

THE IMPACTS OF UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ON PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: ISSUES CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

Conflicts and crises are inevitable in human relations, between and among nations and among international institutions. Remote and immediate reasons and causes are responsible for such conflicts, while peace resolutions are indicators for aftermath of conflicts. Across the globe, and shortly after the end of the 2nd world war, which gave birth to the United Nations Organization (UNO), its objective are to prevent conflicts from escalating into war and help to restore peace either enduring or promotes lasting peace in societies emerging from scourge of war or constant wars. Due to many factors like mineral and natural resources, power politics, civil wars, disputed borders migration, refugees, climate change, poverty, authoritarian regimes, endemic disease, Globalization, that cause conflict. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) plays vital role in preventing conflicts and help to end numerous conflicts for the maintenance of international peace and security through its resolution, peacekeeping missions, ceasefire mechanisms and even enforcement measures like economic sanctions, trade embargoes, collective military action, no fly zones and diplomatic boycotts. The Middle East is beset by multi conflicts: Energy. Geo-politics, ideological divide, big powers hegemony and strategic interest of some countries outside the region. The two most fundamental challenges are the Arab-Israelis conflict and the Iranians / Arabs conflicts. These have brought tensions and great concern to the Middle East while the region has eluded peace over the years. This paper posits to X—rays the impacts of United Nations Security Council in bringing enduring peace and permanent conflict resolution to the region. However, it faces serious challenges like the different strategic interest of UN permanent members, internal contradictions on the part of the countries in the region, religious interpretation on of each party on the ownership of East Jerusalem, oil, Gas and Energy, politics. The paper posits to profer possible solution like collective resolution, avoidance of abuse of veto power, regime change checking the Israelis hegemony and enforcement of balance of power equilibrium. The paperl makes use of secondary source to collate Data and adopts theory of conflict resolution to midwife and navigate the study.

KEYWORDS: Ceasefire, Conflict Management, Collective Security Peace Building, Preventive Diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

The earlier civilizations in history were established in the region now known as the Middle East around 3500 Bc by the Sumerians in Mesopotamia (Iraq), and widely regarded as the cradle of civilization (wikipedia, 2019), as the Middle East region can be located at the junctions of three countries. That is, Africa, Europe and Asia. It is at the crossroad to European, African and Asian continents. Countries located in the region are: Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arabs Emirates, Yemen, Egypt, Oman, Iraq, Israel, Jordan. Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Iran (Bridgat, 2019:1). The 15 nations of the Middle East covers an area of more than 6 million square kilometers of about 4% of the world's land mass. According to the world population review (2018), the total population of the Middle East was estimated about 411 million. Production and processing of crude oil and natural gas are the foundations upon which the economies of most of the countries in the region depend (Mobbs et al, 2010:3), while other mineral resources include salt, marble, crude Asphalt, silica Gypsum, cement, steel zinc, coal Diamonds, potash copper etc. (Home geography, 2019:1)

Figure 1: Map showing the entire Middle East



Source: <https://www.mapsofworld.com/middle-east.map.html>

One of the things that the Middle East is known for is its religious diversity. Many major religions originated in this region, and those religions including Christianity, Judaism and Islam among other religions believes that have been formed there. Islam is the most practiced religion across the region, while there is not just one official language, there are five languages spoken throughout the Middle East: Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, Berber and lately Jewish (world population review, 2019:3). Many issues have been associated with conflict and peace in the middle East which include the following: the middle East before prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), Islam; the early Arab conquests; the succession issue; the beginning of Islamic Government; dissension in the Ummah; the caliphacy; Shiites and Turks; crusaders and Mongols; Islamic civilization; firearms; slaves and Empires; Europeans interests and imperialism, westerning reforms in the Nineteenth century; the rise of nationalism; the roots of Arabs bitterness; modernizing rulers in the independent states; Egypt and the fertile crescent under European control; the contest for palatine; Israel's rebirth and the rise of Arab nationalism; war and the quest for peace; the reassertion of Islamic power; the Iranian revolution; the struggle for the Gulf supremacy; western policy formation and Islamic polity; Iran-Iraq war; the Gulf war; Palestine and its struggles; the war on Terrorism proxy war in Yemen (Iran and Saudia Arabia); and the Syrian civil war (Goldschmidt and Davidson, 2010:X)

The United Nations Organization (UNO) does not exist because it has power to force its will on the world's states, it exists because states have created it to serve their needs. A state's membership in the UNO is essentially a form of indirect leverage. States gain leverage by using the UNO to seek more beneficial outcomes in conflicts (especially on general multilateral issues for which a global forum brings all parties together) states get several benefits from the UNO. Foremost among this is the international stability (especially in security affairs) that the UNO tries to safeguard and allows states to realize gains from trade and other forms of exchange, a forum where states promote a mechanisms for conflict resolution in international security affairs (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2012:237)

According to Calvocoressi (2006) that:

So long as the states remained the basic elements in international society, the prevention of wars could be secured only by states and cooperation among them. They had a choice of methods. Each major power might assume primary or exclusive responsibility in a given region; or all the major powers might together supervise and police the whole globe; or these same powers might equip and finance an association of states to do the job on their behalf (Calvol coressi, 2006:150)

The Security Council was designed to be the sword beside the UNO's Oliver branch. It is charged with organizing collective security operations and dispatching observer missions and peace-keeping troops around the world at the request of one or more of the combatants involved. This body has the right to investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to international friction and to recommend method of settlement (Spiegel (eds), 2009; 530). The primary responsibility for conflict prevention lies with member states. Article 33 of the charter of the UNO is very clear on this part. Furthermore, the UNO is with its universal membership, impartiality and the legitimacy derived from the principles of the charter has important and unique roles to play because of the ever increasing conflicts and the deteriorating level of peace and security challenges across the world. Conflict prevention, the core of the UNO consists of efforts to stop violent conflict from breaking out, avoid its escalation when it does and avert its deterioration after the fact/act (Secretary General, 2015;7). The Security council of the UNO has been given the mandates under the UNO charters to make, intervene, enforce compliance and restore peace in conflict driven areas across the world. The following characters of the UNO at least to the facts of its importance in conflict resolution:

- i. Article 1 (1)--(3)
- ii. Article 2 (2), (3), (4)
- iii. Article 12 (1), (2)
- iv. Article 15 (1)
- v. Article 24 (1)
- vi. Article 26
- vii. Article 33 (1), (2)
- viii. Article 34
- ix. Article 35 (1), (2), (3)
- x. Article 36 (1), (2),(3)
- xi. Article 37 (1),(2)
- xii. Article 38
- xiii. Article 39
- xiv. Article 40
- xv. Article 41
- xvi. Article 42
- xvii. Article 43 (1), (2), (3)
- xviii. Article 44
- xix. Article 45
- xx. Article 46
- xxi. Article 47 (1), (2), (3), (4)
- xxii. Article 48 (1),(2)
- xxiii. Article 49
- xxiv. Article 50
- xxv. Article 51
- xxvi. Article 52 (1), (2), (3), (4)
- xxvii. Article 53 (1), (2)
- xxviii. Article 54

(Charter of the UN, 1945:5-33)

The collective security system, as manifested in the security council with its “great power”⁶ club, constituted an even more dramatic acceptance of the importance of power in maintaining international peace and security. Collective security system has two basic core elements; the unilateral result to war by a state is restricted in international law and a mechanism to provide for the collective use of force by the international community against a state threatening international peace and security is created- UNO (Fidler, 1996:427)

According to Abbss (2018) that: *Peace is a since gua non to development, it is being eroded by perennial conflicts, their occurrences pervades virtually all spheres of the national life, the effects of the conflicts are many and multi-dimensional, insecurity of lives and properties is one of the consequence of conflicts, steps should be taken to control conflicts and ensure peace in society through preventive measures instead of reactive measures (Abbas, 2018:5).*

Initiating constructive engagement and developing more research on the political economies of conflict in the region (Matthew, 2010:2). Conflicts have the capacity to severely constrain development endeavours by destroying infrastructures, interrupting the production process and diverting resources away from production uses aside from human lives lost to conflicts (Adetula, 2006:386).

Finally, the desire to bring an end to warfare and replace it with functional forms of interaction has been major pursuit of nation-states. Indeed, it was the aim of bringing about an end to the scourge of war and converting “SWORDS” into plowshares” that the United Nations (UN) was established in 1945. Although, it was not initially equipped with adequate institutional mechanism to achieve the monumental task. However, the turbulence of the international environment compelled the evolution of the peace-keeping force as an instrumental imperative for managing and resolving conflicts as well as for maintaining international security and with respect to the Middle East where conflicts are the sine que non of states’ survival (Akindele and oche, 2001:129)

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Ceasefire

It is usually an agreement, usually between two armies, to stop fighting in order to allow discussions about peace (Cambridge, 2017). A ceasefire is a temporary stoppage of a war in which each side agrees with the other to suspend aggressive action. It may be declared as part of a formal treaty or informal depending on the understanding between opposing forces (Wikipedia). It is agreement by two sides in a conflict to stop fighting for a time (Chaturvedi, 2006; 38)

Conflict Management

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. It entails the use of force or otherwise. It refers to the coordinated and timely application of political, economic, military or police measures taken in response to a situation threatening peace, with the aim of defusing the tense situation, prevailing escalation or achieving a peaceful crisis management in terms of coercive-cooperation bargaining (Osimen, 2012:34). A crisis is an extreme situation of conflict, which has reached a turning point, where critical decisions have to be taken or else, the conflict escalates to a point of extreme violence (Shedrack, 2015:110). It is the development and implementation of peaceful strategies for setting conflict / crisis (Goldstein and pevehouse, 2012:502)

Collective Security

It is a long term formal commitment among groups of countries in order to protect the security interests of the individual members within their joint spheres of interest. It is deemed to apply interest in security in a broad manner to avoid grouping camps, and refusing to draw diving lines that would leave out powers. It is to create security within sovereign states (Aleksovski et al, 2014:275). Collective security can be understood as a security arrangement in which all states cooperate collectively to provide security for all by the actions of all against any states within the groups which might challenges the existing order by using force. Sovereign nations eager to maintain the status quo, willingly cooperate, accepting a degree of vulnerability and in some cases of minor nations, also accede to the interests of the chief contributing nations organizing the collective security (what is collective security). The concept of collective security is used to legalize policies and actions which are aimed at securing the super power(s) in a region and so long as the region serves the economic needs of the hegemony, this hegemony remains important. It is the hegemony that creates artificial colliding force in the region, through propaganda, the sponsoring of warring parties and direct aggression (Ufomba, 2010:1)

Peace Building

It refers to a long-term preventive pre-hostility strategies for measures to remove the causes of conflict and to strengthen structural stability in a country against the threat of war. Peace building is not primarily concerned with conflict behavior, but addressing underlying context and attitudes that gave rise to violence and hostility between groups (Osimen, 2012: 44). It is a post-war phenomenon which is basically an attempt to consolidate and build upon peace that may have been brokered at the end of the conflict (Akindele and Oche, 2001:140). It is a strategic move to ensure that disagreement of any kind- armed conflict or any other crisis capable of

creating unrest, is not allowed to manifest especially to engulf a given community or state which include both military and civilian intervention forces to maintain peace and restore confidence between among warring parties (Nweke,2010:32)

Preventive Diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur. It constitutes the consensual resolution of tensions, disputes and indicates a more regressive form of appeasement that allows underlying drivers of conflict to persist under an atmosphere of stability. It offers a set of tools to be used on a case-by-case basis by a wide range of actors to peacefully respond to threats and occurrences of mass atrocities by facilitating political solution(Zyck and Muggah, 2012:68). It refers to action taken to prevent disputes from arising or from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of conflicts when they occur. It may take the form of mediation, conciliation or negotiation (United Nations,2015:3)

Theoretical Framework

The theory of conflict resolution has been adopted to midwife this study of analysis. Conflict resolution as a defined specialized field has come of age in the post-cold war area. It has come face to face with the fundamental new challenges. It started in 1950s and 1960s at the height of cold war when the development of nuclear weapons and the conflict between the super powers seemed to threaten human survival. A good of pioneers from different disciplines saw the value of studying conflict as a general phenomena with similar properties whether it occurs in international relations, communities, families or between individuals. In the Middle East, a peace process was getting under which negotiations on both sides gaining experience of each other and of conflict resolution through problem of solving them (Wani, 2011:6). The failure of early peace, social and liberal movements to prevent the outbreaks of WWI and WW2 and the added urgency of possible nuclear annihilation sparked a renewed efforts to established discipline of study for conflict, peace and the desire of the founders to promote an improved understanding of conflicts (especially the politics of conflict) and to foster contacts between academic, observers and political practitioners (Al-Abedine, 2017:2). Theorists, writers and proponents on the theory of conflict resolution include the following; Kelman, (1963), Galturg J. (1973), Berrebi and Kior (2006), Kurt Lewis, Georg Simmei, Lewis Coser (1998), Murton Deutsch (1973), John Dolard, Ted Robert, Symund Freud, and many more.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROPOSITION

Conflict may end victory of one party over another

- Through compromise
- Through conciliation, articulated a positive social function for conflict.
- Conflict is necessary to maintain such a relationship without giving hostility towards each others and to express dissent group members might feel completely crushed and might react by withdrawal.
- Psychological explanation of behavior.
- Systematic causation instead of historical consideration of total situation.
- An approach characterized by dynamics, (Al-Abedine, 2017:3)

Within the theory of conflict resolution, there exist structural, liberal, realist, biological, classical, frustration aggression theories building foundation towards conflict resolution. (Abbas, 2018; 5) social process theories treat conflict and conflict resolution as processes which cannot be explained entirely in terms of either individual behavior or social structures. It focusses on issues as pattern of conflict escalation, the role of conflict in society or the relation between conflict and competition. Social structures theories view social organization as the main source of conflict. Class division, racial or ethnic division or sex division form the basis for social conflict. It recommends five basic approaches to conflict resolution: acceptance, gradual social reform, non-violent confrontation or violent confrontations (Schellenberg, 1996; 2)

LINKAGE/ UTILITY OF THE THEORY

It resides in the search for social and psychological factors that cause violent conflicts and hinders conflict resolution. It also helps in identifying the procedure that should be extracted from the conflict opportunities of solving it, analyzing the process of resolution, either on micro or macro levels, especially in case of conflict between identify groups or conflict with mutual influence in order to reach a long-term peaceful relationship and exploring the possibilities for altitude and stance change by establishing a new cooperative peaceful discourse addressed to paves the way to new kind of relationship, (Al-Abedine, 2017;3)

Issues Associated with Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Middle East

Quite a number of issues have been identified that have triggered tensions among countries of the Middle East. These indicators have been in existence since the civilization periods with more complication in recent times manifesting themselves as deeply rooted in regional politics which act as launch pad for rules engagement, external influence, and involvement of the United National Security Council in peace and conflict resolution. Below are some of the indicators:

Energy Crisis.

As the region is host to huge reservoirs of oil gas resources and later producers of these minerals, it tends to create issues as they supply greatly the developed economics of different countries with different national interests' complexity. It involves the relationship between security of supply (Middle East) and its geopolitics. The geopolitical risk to its consumers, the energy crisis, supply disruptions, high price and the impact of oil prices on producers countries (Clingendael, 2004:43). Almost all the current wars, uprisings and other conflicts in the region are connected by a single thread, which is also a threat, these conflicts are part of an increasingly frenzied competition to find, extract, explore and market fossil fuels whose future consumption is guaranteed to lead to a set of cataclysmic environmental crisis (Schwartz, 2015:1).

Geo- Politics

The competition for influence over the region's weaker states geo-politics strategic interest and control of the economy make the Middle East an arena of violence and instability (Startford world view, 2019:1). The location of the Middle East makes it a place of great interest to players within and outside the region due to its importance to the international political, economic, and religions relations. Any issue from it has wider effects on other regions of the world. The Middle East's geography and strategic uniqueness has made every great power in history to seek to advance its interest in the region. The region constitutes the greatest single reserve of oil in the world, which has made it a regular source of foreign interference in the post-world war II era (Stivactis, 2018:1)

Ideological Divide

They are believers of Sunnis, Shiites, Muslim brotherhood, Jewish followers who shape the ideological direction of the region. Also, according to Olidort (2016) that:

In Iran, power politics are very much alive, and other potential has been equally influenced by the Sunni extremist thinkers like Sayyed Qutb as by politicization of Shiite principles like the imamate. To a greater extent than in the sunni experience, Iranian political ideology has been nearly synonymous with theology (Olidort, 2016:5)

The Middle East is currently in a situation of both power and ideological multipolarity it is driven to a great extent by fears related to regime security, leaders worry about the domestic effects of transnational ideological messages, and are careful of partnering with regional allies whose own principles of legitimate domestic governance are in conflict with their own (Gause 2015,:5).

Big Powers Hegemony

The outside intervention is new, but is not limited to Russia, US initially, China has expanded its involvement in the Middle East in recent years. Japan, India and Europe have stepped up their Middle East roles amid perceived American disengagement. Layer on top of this is the shattering of regional order in the wake of the Iraq war and the Arab spring, and the results is that Middle East's emergence as a common for great-power competition (Fontaine and Singh 2017:3). Due to its geographical importance, any inter-and intra-state conflict the Middle East has the potential not only for destabilizing the region as a whole or upsetting the regional balance of power, but also affecting global stability or instability in oil prices, power relations, competition, containment and cooperation among great powers (Stivactis, 2018:4).

Strategic Interests

The primary actors have distinct strategic objectives. Iran and Saudi Arabic seek to balance each other. Israel seeks to counter both Iran's nuclear and region ambitions and engages in a conflict management rather than conflict resolution and approach towards the Palestinians. It shares with Saudi Arabic the strategic objectives of containing Iran, but Saudi Arabic and the Arabs public opinion place limits on the depth of Saudi-Israeli, cooperation, which is of conspicuous than alliance. The split in the Gulf cooperation Council (GCC) has resulted in the new alliances among the various major power brokers (Feltman et al, 2019:3).

Arabs-Israelis Conflict

Following the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 181(1) of 29 November 1947 concerning "the future government of Palestine," the security council considered the issue of the establishment of future, sovereign government in the territory of Palestine and dealt with the tensions between Israel and neighbouring Arabs-states particularly Egypt, Jordan and Syria (UNSCR). As such, there have been general resolution on the Arabs-Israel crisis which have yielded no possible result on both sides. The Arab-Israeli conflict is a modern phenomenon, which has its roots in the end of the 19th century. The conflict became a major international issue with the birth of Israel in 1948. The Arab-Israeli conflict has resulted in at least five major wars and a number of minor conflict. It has also been the source of two major Palestinian uprisings and by regional tensions among countries in the region (Wikipedia).

Iran-Gulf Arab States

The region has witnessed geopolitical conflict and competition between Iran and the Gulf Arab states particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran. It centers most on political and strategic prisms with ideological and economic dimension. It has recently snowball into proxy wars in

countries like Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon and Syria with external and wider regional and international attention involving Russia, China on one side and USA, Britain France on the other side (Nuruzzaman, 2012:1)

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ON PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- There is a fundamental problem that the UN faces which concerns the dilemmas of international mediation and peacekeeping in conflicts where the line between interest r regional and domestic or communal violence is blurred. Most states refuse to allow outside intervention in their own internal affairs and the concept of state sovereignty and non-intervention is enshrined in international law.
- Regional confidence-building efforts will be more likely to break down if interstate conflict cannot be contained within national borders and threaten the domestic political stability of the parties concerned.
- Dialogue and cooperation between great powered on regional conflict does not necessarily imply that they will want to use UN security council to prevent or resolve all regional conflicts in the future.
- Absent of cooperation on the part of the great powers will make UN security councils hand tied, while the great powers interests, rekindled led in the UN to flourish, it makes involvement in dispute settlement difficult
- The willingness and desire of belligerents in regional conflict depend on their certainty or level of skepticism of UN's role in the peace process of its biasness or objectivity (Hampson, 2016:7)
- The contagious conflict spill over into Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen recently.
- Radicalization and militarization of the region.
- The Arabs-Israeli conflict
- Strategic interest of the great powers in the Middle East.
- Internal contradiction of countries in the Middle East with respect to their direction and dimension of peace resolution with their attendant internal mechanism.
- The instrument of veto power of the United Nations Security council on the region of several numbers on the Israel and Palestine as mockery of the international system as too late too little efforts.
- Religious claim of ownership of the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem to the Muslims, Dorne of the Rock to the Jews and other holy sites in the region
- The factor of Iran as a regional power with her Islamic revolution principles of 1989.

- The factor of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and as the biggest buyers of light and heavy weapons in the world.
- The factor of oil, gas and energy security that play significant and vital role in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ PROSPECTS

- A robust effort to solve the seminal problem of the region- the Arab-Israel conflict
- Collective peace and security in exchange for land.
- Redressing Palestinian grievances.
- Military action against Iran will not advance peace in the region.
- Reject and reduce double standard concept and practice.
- Early warning conflict prevention mechanism.
- The undertaking of joint assessment of hot sports area.
- The promotion of information sharing and coordination among different actors
- Addressing root causes alongside issues of political leadership
- Focusing on the fragile states and setting most venerable ones to armed conflict for the path of stability
- Post-war transitions to peace takes, ballot boxes, and reconstruction
- Collective resolution on peace and conflict
- Avoidance of abuse of veto power equilibrium
- Regime security / change as the case may be
- Peacekeeping and ceasefire mechanism
- Economic sanctions, embargoes on uncooperative countries
- Collective military action, no fly zones and diplomatic boycotts on erring state(s)
- Less interference and intervention by great powers on the region's affairs
- Avoiding war through containment, competition and cooperation in the region
- Promoting activism or peacemaking through advocacy for peace.
- Peace education to citizen of the region
- Political rebuilding which is based on a long-lasting political settlement
- The necessity for social rebuilding which involves the revitalization of social institution (education health etc.)
- Judicial, economic and rehabilitations resulting from the region

CONCLUSION

The aim of conflict resolution is not the elimination of conflict which is impossible and undesirable rather, the primary objective as to transform actual or potentially violent situation (like the Middle East) into peaceful arena (process) for social transformation and political change, it involve these: Negotiation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, bargaining, persuasion, communication re-conciliation and cooperation. Many Middle East countries have their roots in domestic politics. However, these conflicts have affected more than just the countries where they occurred. Lack of peace and insecurity in the Middle East have not only made the pursuit of economic and political development difficult, they have hindered the development of regional integration. peace and security promote regional integration just as the process of regional integration, can serve to the process of regional integration can serve to consolidate peace, security and avoid conflicts in the Middle East through the impact of United Nations Security Council.

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