

# **The Role of President of the UN General Assembly in the Process of Adaptation of “Uniting for Peace” Resolution**

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## **Abstract**

This article explores the role that the Iranian President of the UNGA, Nasrollah Entezam, played in the process leading up to the resolution Uniting for Peace. To compare the General Assembly's past and present, it has been placed under the broader context of liberal institutionalism which advocates an independent role for international institutions and focused on the individual r of analysis.

To have an independent role, to some extent, institutions must disentangle themselves from the structural forces that had been imposed upon them by great powers. The more they are disentangled, the more they are institutionalized. The UN in its early days was less institutionalized than today. So it must have shown more firmness today, for example in Ukraine than it has been seen in its early days in the Korean War. It has been discussed how Entezam's personal capacity made that difference and how his background made him a perfect candidate for the job. The examination of this historical case is pertinent in light of the recent rekindled debates about the role of the UN General Assembly vis-a-vis UN Security Council as consequence of the war in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** Nasrollah Entezam, Uniting for Peace, General Assembly, Korean War

## **Introduction**

«We should be failing in our duty if we did not succeed in saving the world from the catastrophe which threatens it. It is my hope that we shall not fail in that duty, and that your efforts will make it possible for me, at the end of this session, to announce to the peoples of the world that we have achieved what was expected of us.»<sup>1</sup>

Since its early days, the UN has been engaged in a bitter and desperate struggle to fulfill its expectations in preserving peace and security. A range of factors and actors play a role in this struggle. Yet, the President of the

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<sup>1</sup> Nasrollah Entezam, UN General Assembly, the Opening meeting of 5th session, 19 Sep 1950 (A/PV277)

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is often an inconspicuous role that rotates amongst members. The UN Charter fails to assign responsibilities to the position. The tasks and conducts are delineated by internal rules of procedure, mostly as mandatory, optional, and creative tasks. The role of the President of the UNGA was somehow different in its fifth session, during the Korean War (1950-1952). This article scrutinizes the role of Naṣr-Allāh Entezām, the President of the UNGA in 1950, in the process of the Resolution Uniting for Peace. By analyzing the mandatory, optional, and creative roles and his diplomatic record, the article also contributes to the literature on decision-making in international organizations and discovering the role played by individuals in the process of the UN during the Korean War.

The president of the General Assembly has three tasks: presiding impartially over formal meetings, informal negotiations among the members, and representing the General Assembly on ceremonial occasions.<sup>2</sup> The formal authority of the President is laid out in detail in the written Rules of Procedures of the General Assembly.<sup>3</sup> As a member of cease-fire committee<sup>4</sup> supported by the United States of America, he acted beyond the impartial mandate despite maintaining a respected profile at the end of his mandate.

The article relies on a range of archival material to trace statements, positions, and activities of Entezām within the broader global context of the time. In doing so, the article asks how the present and the future of the

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<sup>2</sup> T. Peterson, M. (1986). *The General Assembly in world politics*. Boston [Mass.]; London: Unwin Hyman.

<sup>3</sup> UN Doc. A/520/rev20, reissued at 2022, available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n22/592/76/pdf/n2259276.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> UN Doc. A/C.1/643, 2 January 1951, available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n13/154/40/pdf/n1315440.pdf>.

UNGA are temporally aligned with the history of the Korean War? How does that precedence inform UNGA today? Secondly, it reassesses the question of the role of individuals within the UN mechanisms and broader forces of international politics by focusing on Entezam's impartiality. Thirdly, the article asks how to complement the micro and macro accounts of internationalism, the Korean War, and the UN to have a fuller account of history. The General Assembly's proceedings have inspired four streams of writing. Memoirs by current or former participants provide descriptions of views and reflections on particular events. A more extensive advocacy literature seeks to persuade governments and attentive members of the public to support a particular policy on some current issue. A third stream of writing examines the institutional features of and interaction dynamics in the Assembly, providing lessons in multilateral diplomacy for practitioners and students of intergovernmental organizations. A more diffuse fourth strand uses the Assembly's proceedings to illuminate the broader dynamics of world politics as they are refracted through intergovernmental forums.<sup>5</sup>

In what follows, first, the role of institutions in theories of international relations, including the debate between Mearsheimer and Keohane will be discussed to set up the theoretical background of the article. But to compare two wars so different in time and place, one needs to analyse and compare historical and geographical contexts as mediator variables. So, in the second section, the Korean War context will be discussed. In the third section, the role that Nasrollah Entezam played in the 5th session of the UNGA will be analysed and in the fourth section, the actions that have been taken by the UNGA in the War in Ukraine will be reviewed, so that I will be able to draw

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<sup>5</sup> Peterson, M. J., 'General Assembly', in Thomas G. Weiss, and Sam Daws (eds), *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, 2nd edn, Oxford Handbooks (2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 8 Aug. 2018), p. 121, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803164.013.6>, accessed 28 May 2023.

a conclusion in the last section by comparing the UNGA actions past and present.

### **I. Theoretical literature**

Institutions are new to world politics. In the years between the 1950s and 1970s, political science used to be studied without institutional elements. Institutionalism gradually entered the theories of behaviorism, pluralism, Marxism, and neorealism.<sup>6</sup> Realists should not be happy with this idea of international institutions as they see them just a reflection of the balance of power. Cooperation is possible only when the underlying forces were accommodative. Structural forces are not just restrictive for cooperation. They might be facilitative. However, the theory cannot reveal the mechanism for such cooperation. It just explains the reasons behind it.<sup>7</sup>

Liberals, on the other hand, welcome the idea of international institutions. They are part of the third debate in theories of International Relations. The English school approaches them from a different angle. They emphasize the historical contexts of habits and behavioral patterns. In his book "Anarchic Society: A Study of Order in World Politics", Hedley Bull says any understanding of order, both domestically and in the international community, is incomplete without taking into account factors such as mutuality of interests, sense of belonging to a community, and habit and inertia.<sup>8</sup> At its 80<sup>th</sup>,

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<sup>6</sup> Pollack, Mark A. 2001 'European Integration and International Relations Theory' In *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39 (2), pp. 221–244, p. 227.

<sup>7</sup> Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979 'Theory of International Politics' Philippines: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, p. 71

<sup>8</sup> Bull, Hedley (2002): *The anarchical society. A study of order in world politics* /Hedley Bull. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave. p. 46

the UN is expected to be more institutionalized by these factors in a way that without them, the role of its leader would have been much more difficult.

Mearsheimer, in his essay, "False Promise of International Institutions" bundles together three theories of international relations that he believes consider institutions as a core concept: liberal institutionalism, collective security, and critical theory. He calls all of them institutionalist theories and contends that while Realism considers institutions a reflection of the distribution of power, the other theories assume an independent role for them.<sup>9</sup>

Mearsheimer defines institutions as a set of rules that channels the ways states can cooperate or compete with each other.<sup>10</sup> These mechanisms are decentralized and there is no effective mechanism of imposition.<sup>11</sup> This idea contradicts the spirit of Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter which imposes the will of 5 permanent members of the Security Council on other members. On the other hand, Keohane holds that the main difference is that realists consider institutions like NATO to have no independent role in establishing peace, but liberal institutionalists, while emphasizing the independent role of institutions, do not claim that these institutions are independent under any circumstances.<sup>12</sup> This argument can be shown as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> Mearsheimer, John J. 1994/95 'False Promise of International Institutions' In *International Security* 19 (3), pp. 5–49. Available online at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539078> accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

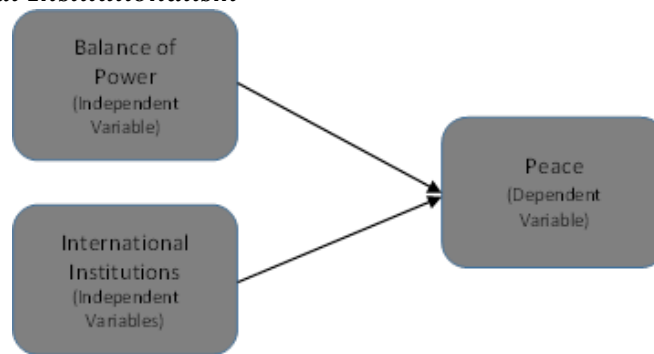
<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Keohane, 1984, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 9. 42.

***Realism***



***Liberal Institutionalism***



Institutions rarely change. The reason is a combination of uncertainty, bargaining costs, and organizational barriers to change, and this means that institutional structure cannot be fully deduced from economic and social underlying circumstances.<sup>13</sup> So if the underlying factors remain constant, institutions rarely change. Underlying conditions are not completely dependent on institutions and vice versa. One can find cases where the underlying conditions have changed while the institutions are fixed.<sup>14</sup> This is blatantly obvious in the UNSC, where for example, Russia is not what it was seven decades ago, but it retained its veto power. According to this debate, if the output of an institution is greater than the common

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<sup>13</sup> Pollack, Mark A. 1996 'The New Institutionalism and EC Governance: The Promise and Limits of Institutional Analysis' In *Governance* 9 (4), pp. 429–458, p. 438.

<sup>14</sup> Keohene, *op cit*, p. 47.

denominator of the national interests of the members, then institutions matter and are not just a reflection of the distribution of power. This is exactly what we saw at the UNGA 5<sup>th</sup> session.

Following these principles, socializing governments and politicians is another important role that institutions play. Socialization is defined by Jeffrey Checkel as the process of familiarizing or inducing actors with the norms and rules of a particular society. It also requires the logic of results to be transformed into the logic of proportionality. This is a two-step process. In the first step, which is called socialization or internalization of the first type, instrumental calculation turns into role-playing. In fact, here the actor understands what is socially accepted in a particular situation or in a particular community. In the second step, the actor considers the norms to be intrinsically true beyond the appropriateness in a society or situation.<sup>15</sup> The prerequisites for this internalization are:

1. When communication and contacts are long and stable.
2. When the communication is voluminous and deep.

So, one can safely say that now, the UN principles have become more internalized than in the early years of its establishment, because as a result of many agencies and subsidiaries that have been formed, communications are more voluminous and deep. Moreover, we have a long and stable history of communications between countries through the UN systems. But people do not enter the institutional arena with an empty mind. They came from different fields of domestic and international politics.

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<sup>15</sup> Checkel, Jeffrey T. (Ed.) 2007 'International institutions and socialization in Europe' Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press (International organization, 59,4), pp. 5-6.

1. Those who have a professional background in international or regional policy fields are more likely to internalize the concepts of transnational roles (such as diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
2. Those who are involved with domestic policy networks and are accidentally thrown into the international/regional arena are less likely to internalize these notions of transnational roles, such as local parliamentarians.<sup>16</sup>

What Checkel said can be a basis for formulating the assumptions of research on the relationship between the success of some institutions and the international professional background of their diplomats. For example, how fluent they are in foreign languages, how much they have studied or worked abroad, how many of their friends are foreigners, etc. As will be discussed later, Entezam had a perfect record on both of these variables.

A blind spot in the neo-neo debate is how much influence diplomats, even those negotiating on behalf of their respective governments, for example in the United Nations, are influenced by the institutional context made for them. Realists believe that in these highly socialized committees, people remain loyal to their government whatsoever.<sup>17</sup> On the contrary, some believe that national representatives often form an epistemic community that has a common professional and knowledge background.<sup>18</sup> Officials and experts of international

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 439.

<sup>18</sup> Davis Cross, Mai'a K. 2011 'Security integration in Europe. How knowledge-based networks are transforming the European Union' Mai'a K. Davis Cross. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 93.

organizations are an epistemic community that can introduce new ideas into global governance.<sup>19</sup>

In this regard, Constructivists, like institutionalists, believe that institutions are important, that is, they have an independent role that cannot be reduced to other factors. But they are different in their approach to the importance of institutions. The rational theory of Liberal Institutionalism considers institutions, whether formal or informal, as the rules of the game, which with their help actors follow their preferences that have already been determined, but for Constructivists, these preferences and even the identity of the actors after membership is subject to change.<sup>20</sup>

Exploring the role of some great leaders in world politics, it should not be difficult to accept Alexander Wendt's title that "anarchy is what states make of it." In Constructivism, it is not just the pursuit of interests that makes countries create international institutions. In fact, it is a two-way road and the existence of international institutions makes a new understanding of national interests, and this, in turn, provides support for international institutions. In fact, membership creates identity and it creates interests. Learning plays an important role here. This kind of impact of perceptions and mentalities on behavior cannot be explained by realism. According to realism, the repetition of the past, like power cycles is inevitable. So it cannot explain why the United Nations has not failed as the League of Nations did.

Stephen Krasner uses the term "punctuated equilibrium", derived from evolutionary biology, to explain that the evolution of institutions is not only the product of environmental conditions but also the

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<sup>19</sup> Abbot, Kenneth W., Snidal, Duncan 1998 'Why States Act through Formal International Organizations?' In *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (1), pp. 3–32, p. 17, Available online at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/174551> accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Pollack, 'European Integration and International Relations Theory', *op cit*.

product of past choices.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the punctuated equilibrium model proposed by Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge is opposed to Darwin's theory of evolution, in which evolution is not gradual, but sudden and is the product of environmental crises.<sup>22</sup> They have a long period of stability and then the crisis comes. The key point in this theory is that there are different solutions to respond to a crisis, but past choices limit present choices.<sup>23</sup> Every choice channels subsequent choices, which can be used in the tree model of Sidney Verba's sequential development.<sup>24</sup> Thus, each choice limits the range of subsequent choices. As one climbs each branch of the tree, it determines which branches one can choose next. So, the choice that the UN made in its 5<sup>th</sup> general assembly may have channeled its conduct in the Ukraine War. It both raises expectations and facilitates confrontation with its blocking member in UNSC, Russia.

Moreover, Abbott and Snidal hold that the greater the investment in an asset, the greater the risk of opportunism<sup>25</sup>. So, one might expect that the risk of opportunism now is greater than in 1950, because countries' investment in the UN now is greater than in the past. The independence of international organizations helps that the intervention of big countries in weak countries does not cause anti-colonial feelings.<sup>26</sup> Without a high degree of independence, such suspicion will not be removed. Independence also requires neutrality, that is, the absence of direct pressure from other countries.<sup>27</sup> For example, UN

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<sup>21</sup> Krasner, Stephen D.; Nordlinger, Eric; Geertz, Clifford; Skowronek, Stephen; Tilly, Charles; Grew, Raymond; Trimberger, Ellen Kay 1984 'Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics' In *Comparative Politics* 16 (2), p. 223, p. 243.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Abbot, & Snidal, *op cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

peacekeepers are chosen from countries that have no interest in the conflict.<sup>28</sup> Neutrality is also necessary for the mediation role of international organizations, whether this mediation is non-binding, such as good offices, or binding, such as international courts.<sup>29</sup> These are the facilities that the UNGA president can utilize to perform their function.

## **II. Korean War Context**

Korean War has been studied less than it deserves as it was overshadowed by the two more important wars, World War Two and the Vietnam War.<sup>30</sup> However, the percentage of civilian casualties in the Korean War was bigger than those two, and at the same time, in the end, it had no result on the ground and borders remained untouched as it was at the beginning. At the beginning, North Korea had the upper hand. But for the United Nations, there would remain just one Korea, and it would look like North Korea.

This war was important for UN studies because it was the first test of its collective security system and its capabilities of peacemaking. This was the first time that the United Nations Command engaged in a conflict. Thankfully, the result of Italy's aggression against Ethiopia in 1935 did not repeat as it was a striking failure for the League of Nations. In that war, the Italian fascist government used chemical weapons and poisoned water in civilian areas,<sup>31</sup> and the League did nothing except impose sanctions which not only was ineffective but

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Halberstam, David 2007 'The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War' New York: Hyperion, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Campbell, I. 2017 'The Addis Ababa Massacre: Italy's National Shame' United Kingdom: ep University Press, pp. 36-37.

also lifted one year later. Korean War could have ended up with that outcome too.

Therefore, this time, UNSC adopted a resolution to authorize the dispatching of the United Nations Command to fight with North Korean forces. That decision was made in the absence of the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. The UN recognized the Republic of China in Taiwan as China and the USSR absented itself to boycott the UN for not recognizing the People's Republic of China as China. However, Twenty-one countries of the United Nations contributed to the UN force<sup>32</sup> and this force managed to cut the military logistics of the Korean People's Army in Incheon, while the South Korean Army had been stuck in a small area in Pusan. Although the US contributed 90% of the UN force, it did not declare war against North Korea or China.<sup>33</sup> This indicates the important role of the UN in avoiding escalation.

To compare the background of the Korean War with the war in Ukraine, one must remember that Korea was under the rule of imperial Japan since 1910, and after the Second World War, to be ready as an independent sovereign country, the US and the USSR agreed to divide Korea into two parts along the 38th parallel for 5 years of trusteeship in which the USSR administer the south and the US administer the north. However, Ukraine has been an independent member of the UN since 1991.

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew Glass, Truman orders U.S. military intervention in Korea, June 27, 1950, on line: Politico, 06/27/2018, available at: <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/27/this-day-in-politics-june-27-1950-665397>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

This decision on the occupation zones had been made at the Moscow Conference just three months after the Japanese surrender. There were cordial relations between the US and USSR in the background to such an extent that the Red Army waited three weeks at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel for the U.S. forces to arrive. This cordially disappeared a few years later. As another factor, both leaders in the south and the north claimed they are the only legitimate government for all of Korea. The UN recognized the Southern government. China was the third factor in the equation. North Koreans took part in the Chinese civil war and in turn, China promised to support North Korea in its campaign against the South. The trigger for the war was a communist insurgency in the South that was backed by the North. At this juncture, the war broke when the North Korean forces crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Comparing with the context of the war in Ukraine, one can say Ukraine has been recognized as an independent member of the UN with a democratic government while Korea was not an independent country and although the government in the south was elected by a general election, it had authoritarian rulers.<sup>34</sup> Unlike the large-scale insurrection in South Korea, there was no such an event in Eastern Ukraine, not at least on that scale. Moreover, the unification of the Korean two parts was legitimate, while the annexation of Eastern Ukraine is not. As far as the distribution of power in international relations is concerned, one can say that in those days, although the USSR acquired nuclear bombs, its arsenal was far from parity with the

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<sup>34</sup> Kim, Q.-Y. 1996 'From Protest to Change of Regime: The 4-19 Revolt and the Fall of the Rhee Regime in South Korea' *Social Forces*, 74(4), 1179–1208.

US and its deterrence was effective from the mid-1960s.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the US had the upper hand to engage in the war.

The USSR's absence has also played an important role here. Following the formation of the People's Republic of China and the recognition of the Republic of China by the UN, the Soviets decided to block the UNSC in their absence. But the interpretation of the UN charter was different from the Soviets'. The USSR's absence made it possible that the UNSC adopts a resolution and mandate United Nations Command to fight for South Korea. In the war in Ukraine, Russia vetoed all attempts by the UNSC to counter the aggression. As to the English School of International Relations, one can expect that habits, inertia, and the sense of belonging must be more powerful now than in the past because these elements grow as time goes by as a result of long and stable communications. Mutuality of interests also grew, compared to the early years of the Cold War, since the world has grown more interdependent.

### **III. Role of Nasrollah Entezam**

UN UN Charter Article 10 gives the Assembly a potentially unlimited agenda by specifying that it may discuss 'any questions or matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter. 'Assembly authority to adopt resolutions is limited only by the Article 12 provision that it should not make recommendations relating to conflicts being handled in the Security Council and the Article 2 (7) provision banning UN intervention in matters 'essentially

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<sup>35</sup> Garthoff, R. L. 1978 'Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy' *International Security*, 3(1), 112-147, p. 112.

within the domestic jurisdiction of states. In practice, neither provision has imposed any significant limitation on Assembly discussions. It has invariably commented on conflicts-in-progress, whether or not the Security Council was also addressing them at that moment.<sup>36</sup>

The focus on one individual is somewhat a departure from the usual level of analysis that we have: we study systems, institutions, and societies. We are interested in the collective. But we have a greater scope of international politics and internationalism, particularly the Global South when we also embrace both the UN General Assembly and the individuals involved in it. It is relevant to international politics, not just war but other issues and aspects, and highlights the nexus between international politics and international law. The institution itself and the debates within it manifest intellectual struggles and conceptual challenges that influence international politics, and characteristics of a good UN leader's integrity.<sup>37</sup> The most important characteristic of a good UN leader is integrity. Central to a UN official's integrity is an unwavering commitment to the greater international good rather than the narrower interests of any government or group of governments. This involves objectivity and impartiality, calling a spade a spade — and acting accordingly — regardless of the political pressures to bend the storyline for the benefit of one set of interests over another. The best UN leader can work through this messy *mélange* of views. This may require exhaustive discussions with a seemingly endless array of

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<sup>36</sup> Peterson, *op cit*, p. 120.

<sup>37</sup> Coleman, Christopher. "Solving global problems in a multipolar world: Qualities of UN Leadership" in Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, *The Art of Leadership in the United Nations: Painting perspectives, staying true to principles*, (Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 2022), p. 27.

interested governments. This is sometimes the only way to identify the common ground, enabling a meaningful path forward. It plays a prominent role in the Korean War, because of the Uniting for Peace resolution, but it is often looked over in comparison to the UN Security Council.

The General Assembly is also a significant player when it comes to conventions, informal debates, and institution-making. It is the largest forum of sovereign states, and there is all sort of questions on the power relations and how each member plays a role or influence. There, the role of the president is important. There are also views that hold UNGA as symbolic or a ritual but then we have the issues in which the assembly leads conventions and debates with tangible impact. In the context of the Korean war, that person was Nasrollah Entezam who I have been researching for a while studying Iran-UN relations. He is the kind of individual you would expect him to be: belonging to a city in Iran (Tafresh) that is home to notable number of diplomats and intellectuals, part of the Iranian aristocracy that comes with its privileges had various diplomatic posts mostly in Europe, went to the League of Nations as part of the litigation over Anglo-Persian oil case and subsequent nationalization that comes with ramifications on imperialism and sovereignty and self-determination, known as pro-American in Iran and abroad, and had roles in UN entities such as the Special Committee on Palestine.

As someone who's been part of the San Francisco Conference, there were notes on his potential as a Secretary General. I analyze his tenure as the President of the UN General Assembly, the one-year term, in three ways: the role comes with some statutory or compulsory duties that are part of the rituals or expectations enshrined in various documentations. Those are the musts. The duties are performed under

rules of procedures articles 30-37. Then we have the “nice to have” aspects that are optional that he played a role here and there in discussions or events or issues. The third one, which is important one here, is the creative one. The creative ones are when it pushes the boundaries of the rigid UN expectations or raises in response to events. Entezam played all three roles. Like every President, he relied on personal and institutional capabilities. Yet, the rule is they must be impartial: including avoiding voting on subjects related to their country.

The Fifth Session of the General Assembly has been one of the longest sessions in the history of the UN, particularly because of the Korean War. The Korean War is what defines and led to it. That’s not all. The Assembly faced a minimal change, in terms of the number of member states with a new addition of Indonesia. We still witness the erasure of women and the reaffirmation of historical gendered tropes. Based on my findings through list of delegations of that session at the General Assembly, 13 member states had women delegation members. At the same time, any deliberations of the UNGA, in the early years of the UN, were part of the institutional development of this organization and all the debates within the Assembly were also happening with an eye kept on the Korean War.

The Korean War was the backdrop of the opening of the fifth session, as evident by the speeches in the first meeting and here we have Entezam’s first remarks. It shaped all the subsequent meetings and any other debate that the Assembly had. The President, in all of his compulsory, optional, or creative roles kept bringing back this context and painting it as the most important item on the international agenda. It was the test for the UN.

As we all know, we have the Uniting for Peace resolution alongside the Good Offices of the UNGA alongside various resolutions and the ceasefire committee. Perhaps, this era is the most active the UNGA has ever been due to two factors. Firstly, the gravity of the situation within the international political context in that particular time. The second factor is the role of the individual, his background, and his standing. Entezam's membership in the Committee of Peaceful Settlement arising from the Uniting for Peace resolution was met with opposition by some members, such as China. This was due to pro-American attitude of the President of the General Assembly. Yet, his diplomatic skills and character were lauded. In this instance we witness the interplay of both the systemic factors and the individual that transformed (and facilitated the transformation) of the role of the President of the General Assembly into an active player.

Entezam welcomed the UN action in Korea as making a reality of collective security in the defense of peace. In December 1950, attempting to facilitate the efforts of a group of 13 Arab and Asian nations to bring about an armistice, Entezam chaired an ad hoc ceasefire group that tried to discuss ways and means of ending the fighting between the United States and PRC. When this effort failed, Entezam encouraged the formation of the UN Good Offices Committee, established under a resolution of February 1, 1951. On 3 November 1950, the General Assembly adopted resolution 377 A (V), which was given the title "Uniting for Peace".

This resolution seemed to be a tool used by the USSR to block the UNSC from adopting any resolution to protect the Republic of Korea. At the beginning of the war in June 1950, the UNSC was able to take action and adopt resolution No. 83 of 27 June 1950 because the USSR, at that time, boycotted the UNSC because of not recognizing

PRC as China. It assumed that the UNSC would not be able to move because the UN Charter requires affirmative votes of all its permanent members for substantive resolutions. The majority of the UNSC members believed the other way around. So, the USSR took part in the meetings of the Council since August 1950 and opposed any draft resolution condemning North Korea. The United States took the lead here and by referring to Article 14 of the Charter made the UNGA adopt resolution 377 A (V). In section A, it says wherever the UNSC fails to exercise its primary responsibility in international peace and security, the UNGA shall seize itself of the matter and hold an emergency special session to make recommendations for “collective measure, including the use of armed force when necessary”.

However, the UNGA would have limitations. It can only make “recommendations” which are nonbinding legally. In reality, resolution 377 A (V) established a Peace Observation Commission and a Collective Measures Committee but none of them were of any significant result. However, resolution 377 A (V) was a major invention because the UN Charter stipulated that international peace and security is under the authority of the UNSC, and while the Council is exercising its function, the Assembly "shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation”. Also, the UNGA shall not refer its actions to the Council (Article 11, paragraph 2). This procedure is not always easy to follow. The Assembly cannot be on the sidelines when international peace and security are on the line.

Entezam compromising his diplomatic capability, mandatory, optional, and creative tasks lead the assembly to adapt united for peace resolution. United Nations at that time was at the first years of establishing, of course, the League of Nations experience was under

its shoulder and it was fear to repeat history. Everyone who was in the organization filled the gaps for reaching results for peace. With this situation in Security Council, the key was using the assembly capacities. Of course, according to articles 11 and 12 assemblies did not have the exact capacity to do. It was a difficult task. One important matter that should be considered, UNSC was not capable enough.

At the end of session, all the delegates appreciated Entezam's presidency, especially the USA and Britain, and his ability. The USSR delegate thanked the president but criticized His unlawful work on some issues. At the end of the session Entezam talked and referred to the inauguration speech in which he promised impartiality. Today 25903 passed from 5 Nov 1951; the world is witnessing the impartiality of the UN, its structures, and its functions. There is a broader question of whether actually within all of these structures, these individuals could be impartial or not. It goes back to finding the middle way between the levels of analysis that connects individual experiences with broader systemic explanations and influences.

#### **IV. Uniting for Peace and War in Ukraine**

When it comes to international law and the principles of the UN, the invasion of Ukraine is a bigger violation than the Korean War. Korea was not an independent country when the war broke out in 1950. Ukraine in 2022 was not only an independent country but a democratic society with democratically elected leaders. So it is expected that the UN be serious in its reaction. From the very beginning, Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukrainian President, asked the UNSC to take firm action and even to expel Russia, so that no one

could block the Security Council to do its job. He even asked the UNSC to dissolve itself if it cannot perform its function.<sup>38</sup>

However, the UNSC became paralyzed and eyes turned to the UNGA to fill the vacant place. The Uniting for Peace resolution created a precedent for the UNGA to take decisive action. It paved the way for having an independent role. The common denominator of the national interests of its members cannot overrule Russia's ambitions. Following the Uniting for Peace mechanism and under the rubric of "Extra Special Sessions" eleven meetings have been held so far<sup>39</sup> and the Assembly passed five resolutions against Russia:

The first resolution was adopted on March 2, 2022, only a few days after the war began, "demanding the Russian Federation immediately end its invasion of Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces." It also addressed Belarus for its illegal activities and asked all parties to abide by the Minsk agreements which have been negotiated by France and Germany in 2014 and 2015. It passed with an overwhelming majority. Only 5 countries voted against while 141 countries supported the decision.<sup>40</sup> This resolution dispelled all of Russia's excuses like the expansion of NATO or the genocide of the

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<sup>38</sup> ABC News 04/06/2022 'Can Russia be removed from UN Security Council and how would that work?' Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-06/can-russia-be-removed-from-the-un-security-council/100969106> accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>39</sup> UN News 11/14/2022 'General Assembly adopts resolution on Russian reparations for Ukraine' Available at: [https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130587?utm\\_source=UN+News+-+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=41ea7bce8f-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2022\\_11\\_15\\_01\\_00&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_fdbf1af606-41ea7bce8f-108116986](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130587?utm_source=UN+News+-+Newsletter&utm_campaign=41ea7bce8f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_11_15_01_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fdbf1af606-41ea7bce8f-108116986) accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>40</sup> UN Press Release 03/02/2022 'General Assembly Overwhelmingly Adopts Resolution Demanding Russian Federation Immediately End Illegal Use of Force in Ukraine, Withdraw All Troops' Available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12407.doc.htm> accessed 28 May 2023.

Russian minority by Kyiv.<sup>41</sup> The resolution by its decisive vote showed that the international community did not buy these claims. The second resolution has been adopted with 140 votes on March 24, only one month after the war broke out. This resolution focused on the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. It also criticized Russia for creating terrible conditions.<sup>42</sup>

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, the General Assembly continued delegitimizing Russia by another resolution. It was approved by 93 votes in favor and 24 votes against and asked for Russia's expulsion from the UN Human Rights Council. The session was held 7 days after the massacre in Bucha on the outskirts of Kyiv.<sup>43</sup> This was the first time that a UN member has been expelled from that Council. A few countries claimed that Russia had threatened them not to vote for the resolution.<sup>44</sup>

On November 14, 2022, the General Assembly voted for the fourth resolution on a proposal drafted by 50 countries and ratified by 94 countries. Only 14 countries voted against it. The resolution asked for an international mechanism to pay for the damages, the loss of human lives or wounds, as well as documentation of evidence and claims.

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<sup>41</sup> Kirby, Paul 02/24/2022 'Has Putin's war failed and what does Russia want from Ukraine?' BBC News, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589> accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>42</sup> UN News 03/24/2022 'Ukraine: General Assembly passes resolution demanding aid access, by large majority' Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114632> accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>43</sup> UN News 04/07/2022 'UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council' Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115782> accessed 28 May 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Nichols, Michelle 04/06/2022 'Russia threatens states with consequences over U.N. vote on Human Rights Council, Reuters' Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/un-vote-thursday-us-push-suspend-russia-rights-council-2022-04-06/> accessed 28 May 2023.

The Russian representative claimed that the United Nations had no role in the proposed mechanism and that the proposed mechanism would be executed only by a group of countries. So, the money that should be spent on rebuilding Ukraine could be spent on financing weapons to Ukraine.<sup>45</sup>

The last resolution so far has been adopted in the first anniversary of the war. The Assembly gathered together for the 5th time and hold another special meeting on February 22, 2023. They condemned the invasion once again and asked Russia to leave Ukraine. 141 countries backed the resolution, the same number as a year ago.<sup>46</sup>

All these resolutions, although had some constructive results for the conflict, reveal the significant gap between the UN results in the two wars. In Korean War, the UNGA authorized a decisive and military response, while in Ukraine War, it did not. Although great powers' relations are different now from those in the 1950s and they do not have any intention to go to war over Ukraine, unlike what they did in the 1950s over Korea, the UNGA could still bring better results by legitimizing some efforts and delegitimizing others. For example, there is some sort of dispute even in Western countries over the righteousness of sending weapons to Ukraine. Or there are proposals for peace that contain ceding territory which encourages the use of force in today's world politics. This violates the very basic principles and values of the UN Charter. These uncertainties could be resolved if the UNGA would have adopted more assertive resolutions based on the Uniting for Peace mechanism.

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<sup>45</sup> UN News, 11/14/2022, op cit.

<sup>46</sup> Aljazeera 02/24/2023 'UN tells Russia to leave Ukraine: How did countries vote?' Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/24/un-tells-russia-to-leave-ukraine-how-did-countries-vote> accessed 28 May 2023.

## **Conclusion**

Due to the possibility of nuclear escalation, the US and the Western allies must be more reserved to push for any resolution that encourages collective defense against Russia in Ukraine. Entezam probably did not have that problem. However, one can expect other measures under Chapter 7, Article 41, of the UN Charter, like economic sanctions or severing means of communication. Moreover, the Remstein initiative could be led by the United Nations Command. In the Korean War, the USSR's absence helped the UNSC to act promptly and adopt a resolution to mandate United Nations Command. Now the UNGA had to act solely and issue such a mandate by itself.

Resolution 377 gave enough authority to the UNGA to recommend the use of armed force when necessary. This resolution, like what have said about evolutionary institutionalism, paved the way for the president of the UNGA to act more decisively to uphold peace. The decision that the USSR made more than 70 years ago to block the UNSC will restrict its freedom of choice to block the UNGA from exercising its power stipulated in the Uniting for Peace resolution. The UN is stronger now than it was in the early years of the Cold War, as is shown in the principles of the English School of International Relations. This increases the risk of opportunism. So, although some elements like the Soviet absence are not present today, the general status of great powers competition is more accommodative for the UNGA to support Ukraine in 2022 than it was for North Korea in 1950.

One thing I want to point out, as a way to open up further research on the topic of the UN and the Korean War, is to assess the precedent that the Korean War set for the role of the UN and the UNGA. Look at

the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and a few other examples where the public debate goes back to the Korean War as the way the international community should act. In a way, the present and the future are temporally aligned in the past that is the Korean War. They expect the same result to be achieved. That is important. The Second point is on assessing the role of Entezam: was he truly impartial? How are we judging him? How do the judgments of the UN civil servants differ from Korean, American, and Iranian officials? Does it? The questions that he raises on his own impartiality are still being decided and debated years after the fifth session.

“You will remember that at the time I was elected I made a promise and also an appeal. I promised that I would preside over your debates with complete impartiality. It is for you to judge whether I have kept that promise.”<sup>47</sup>

At the end, he was successful to fulfill his obligations. USSR was quite unhappy with the result. Its representative called it incorrect, unobjective, and illegal. The representative of the USSR objected to the role Entezam played, in directing speculations and recommendations (UN Doc. A/PV/302).. During the discussion of the item in the first committee the USSR delegation argued that the first draft of the resolution was a violation of the UN charter and hence incorrect and illegal (A/PV/301). Of course, it was rejected. However, other members praised the role that the President played and expressed their general feelings to the assembly and its president. For example, at the end of session, the Brazilian delegation attributed the successful result of the session to his personal effort and manner and said: “it is not too much to say that a great part of result we have obtained are due to his personal contribution and the manner of in

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<sup>47</sup> Nasrollah Entezam, UN General Assembly 5th session, 05 Nov. 1951(A/PV/332)

which he succeeded in facing the innumerable difficulties encountered in the course of our work. For that we owe him our gratitude; he might well be called the good genius of the fifth session of General Assembly" (A/PV/332). The delegate from the UK praised Entezam for his personal judgment too. Also, other delegations praised him with such words; brilliant handling, great responsibilities as a member of the Good Offices committee, no breath of criticism, as to his great courtesy, firmness, impartiality, statesmanship, superiority of knowledge, sense of justice, a man of exemplary gentleness and tact, wisdom, great competence, strong support of impartiality (A/PV/332).

We raise the same question about decisions made today too. It leads us asking we can separate the individual from the broader forces that make international politics. However, thirdly, I want to apply some nuance: the role that Entezam played is not separate from his own identity and past. His experience with the League, his own experience with the British, his Europhile credentials, his loyalty to the UN and internationalism, and his class background, all of those paved the way for the actions. Just as Entezam's actions and record are in a continuum to those, we should study the Korean War as a specific case study on its own merit but also as a mirror of the internationalism in the 20th century that shaped its course and today. We also need to realize while we get the systemic accounts, there are micro-narratives that we should grasp: it is only the micro and macro together that gives us the fuller account.