Book of e.h. carr on 'twenty years crisis.'

This paper seeks to make a review the book of E. H. Carr on ' Twenty Years Crisis.' The book is about international relations (IR) hence discussion dwells mainly on related different IR concepts including utopianism and " extreme" realism. The book was written by Edward Hallett Carr in 1939 and is believed to be one of the classics in international relations (IR). I see two reasons why Carr's book makes a special place in the field of IR. Firstly, since the book was first printed in 1939, it is believed that it greatly contributed to the establishment of international as an autonomous discipline; secondly, it has a quite good amount of texts in understanding classical realism.

An observant mind would think that the book was written shortly before the outbreak of World War II – as the author himself has put in the preface to the first edition. The book is believed to have grown out of the author's disappointment with utopianism and " extreme" realism that appeared to him to belong to opposite poles that have developed in the study and practice of international politics after the Great War. Utopianism is believed to have its roots from the philosophical liberalism and gained popularity in the first decade after WWI which included the view that there is goodness in man and of humankind as united by a substantial harmony of interests; the existence of natural law; and a reliance on the constructive consequence of public opinion on politics.

Using the doctrine of utopianism, one could see the creation of the League of Nations and the liberal international economic system. But for author Carr, he saw the opposite, arguing that these two liberal institutions were weak which actually uncovered the weaknesses of the utopian approach. It was Carr's view, that the political and economic events in Europe occurring

before the World II proved that principles like the universal interest in peace or the benefits of open markets were not really true in the real sense since these developments were dependent on a distribution of power favouring the status quo countries which included Great Britain and the United States at the time.

Carr's emphasis on power in international politics, however, does not preclude him from disagreeing with those who take this realist principle to its extremes. He looks at politics as a constant quest for power in which imagination does not play any role, and making an allowance for morality as always relative and functional to interests. Thus he argued that the kind of realism developed in the decade before World War II, made utopianism's opposite mistake that is analysis made makes purpose lacking in meaning. Carr's contemporaries including " heirs of Machiavelli" were proposing a completely pragmatic approach to politics, which had detached any emotional appeal, finite goal, or ground for ethical judgment, which Carr readily found to have no basis.

This would leave any one then reading this book wander the way one then should look at world politics. The author then made his theory of international relations clearer in the second half of the book. What he theorized as is that power or drive for supremacy is the main driving force of international politics. He denied not the fact that every state has selfish interest and that no interaction in the international arena can be well explained without making an assumption to the selfish nature of states. These countries according to Carr lust for influence and to the conflictual

character of politics. He defined power to be referring to military as the most important, because of the possibility of war that was always present then.

Power could also be economic, or ideological. He thus believed that power is not the only force at work in the international arena. As to how can this be, Carr, as distinguished from the " extreme" realists, believes that morality plays a role in politics. His conception of ethics, however, is not embodied as part of one he is opposing, the theory of the utopian philosopher. Instead what Carr theorized on is a " realistic" morality, found and felt in the actual behaviour of the states that recognize each other as belonging to the same community. Commonality for membership in the same community lies with similargoalsand " feelings" of said members.

There is basis to look at the authors position on ethics in international relations as having significant limitations which should include the need and concern for self-preservation) so that denying not to have any function in politics may sound to be baseless since man must not be forgotten that he can be sociable as well as egoistic. Thus in trying to find the middle ground or the so called " golden mean" that is between complete power and purely morality based on utopianism, Carr's analysis of international law did show his plausible view in international relation. It may be just logical to understand his argument not to obey the law because it is " good" or out of pure imposition.

He believes then powerful countries then do so make decisions because law gives certainty and regularity to an order and such situations do show both the systemic distribution of power and the consent of its participants. What can be inferred from Carr's position is that, the main challenge for a system

undergoing a redistribution of power via peaceful transformations of its legal order moral principles should be maintained as still important part of the process.

To conclude, it may be said that the Carr's book on The Twenty Years' Crisis is a classic of International Relations and it's a complex although others believe that has its simple structure. Beyond the complexity it must be noted the author's arguments revealed his concern the method of International Relations as well as its substance. Carr's attacking utopianism and " extreme" realism limits not only views of the human nature and of the essence of politics, but his good grasp of the relationships of thing like those between pragmatism and ethics in the study of politics making a reader to fill in some interpretation for the solution. What must be remembered also is not his narration of the history of the inter-war international system, nor pure theoretical discussion as show in his refusal to transform arguments into universally models as he seemed to argue on case to case basis.

Reference

1. Carr, E. (2001) The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919 -1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations (Paperback), as updated by Michael Cox