Tạp chí Lý Luận Chính Trị Và Truyên Thông

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Global issues are the problems of an international scale which, if not properly solved, will lead to catastrophic consequences for humankind. There are various global issues such as environmental problems, population explosion, poverty, epidemics, international terrorism, illegal transnational migration, and so on. They have appeared and grown alongside the globalization wave throughout the world. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the global issues have been developing in numerous areas. In the 1970s, after the oil crisis, the global issues have become more prominent when and have forced the countries to take good care of them to the extent that these issues have also given rise to changes in principles and rules of international relations, resulting in confrontation to dialogue and cooperation. Till the 21st century, the severity and scale of this globalization have been increasing. Therefore, the analysis and assessment of the impacts of global issues have signaled an urgency for all of the experts, leaders, and citizens. There are different ways of looking at an impact assessment of the global issues, but the assessment which bases on the theories of level-analysis has been limited. Theorists such as David Singer in World (1961) have initiated the idea and have initially analyzed the levels of impact analysis, which highlighted the international system as level of analysis, and national state as level of analysis.

John T. Bourke and Mark A. Boyer in their book "World Politics - International Politics on the World Stage," have introduced three analytical levels: system-level analysis, state-level analysis, and individual-level analysis. Under these three levels, the impacts of global issues are examined with more variations and are described as a picture with a rich array of colors. These can be identified as the followings.

1. Individual-level analysis of the impacts of the global issues

Due to the differences in natural, politic, economic, social, cultural conditions, policies, laws, communal characteristics, citizens' literacy and individual circumstances in countries, the influence of global issues on each individual bears the imprint of these in different geographical areas. Nevertheless, two main aspects of globalization have been identified for individuals.

First, the impacts of global issues on the lives of individuals. These impacts include: loss of life, loss of livelihood, financial loss, changes in living conditions and environment, lack of food, and so on. A very vivid example of those is the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of October 4th 2020, there have been 35,122,281 cases of infections and 1,037,524 deaths globally.(1) The pandemic has caused major damage globally to industries such as tourism, transportation, manufacturing, and trade. Individuals working in all industries have been all deeply affected as a result of unemployment or job change. Personal income has become precarious or almost non-existent as life has become difficult due to the rise in the costs of living.

Second, the global issues can foster individuals' cognition that changes their behaviors in positively. Individual perception plays a decisive role in preventing and dealing with or eradicating global issues. Faced with the impact of global issues of different scales and levels of influence, prestigious individuals, especially leaders in countries have actively joined, shared information, and urged policy changes. In addition, when global issues threaten the safety, survival and quality of life of individuals and nations, individuals must also modify their behaviors. Particularly for the leaders, the global issues also affect their behaviors - expeditiously receiving and processing reports and research results, acquiring prompt feedback from public opinion and using their professional experience to assess the potential impacts of global issues. Simultaneously, the global issues influence leaders' decision making and policy amendment with an eye toward negative consequence prevention and control, adaptation and responding methods to such problems.

2. State-level analysis of the impacts of the global issues

The global issues comprehensively affect all areas of a nation's social life, primarily politics. They have changed the process of domestic and foreign policy-making of each country. The decisions on domestic and foreign policies are usually based on evolving global, regional and domestic circumstances as well as national strategic goals and interests. The emergence of the global issues requires countries to respond to them, leading to changes in national goals and interests and consequently changes in their domestic and foreign policies. Moreover, the global issues have forced countries to seek solutions, including signing international agreements. Binding responsibilities resulting from international treaties and agreements affect adjustment of their domestic and foreign policies. In addition, the global issues also lay impacts on the change or renewal of political institutions and even political regimes sometimes. For example, poverty that leads to inequality or social distress erodes trust in government and law, resulting in anger and discontent in society.

This type of situation has been seen in contemporary pro-democracy movements. Provocation on social networks provide fertile ground for political insecurity. For example, in 2011 an unemployed Tunisian graduate student had to sell fruit for a living. While all of his assets were confiscated by the police, he, in great despair, publicly immolated himself with gasoline. In response, Tunisian youth turned to the street to protest. Prolonged riots and conflicts with police caused hundreds of injuries and deaths. Tunisia faced a serious social crisis which was followed by the president's exile in January 2012. As a result, the country was plunged into unrest, resulting in an economic downturn, escalating terrorism, high unemployment rate, high food prices, political instability, and crime, making people's lives become more arduous.(2)

Furthermore, the global issues affect national independence and sovereignty. Many problems result in conflict and even war. Some terrorist organizations exploit differences in religion, belief, and ethnicity as a means to promoting their group's interests, leading to transnational religious conflicts. Destabilizing factors such as these which increase social conflict among classes can damage relations with other countries, notably in border areas.

Additionally, the global issues also lay impacts on the national economy by hindering economic development, thus limiting international economic cooperation. By reducing

a nation's ability to reserve and stockpile materials, other tasks geared toward national defense such as modernization of the military, application of technological advancements in the area of national defense are limited. These would include construction of defense zones, defense projects, and creation of economic zones.

Relevant global issues also include devastation from natural and man-made disasters and epidemics. For example, in 2020, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has created the most serious socio-economic crisis since World War II. The economic backlash has outstripped the 2008 financial crisis and even surpassed the Great Depression in the United States in the 1930s.(3)

The global issues have significant impacts on the cultural and ideological life of nations and their people. The statement "cultural aggression is the last and most radical form of coercion" is frequently cited when cross-cultural problems appear. A global issue such as transnational migration, on one hand, promotes cultural exchange, yet on the other hand, frequently leads to conflict because of misunderstanding of cultural differences. Cultural encroachment becomes more significant when provoked by political forces who take advantage of the conflict for their own gains.

The global issues affect national power. Natural disasters, earthquakes, tsunamis, storms and floods from climate change, epidemics, depletion of natural resources, terrorism, poverty, population explosion, all pose challenges to the capacity and resilience of governments. They threaten economic and scientific and technological advancements among other government functions. They even greatly affect the quantity and quality of human resources, the core components of the national power. In addition, the global issues affect a nation's quality of life index, causing fear and confusion, which can reduce will, determination, trust and solidarity in times of hardship within each nation. This affects the quality of life and national solidarity, aka. the soft power of the nation.

3. System-level analysis of the impacts of the global issues

First are impacts of the global issues on world peace and security. Many global issues are found to be deeply rooted within a country. However, their consequences can spread outside the borders, becoming a security threat, and affecting a peaceful and stable environment in the region and around the world. For example, climate change has threatened world peace and security in the form of cascading effects. Climate change causes the earth's temperature to warm. The warming of the earth causes ice to melt. This leads to a rise in sea level, resulting in higher tides, floods and loss of land in low-lying areas. Loss of land leads to a loss of fishing and traditional farming areas. This affects food security and personal safety which in turn creates additional issues. These include socio-economic problems including recession, inflation, poverty, increased crime, etc.

According to a report of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), if greenhouse gas emission is not reduced globally, the average temperature in Southeast and South Asia will increase by 4.8 degrees Celsius by 2100, compared to the average temperature in 1990. At that time, the sea level will have increased by 0.7 meters (2.29 feet). As a result, rice production in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam may decrease by 50%.(4) This also leads to increased migration, affecting the stability of life and regional security. The collaboration in reducing negative effects of climate change among the nations can bring about positive outcomes, but there may trigger other security risks. For example, countries must commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For countries with slow economic growth using outdated technology, reduction of the use of fossil fuels shall have negative impacts on the country's economic growth and food security. Moreover, international technical assistance and monitoring of emission reductions that countries can sustain have opened the door to other countries, interfering both domestic and foreign policy making process, especially in the energy sector.

Depletion of natural resources due to overdevelopment and wasteful use has pushed countries into a fierce competition for control over the supply and distribution of resources in resource-rich geographical areas. Strategic resources which are vital to human life and economic development such as fossil fuels and water are pivotal in terms of peace and security in most regions of the world. An example would be

competition among the great powers in science and technology and in the domination and control over the supply and exploitation of oil and gas in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America, a competition that threatens international peace and security. Not only are fossil resources becoming scarce, but water, arable land, air, and biodiversity are increasingly polluted and overused.

In 2010, the World Bank forecast that after 21 years, the demand for water will double due to population growth, increased use for human consumption, and the demand for industrial water for mining, processing and manufacturing industries, and agriculture and livestock production. In the next 30 years, water demand will increase by 650%, posing the threat of water shortage to 26 countries with 250 million people.(5) As a result, international disputes related to water sources will increase. The exploitation of transboundary rivers will become a cause of conflict when the parties do not have a common agreement and effective cooperation. Disagreement over water resources can become a threat, while some countries have used water as a tool for war, thus damaging their relationships with others. This dominion over water sources seriously threatens peace and security in these regions. In some areas such as the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, water security in border areas increases and complicates extant territorial claims.

Putting all together, these global issues have aggravated the inherent contradictions and conflicts among countries. Epidemics, with their complex developments, also threaten world peace and security. Contagious disease can cause food insecurity.

Among all the rest, the issue of international terrorism has had the greatest and the most obvious impacts on international peace and security. The main objective of terrorism is to generate severe psychological effects and to create panic, fear, and high vigilance in society. Capturing global attention when a terrorist attack is broadcast is equally important to the perpetrators. These acts lead to panic and pose a threat to world peace. The most famous of these occurred on September 11th 2001 when terrorists hijacked airliners and crashed them into the north and south twin towers in New York City. A similar attack was made on the Pentagon in the United States. Altogether 2,976 people were killed and 6,000 were injured.(6) This terrorist attack shook the whole world. The security of the United States had been seriously

threatened with the result that it profoundly changed its domestic and foreign policies. It turned its attention to fighting terrorism. With the cascade effect, this act changed the security situation throughout the United States and the world.

Not only in the United States but also in Europe and many Asian and African countries, international terrorist organizations have also conducted destructive acts aimed at public places. Entwined with terrorism, illegal transnational migration also creates many challenges to international peace and security. Transnational criminals mixing with the flow of migrants, make tracking of these criminals a challenge to all border security.

Second, the global issues affect international linkage and cooperation on a global scale. As the effects of emerging global issues move rapidly and become widely available they inevitably become dilemmas for individuals and countries.

Sooner rather than later, it will be required that the whole world join hands to solve such problems. Therefore, bilateral and multilateral international cooperation needs to be strongly promoted in a wide variety of fields.

Global issues that have impacted countries with large national and international security forces need to update and renew bilateral cooperation agreements. The purpose of renewing a bilateral cooperation mechanism is to: 1) share information and experience, 2) conserve resources and share technology; 3) react quickly to emerging threats.

Negative global issues have a negative impact on the survival of the whole world. With this in mind countries are forced to put aside outdated conflicts and differences to cooperate and prevent new problems and find new solutions. Out of that, multilateral cooperation is developed and adjustments are made. Depending on the seriousness, scope, and mutual impacts, countries must direct their efforts to create an interwoven network of cooperation. Global issues have mandated a more effective multinational mechanism and promoted new alliances. This mode of new cooperation is accompanied with mechanisms of cooperation in dealing with each issue.

For example, the United Nations organizes many special agencies to deal with global issues such as the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for environmental issues. IPCC was established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP); the World Health Organization (WHO) was formed to combat disease; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) have been charged with addressing issues of poverty, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been charged with monitoring and suppressing illegal migration.

Not only multilateral cooperation organizations are used to achieve better efficiency in solving problems. Countries around the world are also forced to diversify their multilateral cooperation through conferences and forums. These take place more frequently and play an important role in finding solutions to global issues. Multidisciplinary cooperation is also a channel for international relations actors to share information and exchange response experiences. It allows individual nations to call for mutual material and technical support to assist each other in the face of risks, natural disasters, epidemics, international terrorism, and the myriad array of problems facing the international community. This mutual support contributes to the control and management of impending global issues. Participant countries have a new opportunity to study, discuss, and find strategic measures. They are able to implement specific actions and adopt public statements and provisions to downgrade the negative impact of global issues. They must also create a mechanism to establish funding to support vulnerable communities. In the course of cooperation, the parties can learn from others' experience, coordinate action, and share technical methods, thereby leading to the formation of a common approach. For example, in recent years, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) has operated effectively. It has proved its worth as an important channel for dialogue in reducing tensions and differences in the region. The ASEAN Regional Forum is another example. It was established in 1994 with the aim of promoting dialogue and consultation on regional political and security issues. It has been charged with building trust and developing preventive diplomacy. The ASEAN People's Forum 2018 (APF/ACSC 2018) was created to represent the voice of ASEAN members in

conferences on global issues.

Thirdly, the global issues affect the way major powers assemble multinational forces. Global issues have forced powerful countries to create new ways of gathering international forces. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States launched a global war against terrorism. It developed a new way of joining military forces to share information on this dangerous transnational crime. It persuaded countries to participate in the fight against terrorism on a global scale. Under the rubric of the "International Coalition" against terrorism, America's soft power and hard power have been strengthened, gradually laying the foundation for the country to gather global forces as needed. The war on terrorism not only helps the United States take the lead position in the list of countries participating in counter-terrorism, but also in the long run, it remains the lead country in decision-making related to international counter-terrorism.

Fourthly, the impact of global issues determines the concentration of world forces. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a far-reaching and comprehensive impact on all countries. It has contributed to the current multi- polar, decentralized world. On current global are, the United States, China, the European Union, and Russia are the significant actors. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the balance of power among these countries may change. The epidemic has the potential to dilute the influence of the United States. Recent United States politics has undergone significant fluctuation amid foreign policy changes. The epidemic has also shaken the economies and solidarity within the ranks of the European Union. Russia has been also been negatively affected economically by the epidemic. China has been severely damaged by the consequences of the Sino-American trade war, by the Covid-19 epidemic, and by natural disasters. These have all affected China's global position.

Global issues are, as the saying goes, "nothing new under the sun." Analyzing the impact of global issues is not new but it always requires special attention. However, returning to the three levels of analysis identified by Bourke and Boyer – system-level, state-level, and individual-level analysis – the results have not been sufficiently documented. The individual, state and system level approaches provide a partial overview of the complex effects of global issues. That is the basis for the formation of

a comprehensive, systematic analysis of the impact of global issues in the current period.

Tài liệu tham khảo

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