

AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECURITY COOPERATION AS A PATHWAY TO PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: Peace and ways to achieve it have always been among the most important concerns of mankind. The age of war and peace is tied to human history. Food has been a human need since the beginning, and agriculture and food production have been integral throughout human history. There have been many wars over food, food resources, and agriculture.

However, the question addressed in this article is how to make food and agriculture a means to achieve peace. This has happened in the past, either after improving relationships between countries from enmity to friendship or, more rarely, during a time of transformation. There is still the possibility that this approach could become a component of peace agreements, making them stronger. Considering that no two cases are ever completely similar in historical events and human sciences, it is possible to

propose a new theory or suggestion by examining the most correlations.

Keywords: peace, agriculture, food security, reconciliation, hunger crisis

JEL code: Q18

Research aims: hypothesize how food and agriculture can be made a means to peace.

Research novelty: food security cooperation has been argued to be a key point of establishing peace between countries.

Introduction

Trade in food and agricultural products has existed between neighbouring countries and beyond for centuries. Today, this trade is huge and has reached \$1.75 billion according to FAO statistics (According to the United Nations News, 2021).

Only a portion of this extensive volume of global food trade results from food production cooperation between countries, the exact amount of which remains unknown. However, whether joint food production has positively impacted the political relationships between nations is the central question of this research. Indeed, there is a belief that food production and trade can transform from mere components of global commerce into a profitable process that fosters closer ties among countries. The purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of agriculture and food security in strengthening peace between countries.

It can be said that food dependencies among countries should be transformed into cooperation in joint food production. Instead of viewing the food trade as a soulless, purely profitable structure or assuming it as a threat to others' dependence, we can use it as

a bridge to connect nations. Unfortunately, as seen in the Ukraine war, the food trade can also be wielded to exert pressure (BBC News, 2023, April 12).

There are cases of cooperation between countries in the field of food production, which has made the bond between those countries stronger, both in the relationship between the two countries and in the structure of a regional organisation. One of these collaborations was between China and Russia or ASEAN member countries.

It can be said that the unique approach of this article is a targeted examination of how cooperation in the fields of food security and agriculture can facilitate the transition from conflict or disputes to peace and reconciliation between countries. Here, cooperation in food security is not defined as an outcome of peace but as a means to achieve it.

Methodology

In this research, library studies and the review of news and events have been utilised. Content analysis of theories has been conducted to apply them, along with case and historical analysis of events. This research is based on two foundations: ideas and hopes, and historical events, and it aims to connect them.

Research Background

Niemi's interpretation of agricultural relations between China and Russia has strengthened the ties between these two strategic partners, particularly concerning China's food requirements. China aims to utilize Russia's extensive agricultural land to fulfill its food requirements (Niemi, May 2024). A China Daily article by

the Center for Latin American Studies secretary-general examines the close agrarian cooperation between China and Latin America within the Belt and Road Initiative framework. The article discusses the significance of this agrarian cooperation as a pillar of economic collaboration between China and 22 Latin American countries (China Daily, 2023, August 25). The Vorhaben article published in the Wilson Center investigates the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on food.

The article examines the challenges, solutions to the problems, and benefits of this agreement. From the author's point of view, a 233% growth in agricultural and food trade between the three countries is one of the achievements of this agreement. These capabilities led to the update of this cooperation document, now called The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). (Vorhaben, 2021, September 17).

The theoretical basis of this solution

The global community has perpetually oscillated between two contrasting views: realism and idealism. Although various views and theories have been prevalent among thinkers and theorists to define events and give solutions, it is possible to place a large part of them into one of two categories in the political reactions of the world, or somewhere between them, or as a mixture of both categories of political beliefs. Realism, emphasizing military, political, and economic superiority, has led to the development of infrastructural capabilities and uneven prosperity among nations. In the real world, as global or regional powers vie to capture as many markets as possible, they engage in political and economic

disputes. Meanwhile, less privileged or exploited nations grow increasingly dissatisfied with this harsh world order.

When countries exhaust all options or resort to threats, global and regional peace hangs in danger. The historical trajectory of uneven growth among countries and power competition - both at the global level and within societal class differences - poses a threat to global security. Communism emerged as a notable outcome of this process. However, across different centuries, the consequences of this sinister competition and exploitation of nations have manifested in various forms. The devastating First and Second World Wars serve as prime examples.

In response to these wars and their profound destructive impact, the world sought solutions. The League of Nations was the initial attempt, but it did not fully materialize. Subsequently, the world faced the horrors of World War II. After the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) was established - a testament to the efforts of individuals with humanitarian convictions. The grim chronicles of these wars and their far-reaching consequences prompted a more profound examination of the interplay between individuals and society and their reciprocal impact. The perspectives of structuralism and constructivism emerged as a result of these research endeavors. Decades later, the UN and its dedicated staff have worked tirelessly to promote peace.

Yet, the UN's effectiveness is influenced significantly by the policies and ideologies of member governments. The Security Council, responsible for security, political decisions, and sensitive matters, operates with limited representation from select countries - some of which hold veto power. Conflicting interests among major powers within the Security Council and regional

conflicts in other UN areas often impede peace and the advancement of human rights. While the UN has successfully prevented many wars and crises, it has also faced failures. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have emerged as a result of the specialization of United Nations sub-groups. Their focus lies in producing and providing specialized assistance in the field of food.

The intellectual basis of this article for the path of peacebuilding through cooperation in the field of agriculture and food is rooted in various theoretical perspectives, some of which can be briefly examined.

Economic liberalism, in its philosophical structure and theory, insists on countries' cooperation to achieve global security and what causes international peace. In this direction, legal coordination and the creation of structures will be the duty of governments to pave the way for the free cooperation of the private sector between countries (International Trade Council, 2023, November 25). Another theory that can have dual utility is the Democratic Peace Theory, which posits that democracies are more peaceful in their foreign relations. This can be extended to cooperation in various fields, including agriculture. The theory, rooted in Immanuel Kant's essay "On Perpetual Peace," suggests that liberal democracies engage less in war with each other and promote peace through economic interdependence and cooperation (Reiter, 2012, October 25).

Another theory that can help to define the solution presented in the article is Functionalism, along with its newer version, Neofunctionalism. Functionalism discusses the role of international organizations and encourages countries to cooperate

in non-political fields to become closer to each other (thekootneeti,2022, September 18). Also, neo-functionalism is a theory of regional integration that focuses on how non-state actors, such as interest groups and international organizations, contribute to the creation of stronger supranational institutions. A classic example of Neofunctionalism in practice is the European Union (EU).

International and Regional Efforts Towards Food Cooperation

One of the first organizations to recognize food as a crucial aspect of global communication and a foundation for the human rights of nations is the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Established on October 16, 1945, the FAO operates as one of the specialized agencies under the United Nations (FAO, 2024, June). Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA): IICA is a collective dedicated to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and moving toward a future where agriculture is not only productive but also a driver of climate resilience (IICA,2024, June 8).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) also has been actively involved in agricultural cooperation. ASEAN's collaboration in agriculture and food dates back to 1968, initially focusing on food production and supply. Over time, the scope expanded to include broader areas such as agriculture and forestry (ASEAN,2024, June 9).

In the European Union, there are also mechanisms for solidarity and cooperation between members in agriculture and food. The Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural

Development (DG AGRI) is an important institution in the European Commission. DG AGRI promotes the sustainable development of European agriculture and ensures the well-being of rural areas. (European Commission, 2024, June 9).

Would be From Enmity and Differences to Friendship and Cooperation between Countries?

History's response to this question has often been positive, and we have witnessed such transformations many times. The process of turning enemies into countries with peaceful relations occurs frequently. However, the central issue is whether we can actively demand and expedite this process or whether we must wait for long-term historical developments. But today, especially after the Second World War, this matter has been successfully accelerated in some cases.

France and Germany

Relations between Germany and France: World War II left a terrible legacy for the whole world. These horrifying memories have become more prominent in Europe. After World War II, Germans felt guilty about European and American society. A terrible defeat that was much more difficult than the First World War and only added to the instability of the defeated nation. During this period, almost everyone had to face the loss of loved ones; About 8.8 million German civilians and 5.5 million German military members died in World War II. Those who survived usually faced long-term mental and physical problems, a huge destruction had taken over the whole country and in fact, the German land was moving towards disintegration. There were few resources for reconstruction, no communication with the outside

world, and millions of people living in destruction. (Loveland, 2020).

After the overthrow of Germany in 1949, it was under the control of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France. Soviet forces remained in the Eastern European countries liberated from the Nazis by the Red Army (Cyril E. Bloack et al, pp. 57-103, 2000).

However, the examination of the conduct of the occupying countries in Germany, including France, revealed significant differences compared to the actions of the victors in the First World War. The behaviour of the victorious countries, especially France, was very harsh toward defeated Germany after World War I. The Treaty of Versailles imposed severe conditions on Germany, leading to economic difficulties and widespread discontent. (Godfreed et al, 2015). During World War I, the Allies maintained a naval blockade of Germany, resulting in severe suffering and death among the German civilian population due to food shortages and disease. Estimates suggest that between 478,500 and 800,000 civilians died from starvation-related causes (Kramer, 2020).

Perhaps, in the first step of Germany's recovery in the form of West Germany, the fear of the Soviet Union and its supremacy in Eastern Europe played a role. The fear of the Soviet Union outweighed the concern about restoring German power, leading France to cooperate with its two other allies, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The next step was the plan to rebuild Europe, which had been devastated by the war and the threat of communism. The U.S. reconstruction program culminated in the Marshall Plan. General

George C. Marshall, the 50th U.S. Secretary of State during Truman's cabinet, devised this wise plan to aid Europe's recovery. (Mills, 2008, p. 195). While the primary goal of the Marshall Plan was to rebuild Europe and prevent the poverty that had given rise to Nazi Germany and communist groups, it also significantly contributed to the rapprochement of Western European countries, including West Germany and France.

Another key figure in this context was French Minister and Prime Minister Robert Schuman. While he is primarily known as the driving force behind the proposal to establish the Council of Europe and the European Common Market, he also championed forming a federation between France and Germany in 1950. This vision included a common currency and a joint army, aiming to foster peaceful unity between the two nations. Although this specific idea was not fully implemented, it served as a precursor to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (Valls, 2016, August).

Trade agreements within the European Union (EU) have a positive impact on the agriculture and food sectors. These agreements result in a significant increase in EU agricultural exports, with a more limited increase in imports, creating a positive trade balance overall. Additionally, these agreements have implications for EU internal trade. In 2023, the value of goods traded between EU member states (intra-EU trade) reached €4,102 billion.

Today, France and Germany collaborate through the Common Agricultural Policy. These policies prioritize preserving life in European villages, ensuring agricultural security sustainability,

and protecting the environment. They also govern European markets (European Commission, 2024, July, 24)

South Korea and Japan

The relationship between Japan and South Korea has had many ups and downs. In the 19th century, Japan had its eyes on Korea, seeking land and resources. Unfortunately, the resistance of Koreans lacked support from other countries, leading to Korea's complete annexation by Japan from 1910 until the end of World War II (Kim, 1962). Sending more than 100,000 Korean men to war, some of whom were forced, and also using thousands of Korean women as forced sex workers in the Japanese army are among the darkest aspects of Japan's colonial era (Soh, 2001).

The fighters for Korean independence, with the support of China, Russia, and the United States, began forming groups and fighting against the Japanese colonial army until Japan finally surrendered in 1945. At the end of World War II, Korea regained its independence based on the agreements of the Yalta Conference. Although this was a prelude to the division of Korea, Soviet forces were positioned above the 38th parallel, while US and later UN forces were stationed south of that line. Drawing from its history, South Korea deliberately avoided diplomatic and commercial relations with Japan, making this stance the foundation of its independence.

Later, North Korea launched an attack on South Korea with the support of Pyongyang. However, American forces and the United Nations, along with their allies, resisted this aggression, and the two Koreas returned to the designated border. Diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea were eventually established in 1965.

Is economic cooperation always the final solution to resolve political and economic disputes?

There is no simple answer to this question. In general, independent countries cannot be forced to cooperate. However, they can be encouraged or pressured to do so. The feasibility of such efforts depends largely on the magnitude and nature of the differences between the countries, as well as their respective forms of government.

Ideological Differences

When regimes in involved countries hold stark ideological disparities, even shared economic interests may fail to force cooperation. In many cases, these regimes prioritize their national interests over the well-being of their citizens. For example, the enduring differences between Cuba and the United States. Also, despite potential economic benefits for North and South Korea, despite historical tensions, there have been instances of cooperation between North and South Korea. However, the North Korean regime's actions, such as deactivating joint factory infrastructure, demonstrate the challenges of sustaining cooperation in the face of political differences.

Another challenging case involves disputes over borders or territorial integrity. Such disputes sometimes escalate to war or have the potential for permanent conflict. An example of this can be observed in the tensions between Taiwan and China, as well as between India and Pakistan. While there are trade relations between China and Taiwan - India and Pakistan

Has there been a successful case of cooperation despite the persistence of ideological differences?

The relationship between Vietnam and the United States can be considered a successful example of how countries with a history of enmity can become great partners. Although the depth of this relationship is primarily economic, the economy plays a crucial role in guiding relations between countries. Looking at Vietnam's business partners and their importance in partnership with this country provides interesting information. The first five countries in trade with Vietnam in 2021 are as follows: United States: US\$96.3 billion (28.7% of total Vietnamese exports), China: \$55.9 billion (16.7%), South Korea: \$21.9 billion (6.5%), Japan: \$20.1 billion (6%), Hong Kong: \$12 billion (3.6%) (World's Top Exports, 2024. August).

The Vietnam War was a great tragedy that left bitter memories between the two sides and is remembered for the social movements surrounding it. In the early 1990s, Vietnam began improving its relations with Western countries, culminating in a special trade cooperation agreement with the United States from 2016 to 2019 (Atreides, 2023). In 2022, Vietnam's total exports to the United States were valued at \$109.46 billion and food product exports to the United States in 2022 were approximately \$4.54 billion

The relations between Jordan and Israel can be considered another example of the relations between two countries that were enemies in the past and are friends today. After the formation of the Israeli government, Jordan, along with other Arab countries, went to war with Israel several times: in the Israel War of Independence in 1948, the Six-Day War in 1967, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Although there was no conflict between the

two countries after that, until 1994, the relations between the two countries were identified as being in a state of war.

In October 1994, with the efforts of the United States, the two countries signed a peace treaty (Wadi Araba Treaty), and Jordan became the second Arab country to establish official relations with Israel. Since then, the two countries have had various economic and political cooperation. In 2022, the trade volume between Jordan and Israel was significant. Jordan's exports to Israel are approximately \$290 million and Israel's exports to Jordan are roughly \$72.8 million. The food and agriculture exports from Jordan to Israel were around \$23.08 million (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

In October 1995, a cooperation agreement was signed in various fields, including the agriculture cooperation between Jordan and Israel. One of the areas of cooperation was in the field of agriculture. The two countries aimed to develop new markets for agricultural products in the east of the Jordan River Valley. Companies were established to market common agricultural products between the two countries, utilizing Israeli technologies (Jewish Virtual Library, 2024, August, 8).

Cooperation in Agriculture and Food Security in Peace Agreements

When cooperation in the field of agriculture and food between enemy countries is considered to encourage peace, it seems that discussing these cooperations in peace talks will be more effective. The sooner the ties of cooperation are fostered between the two warring countries, especially in the field of agriculture and joint food production and security, the more cooperation will be needed. Experiences in this field have been observed in the past.

For example, the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan signed on October 26, 1994, can be referred to, which includes specific provisions for cooperation in agriculture.

Suggestions

According to the mentioned cases, proposals for peace negotiations between countries can be considered. It is beneficial to have representatives from the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the FAO present in peace or reconciliation negotiations between countries with enmity or deep differences. Their presence can help assess the capacity of the involved countries and mediate to establish peace. Cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food production, and trade is crucial.

It is suggested that international mediators (preferably with the presence of UN representatives) should incorporate provisions for food and agricultural cooperation in all peace agreements. Additionally, countries seeking peace and reconciliation could be encouraged to invest in each other's agricultural sectors or food production factories, making this a bilateral effort. Another approach is to establish joint production lines for agricultural and food products, allowing parts of a product to be completed and exported to other countries.

Conclusion

It is not possible to provide a specific solution that can be used to create peace in all conflicts because the nature of conflicts between countries varies. Some conflicts are border disputes, while others involve competition for global positions. However,

what is clear is that today's world, due to its high population and climate changes, is experiencing a severe food production crisis.

Although there is food in many countries, food security is threatened by high inflation. Therefore, food and agriculture are crucial issues in global cooperation.

Even countries with significant differences are compelled to ensure food provision. It is challenging to force conflicting countries to cooperate in the field of food security, which is a sensitive aspect of national security. However, if countries are willing to establish peace and friendship, food security can be a valuable tool to strengthen bonds between them. This solution is feasible and beneficial for many countries that follow a logical approach based on national interest.

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ԳՅՈՒՂԱՏՆՏԵՍԱԿԱՆ ԵՎ ՊԱՐԵՆԱՅԻՆ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԳՈՐԾԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ՝ ՈՐՊԵՍ ԵՐԿՐՆԵՐԻ ՄԻՋԵՎ ԽԱՂԱՂՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԵՎ ՀԱՇՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՈՒՂԻ

Նաիրի Սարգսյան

Հայաստանի պետական տնտեսագիտական համալսարան,
Իրավաբանական գիտությունների թեկնածու,
Հայաստանի աուդիտորների պալատի նախագահ

Ալիբեգա Ադկանյան

Հայաստանի եվրոպական համալսարան, ասպիրանտ

Բանալի բառեր – խաղաղություն, գյուղատնտեսություն,
պարենային անվտանգություն, հաշտեցում, սովի ճգնաժամ

Խաղաղությունը և դրան հասնելու ուղիները միշտ եղել են մարդկության ամենակարևոր մտահոգություններից: Սնունդն ի սկզբանե եղել է մարդու կարիքը, և գյուղատնտեսությունն ու սննդի արտադրությունը անբաժանելի են եղել մարդկության պատմության ընթացքում: Բազմաթիվ պատերազմներ են տեղի ունեցել սննդի, պարենային ռեսուրսների և

գյուղատնտեսության համար: Այնուամենայնիվ, հողվածում արժարժվում է հարց, թե ինչպես կարելի է սնունդն ու գյուղատնտեսությունը դարձնել խաղաղության հասնելու միջոց: Դա տեղի է ունեցել նախկինում, կա՛մ երկրների միջև հարաբերությունների բարելավումից հետո՝ թշնամությունից մինչև բարեկամություն, կա՛մ ավելի հազվադեպ՝ փոխակերպման ժամանակաշրջանում: Դեռևս կա հավանականություն, որ այս մոտեցումը կարող է դառնալ խաղաղության համաձայնագրերի բաղադրիչ՝ դրանք ավելի ուժեղացնելով: Առաջարկվում է, որ միջազգային միջնորդները (ցանկալի է ՄԱԿ-ի ներկայացուցիչների ներկայությամբ) խաղաղության բոլոր համաձայնագրերում ներառեն սննդի և գյուղատնտեսության ոլորտում համագործակցության դրույթներ:

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