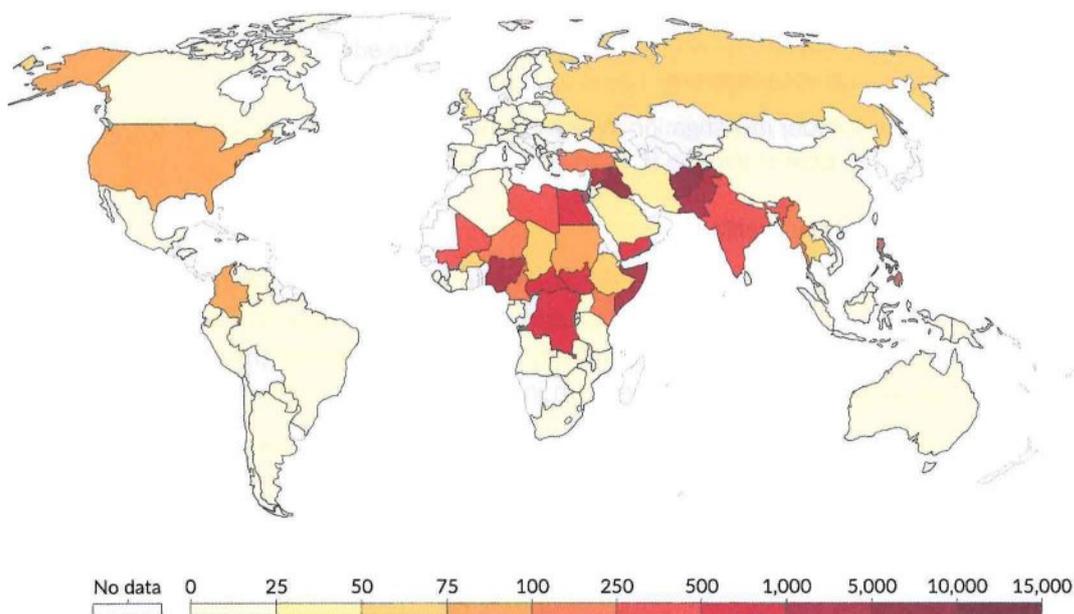
Terrorism as an instrument of state policy

Terrorism can also be used as a policy instrument to achieve the aims of the state. This may involve an unstable or undemocratic government holding on to power, the quelling of popular dissent, or the control over insurgency or militia groups from within the state itself.

When terrorism is used as an instrument of state policy it can often contribute to, or play a large part in, a wider system of punitive policy decisions made by a state's leaders. This aspect is important to note when considering many of the ethical issues covered in Unit 4 Area of Study 1, including human rights and people movement.

Citizens' rights are often violated when terrorism is used as an instrument of state policy. It can include the perpetration of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. In turn, internal displacement of the population due to terrorism has an effect upon people movement and migration.

The principle of non-interference in sovereign states under the UN Charter means the international community is often limited in its response to terrorism as an instrument of state policy. This allows those states to continue propagating violence, posing a threat to the effective resolution of this global crisis.

Activity 4.2.16 – Terrorism as an instrument of state policy

Using the case of Syria under the leadership of Bashar al-Assad, create a fact file that includes the following:

1. A list of actions undertaken by al-Assad that demonstrate the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy.
2. Quotes from al-Assad in which he justifies this use of terrorism.
3. Quotes from other global actors that criticise this use of terrorism.
4. A list of the mechanisms used by other global actors in response to al-Assad's actions (including relevant evidence).
5. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the mechanisms used by other global actors. (Use a SWOT analysis chart to help organise your evaluation.)

As a starting point for your investigation, review articles from reputable sources such as *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, the BBC and Al Jazeera.

The role of asymmetric warfare

Asymmetric warfare involves conflict between opposing groups that possess unequal military resources and capabilities. Because of this, the stronger opponent (usually a state that possesses an organised military force) is exposed to the unconventional tactics of the weaker opponent (usually an insurgency group or terrorist organisation).

Therefore, while states have historically been able to use conventional methods of warfare to fight threats to their existence, asymmetric warfare has contributed to the rise of terrorism in large part thanks to its ability to threaten the state in non-traditional ways.

Terrorism frequently violates the principle of **just war**. This includes a greater emphasis on civilians and public spaces as legitimate targets as well as the use of unconventional weapons, which are relatively cheap and very easy to access.

> **Just war** refers to the notion that war should only be employed as a last resort after all non-violent options have been exhausted.

Consequently, the appeal of asymmetric conflict has fuelled the actions of terrorist groups, which are now able to assert their political objectives more than they have been able to in the past.

Activity 4.2.17- Statistics

1. Using the Global Terrorism Index at the link below, create a summary of 10 statistics that demonstrate the global trends in terrorism over the past 12 months.

   http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/terrorism-index/

2. After you have gathered your statistics, compile your work with two other people and complete a 'connect, extend, challenge' thinking routine to assess your learning.

3. How are the ideas and information connected to what you already knew?

4. What new ideas did you get that extended or pushed your thinking in new directions?

5. What is still challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?

Global actors' responses to terrorism and their effectiveness

Global actors have responded to the crisis of terrorism in a variety of ways, employing methods of **crisis diplomacy**, **international cooperation** and **unilateralism**. The transnational nature of terrorism has presented an entirely new challenge for states as it threatens a core element of sovereignty: legitimacy and autonomy within a defined territory (Brown, 2015).

Combatting the crisis of terrorism with a conventional military force in a conventional military way remains difficult as the target is constantly changing, growing and moving. Global terrorist groups pose a threat that is decentralised and globalised, and using broadcast and print media and social media extensively to spread their messages, to recruit individuals to their cause and to coordinate attacks.

According to Brown (2015, p. 153), global actors have responded in the following way:

> **Crisis diplomacy** negotiations between actors in the global political arena in response to an immediate crisis. This most commonly concerns conflicts and natural disasters but also economic and health crises.

> **International cooperation** occasions when global actors work together to achieve common ideals and goals.

> **Unilateralism** the policy of a state acting alone, with little regard for the views or interests of other global actors, in pursuit of foreign policy objectives.

'The creation of new criminal offences, broadened legal definitions of terrorism, the granting of greater powers of detention and arrest, as well as improving funding for state agencies involved in countering terrorism... they have also reacted to the new threats by seeking to prevent or disrupt the emergence of ideas that might support terrorist violence through anti-radicalisation initiatives.'

These initiatives have included supporting multilateral agendas within the global community to facilitate the silencing of extremist voices, and monitoring citizens for signs of radicalisation (Brown, 2015). This demonstrates that terrorism has not only become a concern for the security of the state in global politics, but for its citizens as well. Global actors are confronted with the question of when and how to intervene.

United Nations

The UN has struggled to produce a definitive, universal definition of terrorism. Despite this, the UN has taken a staunchly cosmopolitan approach and has recognised the need for diplomacy to solve this global crisis.

Although countering terrorism has been on the UN's agenda for decades, the events of 9/11 prompted the UN Security Council to adopt Resolution 1373 and establish the Counter-Terrorism Committee. In September 2006, all member states of the UN General Assembly came to a consensus on a common strategy framework to fight terrorism known as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. This strategy is upheld by four pillars, which encourage a global, multilateral response to terrorism.

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy four pillars

1. Addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism;

2. Preventing and combatting terrorism;

3. Building member states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in this regard;

4. Ensuring the respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for countering terrorism.

Source: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy

In April 2004 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1540, which affirmed that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitute a threat to international peace and security. This resolution imposes binding obligations to adopt legislation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, which may be used by states to perpetrate terrorist acts, and establish appropriate domestic controls to prevent their trafficking. Although this resolution is outside of the 10-year time period of our study, Resolution 2325 affirming Resolution 1540 was adopted unanimously in December 2016, highlighting the UN's ongoing response to the global crisis. This multilateral diplomatic response led by the UN guides states in the fight against terrorism through collective action and sends a clear global message against terrorist acts.

Limitations of this response

As we have seen throughout this textbook, the UN is limited in its action when resolving global crises for a number of reasons. These include:

- Lack of implementation enforcement. UN Security Council resolutions are subject to state-based compliance, and the veto power of the permanent five members may result in the blocking of counter-terrorism strategies in their favour.

- Lack of a standing army. Few member states outside of the United States and its coalition members are willing or able to take military action to deter terrorist groups such as IS.

- Globalisation. Although numerous areas of the UN's mandate have benefited from globalisation, it is also a key driver of terrorism. Globalisation has helped the spread of compromising information and aided the distribution of weapons technology, such as nuclear weapons, which further challenges the ability of the UN and its member states to combat terrorism.

Activity 4.2.18 – Criticisms of the UN

Using online research, starting with reputable sources such as *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, the BBC and Al Jazeera, answer the following questions.

1. Describe the key criticisms of the UN made by other global actors with regards to its work in fighting terrorism.

2. Provide quotes from global actors that demonstrate these criticisms.

3. Outline the mechanisms used by other global actors (including relevant evidence) in fighting terrorism.

   a. Note how these mechanisms have complemented the work of the UN.

   b. Note how these mechanisms have undermined the work of the UN.

4. Provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the mechanisms used by the UN to fight terrorism.

States

As outlined at the beginning of this section, states have taken varied approaches to the global crisis of terrorism. Their responses, however, centre upon the key considerations that uphold all elements of sovereignty – particularly border security and the safety of citizens.

The global crisis of terrorism, therefore, lends itself for consideration and discussion when thinking about the ethical issues covered in Unit 4 Area of Study 1, such as people movement.

Activity 4.2.19 – Research investigation

Using online research, starting with reputable news sources such as *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, the BBC and Al Jazeera, conduct an investigation into the responses to terrorism made by two or three states, such as Australia, the United States, France and Turkey.

For each state, draw up a table and fill it in with your research using the following prompts:

- A brief timeline of terrorist attacks that have occurred in the state

- The immediate responses made by the state following the terrorist attacks

- The long-term responses made by the state following the terrorist attacks

- The perspective of the state in fighting terrorism (realism or cosmopolitanism) and an explanation of why

- The nature the state's response: was it unilateral, multilateral, diplomatic, military? Was it against another state, or a non-state actor? Does this make a difference to the effectiveness of the response?

- An evaluation of whether the state has effectively responded to terrorism, integrating explicit evidence.

Challenges to achieving effective resolutions

Numerous challenges exist in achieving effective resolutions to the problem of terrorism in the twenty-first century. While responses by global actors to this crisis can be assessed for their levels of effectiveness, as a multidimensional crisis that frequently transcends state borders, terrorism will remain a key challenge for the global community into the foreseeable future.

The contemporary case studies and evidence used throughout this section will assist you in recognising the key challenges that global actors face in achieving effective resolutions to terrorism. Two challenges related to terrorism are explored in the table below.

Table 4.2.2. Challenges related to terrorism

	Use of drone strikes	Counter-terrorism laws
What is the challenge?	There is strong evidence to suggest that terrorists use drone strikes as a recruitment tool. States, such as the United States, use drone strikes to seek out and target terrorist strongholds in the Middle East. However, even when drone operators target specific individuals, they kill vastly more people than their targets, and in turn often need to strike multiple times to achieve results. Drone strikes often occur under a blanket of government secrecy and perpetuate the cycle of violence linked to terrorism. A Council of Foreign Relations tally assessed that 500 drone strikes outside of Iraq and Afghanistan have killed 3674 people since 2015.	With the rise of terrorist acts, states have increasingly implemented counter-terrorism laws. Such legislation aims to extend the powers of repression and surveillance held by the state. In 2019 Australia's Coalition government introduced a temporary exclusion order to prevent terrorist affiliates, including Australian citizens, from entering Australia for up to 2 years.
Why is this a challenge when it comes to resolving terrorism?	Although drone strikes are effective in targeting terrorist groups and eliminating them, the further ramifications these attacks have on civilians and casualties is great, especially in non-defined war zones. The use of drone strikes as a counter-terrorism tool is debated, as it is unclear whether they are used to counter terrorists or to counter the states in which terrorists exist. The accuracy of drone strikes is a key concern, as is the lack of transparency around the intelligence used by states to inform drone strikes.	States must achieve a balance between protecting their citizens from terrorism and not undermining their civil liberties. International experts and the UN make it clear that civil liberties, human rights and counter-terrorism laws can coexist. The UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy states that protecting human rights is part of protecting citizens against terrorism and eliminating the conditions conducive to its spread. Critics of counter-terrorism laws argue that legislative changes go too far in undermining civil liberties, without any proof that they achieve their aim of making citizens safer.

Activity 4.2.20 - Practice questions

Practice tasks

1. Define the term 'crisis diplomacy' as it applies to the study of Global Politics.

2. Outline one cause of the global crisis of terrorism.

3. Describe one proposed solution from one global actor to the global crisis of terrorism.

Bringing it all together

When working through the following questions, pay attention to the command term that is being used.

1.

    a. Outline the response of one global actor to the global crisis of terrorism.

    b. Describe the response of one global actor to the global crisis of terrorism.

    c. Evaluate the response of one global actor to the global crisis of terrorism.

2.

    a. Outline the challenges one global actor has faced in responding to the global crisis of terrorism.

    b. Describe the challenges one global actor has faced in responding to the global crisis of terrorism.

    c. Evaluate the challenges one global actor has faced in responding to the global crisis of terrorism.

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Glossary of terms

Adaptation adjusting to the demands imposed by the 'new normal' brought on by the more severe and intense impacts of climate change.

Crisis diplomacy negotiations between actors in the global political arena in response to an immediate crisis. This most commonly concerns conflicts and natural disasters but also economic and health crises.

Globalisation the acceleration and intensification of exchanges of goods, services, labour and capital that promote global interdependence. These have been facilitated by rapid changes in communication and technology.

International cooperation occasions when global actors work together to achieve common ideals and goals.

Just war the notion that war should only be employed as a last resort after all non-violent options have been exhausted.

Mitigation the strategies, policies and initiatives geared towards combating climate change by addressing the source of the crisis.

Mutually hurting stalemate a situation in which neither party thinks it can win a given conflict without incurring excessive losses, and in which both are suffering from a continuation of fighting.

Occupation control and possession of hostile territory that enables an invading nation to establish military government against an enemy or martial law against rebels or insurrectionists in their own territory.

Proxy war a conflict instigated by opposing powers that do not fight against each other directly. Instead, they use third parties to do the fighting for them.

Sectarianism strong support for the religious or political group you belong to, often involving conflict with other groups.

Takfir the pronouncement that someone is an unbeliever (kafir) and no longer Muslim. Takfir is used in the modern era for sanctioning violence against leaders of Islamic states who are deemed insufficiently religious.

Transnational nature extended beyond the borders of the state.

Unilateralism the policy of a state acting alone, with little regard for the views or interests of other global actors, in pursuit of foreign policy objectives.

Utility of violence violence used as a means of achieving one's political objectives, traditionally a state power.