

## An alternative look at International Relations

On the news website *The Wire*, Sushil Aaron asks an important question: why is it that the international relations (IR) community of strategic thinkers in India, barring a few, are silent on what afflicts governance in the country today? By strategic thinkers, he means commentators, former diplomats and academics who are in the business of suggesting and formulating policy goals by analysing global political economy issues, diplomatic relations, and world affairs. This is a pertinent question that is not just directed at the myopic and careerist tendencies of some members of this community. It is also a comment on the limiting nature of “strategic thought” that turns a blind eye to domestic politics, the policies framed by the ruling class and their effects on public life, while keenly following every diplomatic nuance or the conduct of international affairs in multilateral and bilateral fora.

This is because of a fundamental flaw in IR practice and theory. IR is limited to mean the conduct of nation states in a world order that is characterised largely by anarchy and which necessitates self-seeking behaviour by nation states seen as individuals. This theory flows largely from the ideas espoused by Kenneth Waltz in *Theory of International Politics*, which spawned a paradigm of IR termed as neorealism or structural realism, one which reigns supreme in India too.

There have been various critiques of this paradigm and new alternatives have emerged, but the most promising approach to study the continuum of both the domestic and the international has been by the international theorist Benno Teschke. He seeks to combine insights from history, political economy, historical sociology and international political economy to draw a new paradigm called political Marxism. His book, *The Myth of 1648*, tears apart the realist understanding of the Peace of Westphalia and instead analyses it through an understanding of the transformations in social property relations in the regimes that formed the pact.

In Indian academia too, there are works that go beyond the narrow frames of reference set by structural realism and its variants. For instance, in *The Making of India's Foreign Policy*, Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya combines an analysis of the changes in the domestic system and the international environment and theorises the conduct of foreign policy. *India Engages the World* by N.C. Behera and Achin Vanaik is also worth a read.

Receive the best of The Hindu delivered to your inbox everyday!

Please enter a valid email address.

Marriage is a civil contract — adultery or divorce should have only civil consequences

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](http://crackIAS.com)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com