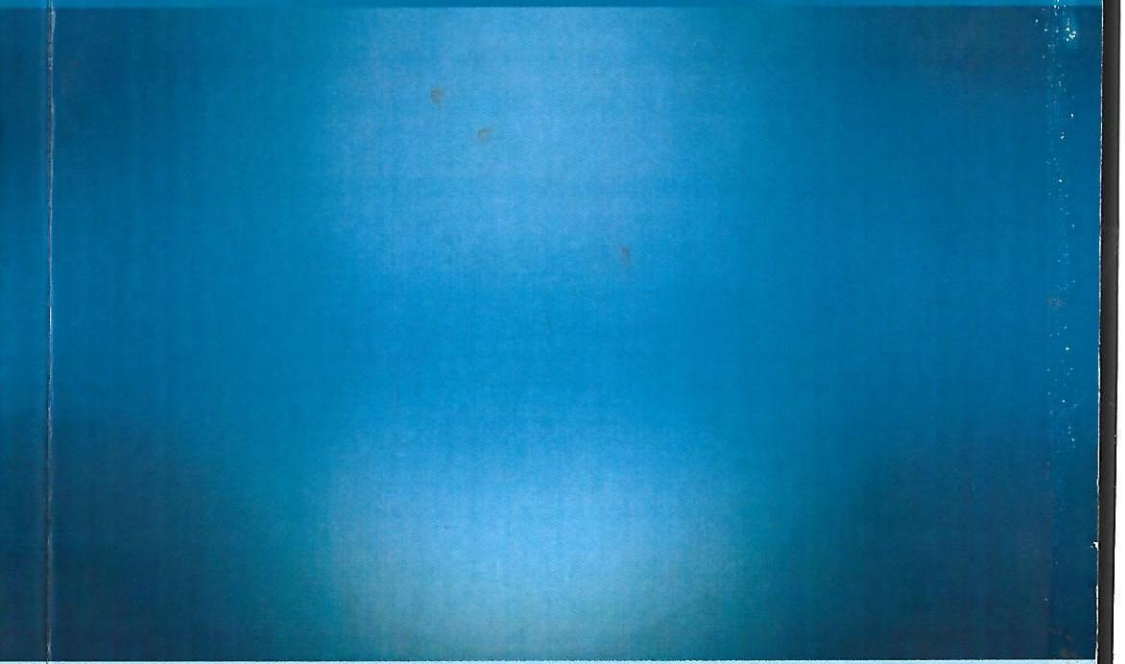
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AN INTERROGATION OF ALLIANCES FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND DEFENCE: ROLES OF NATO AND EU IN THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE UKRAINE- RUSSIAN CONFLICT

Abdulkareem Jimoh EDUN

Abstract

International politics is characterized by a nation thriving hard to achieve and protect its domestic interests irrespective of the method and means that have been adopted to accomplish such objectives. However, the international system in the current world has witnessed countries sacrificing their national interest for collective interest as exemplified with EU and NATO members in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict. This paper examines the extent to which multilateral interest supersedes domestic as well as the consequences of placing a high premium on collective interest above domestic interest in international politics. The paper adopted a mixed method of data collection using interviews to get relevant data from experts in the field of International Relations. Findings reveal among others that the war in Ukraine poses a great deal of risk to the world as a whole and to the individual countries who have chosen to place a premium on collective interest rather than their national interest which is the sole aim of international relations. It also discovers that paying more for fuel and gas because of sanctions against Russia is not worthwhile to defend another sovereign country. From the findings therefore, the paper recommends the need for nation-states to always place preference on their domestic ahead of multilateral interest, in any case, there is a clash therein. It also recommends that state actors and non-state actors should ensure that their actions in international matter is not short-sighted but rather a consideration of long-range consequences should always reflect in their interplays. In this sense, neo-globalization, a new global economic, political, and security arrangement that will always place internal interest above external interest should be put into action.

Keywords: International Politics, NATO, Conflict, National Interest, Multilateral Relations

1. Introduction

International politics is characterized by chaotic displays of military superiority among a comity of nations in the international system and each nation thrives hard to achieve and protect its domestic interest irrespective of the methods and means adopted to accomplish such objectives. China's interest in Western Pacific, USA's interest in North Atlantic, France's interest in Africa, and Russia's interest in Eastern Europe was strategic to the dominant powers and therefore always take military firepower to protect such interest- USA annexation of Texas, Iraq invasion of Kuwait, Israel occupation of East Jerusalem. France's destabilization of the Gadhafi regime, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the current invasion of Ukraine. All these were clear indications of the complexities of international politics.

Historically, Ukraine is considered part of old Russia, a defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and referred to as "Separate Russians". After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the relationship between the two countries has been tense and hostile due to the movement of Ukraine towards Europe and Russia's anti-NATO stand. In the early 1990s, Ukraine's policy was

dominated by aspirations to ensure its sovereignty and independence, followed by a foreign policy that balanced cooperation with the European Union (EU), Russia, and other powerful polities and alliances.

The hostile relations between the two countries metamorphosed into a revolution in 2014 in Ukraine, which was followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, and due to Russia's backing for the separatist fighters of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic in, the conflicts that had killed more than 13,000 people by early 2020, and brought Western sanctions on Russia. (Reuters, 2022). Numerous bilateral agreements have been terminated and economic ties severed.

Throughout 2021 and 2022, Russian military buildup on the border of Ukraine escalated tensions between the two countries and strained their bilateral relations. (The Economist, 2022) (Michael, 2021). Ukraine broke diplomatic relations with Moscow in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Streets bearing the names of Russian figures and monuments symbolizing Russia and Ukraine's friendship would also be removed from various locations across Ukraine among other actions. However, the unprecedented move taken by the Ukrainian Government to join the EU and NATO as a member nation sparked the current conflict between the countries. The implications of the step by Ukraine were not only interpreted by Russia as a security threat on her territory but on a larger implication allowing the USA, an archrival of Russia, to have close monitoring of Russia's military and other activities, a threat that Russia will do everything within her reach to abort.

2. Statement of the Problem

As expected, NATO, EU, and their allies have taken steps to sanction Russia and on the other hand, Moscow responded in corresponding manner to the "unfriendly countries" with the "Gas Switch-Off" action requiring EU countries to pay for energy in

rubles rather than dollar or Euros as stipulated in their agreements thus cease the supply to those nations. This trend is toeing dangerous dimension with many of the EU members sleepwalking into the war through provision military hardwires to Ukraine in the guise of solidarity. The occupation of Ukraine sea ports and subsequent blockade of grain supply chain has aggravated food crisis not only in Euro zone but also in the entire World. Why it is a difficult situation for EU members to survive without energy supply from Russia, it is also extremely difficult for member nations to fail not to implement EU and NATO sanctions on Russia. In a clandestine move, Bulgaria alleged that some members nation was going through back door to purchase Russia energy in rubbles and Hungary has made strong opposition to the collective policy of EU to in totality sway action on the purchase of Russia energy. The implication of this conflict is far-fetched by Government and ordinary citizens of EU countries with serious energy crisis in Euro zone that has skyrocketed not only in the price of gas but also the entire economy. State of emergency has been taking place in the zone with Hungary's declaration and more than 6,5m have been displaced by the conflict (UNRA, Al Jazeera news 2022). Therefore, this paper examines the challenges encountered by EU members in implementing the sanction directives of both NATO and EU on one hand and the consequences of fulfilling their membership responsibility on domestic interest, thus cutting in the web of the conflict. There is no doubt, the cost of adhering to EU directives is far-reaching in the national interest of member states. The Multilateral interest of NATO has impeded the Domestic/National interest of its member EU Countries within the auspices of the Ukraine-Russia Crisis. Specifically, the paper raised questions such as; Does multilateral interest larger than domestic interest in international politics? What are the cost implications of placing a high premium on collective interest above domestic interest in international politics? In achieving these set objectives, the paper sourced data both primarily and secondarily. Data

collected were also analyzed quantitatively, using inferential statistical method.

3. Conceptual Analysis

3.1 National Interest

National interest is a strategic and critical concept in international politics and it is both primary and sole obligation of every actor in the International system to which other subordinate objectives hub-nub (Kegley, 2020, p. 23) opined that, "The primary obligation of every state - the goal to which all other national objectives should be subordinated – is to promote its national interest and to acquire power for this purpose" In an international System that is characterized by power struggle, national interest is always guided by power acquisition but in broader perspective, encompasses spectrum beyond power acquisition but includes what state sees as its core interests, which are those that involve the protection and continuation of the state and its people. Hughes cited in Kaufman, (2013, p. 106) core interests as those that "flow from the desire [of the state] to preserve its essence: territorial boundaries, population, government, and sovereignty." From his perspective, core interest is more than simply security defined in traditional military terms, but it also means assuring a country's economic vitality, its values, and other components that are central to the essence of the state. One can argue that these are also essential to a country's security, but they fall outside the traditional definition. In this regards, security in all ramifications is very strategic and core to national interest - economic security, social security, environmental or climate security and military security. Thus, protection of the state sovereignty and environment, eradication of diseases, freedom from hunger, access to potable water, and so on all are core values of national interests. Irrespective of how, where and when these are derived from, the most germane point is that these are achieve either collectively or individually. Concerning the raging conflict in the Eastern Europe and the State

of individual national interest of EU members vis- a- vis collective NATO interest, it is appropriate to state here that EU interest may be at cross with the collective interest of member nations in term of security which may be moderately guaranteed through NATO, economic and social security but may be in jeopardy considering the reliance of EU on Russia energy supply and Ukraine grain supply which has been distorted by action and inaction of EU members on the conflict.

3.2 Globalization

This is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. Globalization has accelerated since the 18th century due to advances in transportation and communication technology. This increase in global interactions has caused a growth in international trade and the exchange of ideas, beliefs, and culture. Globalization is primarily an economic process of interaction and integration that is associated with social and cultural aspects. However, disputes and diplomacy are also large parts of the history of globalization, and of modern globalization (James & Steger, 2014).

Economically, globalization involves goods, services, data, technology, and the economic resources of capital. The expansion of global markets liberalizes the economic activities of the exchange of goods and funds. Removal of cross-border trade barriers has made the formation of global markets more feasible (Stever, 1972). Advances in transportation, like the steam locomotive, steamship, jet engine, and container ships, and developments in telecommunication infrastructure, like the telegraph, Internet, and mobile phones, have been major factors in globalization and have generated further interdependence of economic and cultural activities around the globe.

In 2000, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people, and

the dissemination of knowledge. Globalizing processes affect and are affected by business and work organization, economics, sociocultural resources, and the natural environment. Academic literature commonly divides globalization into three major areas: economic globalization, cultural globalization, and political globalization.

3.3 Multilateral Relations

In international relations, multilateral relations or multilateralism refers to an alliance of multiple countries pursuing a common goal. Multilateralism, in the form of membership in international institutions, serves to bind powerful nations, discourage unilateralism, and gives small powers a voice and influence that they could not otherwise exercise. For a small power to influence a great power, the Lilliputian strategy of small countries banding together to collectively bind a larger one can be effective. Similarly, multilateralism may allow one great power to influence another great power. For a great power to seek control through bilateral ties could be costly; it may require bargaining and compromise with the other great power. It was defined by Miles Kahler as "international governance" or global governance of the "many," and its central principle was "opposition [to] bilateral discriminatory arrangements that were believed to enhance the leverage of the powerful over the weak and to increase international conflict" (Kahler, 1992, p. 45). In 1990, Keohane defined multilateralism as "the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states" (Keohane, 1990, p. 23). Ruggie elaborated the concept based on the principles of "indivisibility" and "diffuse reciprocity" as "an institutional form which coordinates relations among three or more states based on 'generalized' principles of conduct ... which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any occurrence." (Ruggie, 1992, p. 103).

Multilateralism may be the only choice, because small powers rarely have the resources to exert control on their own. As such, power disparities are accommodated to the weaker states by having more predictable bigger states and means to achieve control through collective action. Powerful states also buy into multilateral agreements by writing the rules and having privileges such as veto power and special status. International organizations, such as EU, ECOWAS, G7, G8, BRICS, Commonwealth and NATO. It is an all-encompassing arrangement which include but not limited to security, political cultural and economic.

4. Theoretical Framework

The paper combined Realist and Liberalist theories to analysis the issues discussed in the paper such as collective response by both NATO and EU on the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. These two sets of theories have enabled us to understand what this conflict is all about, what are the stakes of the parties involved in the war and why it is a necessity for the parties to engaged in war. The theories also enable us to understand why NATO and EU engaged in collective sanction and why EU required to sacrifice Domestic interest for multilateral interest. The realist school is power centric and therefore put the maximization of power at the center of all the behaviors of the nation-state. The assumption is that nations act as they do in order to maximize their power so that they can better achieve their own goals thus Russia invasion can be aptly analyzed from this perspective.

The main sign-post that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and Kenneth Waltzt were proponents of this theory. Unlike the Realists, Liberal scholars pointed to the growth of transnational forces, economic interdependence, regional integration, and cooperation in areas where war appeared unlikely – trends and issues not amenable to realist analysis." Thus, liberal thinking

grew up to fill the theoretical void emerging in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world. This approach relies heavily on the confluence of economics and politics in its belief that everyone and all states will benefit from the flourishing of free markets and open exchange of ideas. In many ways, liberalism is tied heavily to a belief in the importance of both capitalism and democracy, and the notion that free trade will create interdependence among states that will result in greater benefit for all. There is no doubt, the liberal theory fits into the explanation of NATO and EU action against Russia invasion of Ukraine. The two Economic and security blocs have taken collective action against Russia which has not involved direct military confrontation but rather economic maneuvering that stems to push Russia back on the invasion. Though this collective action was at variants with individual National Interest of the member nations. Liberalism, also known as idealism, starts with different assumptions about the world than does realism, and it believes in pursuing policies that can be termed to be in the common good, rather than what is good for the individual state. Idealism can be found in the description of the Peloponnesian War.

5. Alliances for Collective Security and Defence

Collective security can be understood as a security arrangement, political, regional, or global, in which each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and therefore commits to a collective response to threats to, and breaches of peace. Collective security is more ambitious than systems of alliance security or collective defense in that it seeks to encompass the totality of states within a region or indeed globally, and to address a wide range of possible threats. Collective defence means that an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies. (NATO Article 5, 2022).

Collective security can also 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 challenge the existing order by using force. That contrasts with self-help strategies of engaging in war for purely-immediate national interest. While collective security is possible, several prerequisites must be met for it to work.

Undoubtedly, international politics is all about displaying of political, economic and military mighty among state actors in international system. It is an asymmetric relation between and among players in international system and relationship evolve from integration, disintegration and self-determination. From the Treaty of Westphalia to League of Nations and to the present-day United Nations, blocs and blocs have been formed primarily to achieve the state or national interest. Invariably, multilateral - relations are all about advancement of national interest where micro interest is subsumed under macro interest. However, recent happenings in the field of international relations have demonstrated that it is difficult to achieve exclusive national interest in a macro level. The BREXIT has demonstrated in a clear term how difficult the achievement of national interest could be realized in a canopy of macro relationship where the great Britain decided to exit the world acclaimed and modelled EU for the sake of its peculiar national interests. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was principally established for collective the security of European Zone under the canopy of United States of America has, to some extent demonstrated its ability to deter and protect external enemies against EU but with huge price. The invasion of Ukraine, a prospective member nation of EU by Russia has clearly shown that EU member states will only enjoy such protection with huge economic price most especially with a clash of interest with a super power neighbor such as Russia whose its supply of energy is the only pillar of survival for EU citizens and multinational companies. It is quite clear from the findings that the EU is cut in the complexities of Ukraine-Russia conflict. Actions and inactions of EU against Russia in this conflict has attracted corresponding

actions from Russia on the supply of energy to the zone which forced some states to declare a state of emergency and a blink economic situation in this zone. Sequel to this, is the solicitation of alliance with middle East giants such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Israel via Egypt, an alliance and economic brides of necessity that the future is not clear. Obviously, NATO and EU actions was in solidarity with intending and prospective member - Ukraine and also to attract confidence and protection to 'who may be' other intending members such as Sweden and Finland who have also applied for EU membership. While some observers averred that this action amount to a flight of fancy in international system, others asserts that it was an economic suicide attempt by EU, waging the cost of such action on its individual member states. Of course, the consequences are far reaching. and this has started taking effect on both energy and food supply to these nations which are critical and fundamental to general development As Estonia Prime Minister, Kaja Kallas opined that European unity on the reaction to Russia 's invasion of Ukraine is proving hard to keep in the face of the war's damage on population and living conditions throughout the continent.. Estonia has the highest inflation in the EU and US is experiencing the worst economy since about four decades ago. The economic woes of this action are not only impacting negatively on Euro Zone but the entire globe - surge in the international price of energy and distortion in the chain of food supply which aggravated already famine situation in the world most especially the Africa and Asia continent.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing therefore, actors in the international system should always place high priority on their national interest and unconditional premium is a necessity for the survival of those actors locally and internationally. National interest is sacrosanct must always be accorded special position in a multilateral relation. Integration, balance of power and collective security is inevitable

in international politics but micro integration must always supersede macro integration. whereas it is paramount for the survival of states to pursue common good as Liberalist posits, it is also germane states can pursue common good without necessary promote war or escalate already tensed international environment. In practical terms, countries such as the Republic of Türkiye, formerly known as Turkey, has demonstrated to the whole world how a country can be a member of a multilateral organization and still maintain relative friendly relations with common enemy. In particular, NATO/ EU can still achieve common goal in Ukraine without necessary being in confrontation with Russia thus averting 'crack' noticed in EU, protect national interest such uninterrupted supply of energy from Russia and prevent the whole world from experiencing inflation that stem from energy crisis and distortion of food supply as consequences of blockade of black sea, the major route of wheat supply from Ukraine by Russia.

In the face of constant interaction between and among nations on bilateral and multilateral grounds, the following recommendations are made:

i. There's the need for countries to always put their domestic interest ahead of multilateral interest in any case there is a clash therein. This is important as international relations is all about the projection and achievement of domestic interest. Mortgaging domestic interest for Multilateral interest can bring about internal unrest, economic burden such as distortion in the pattern of economic prosperity and political instability.
ii. Presidents and their equivalent in other countries should ensure that their actions in international matters reflect the interest of their people rather than own personal choices.
iii. War is never a good thing no matter the cause it seeks to dress and that leaders should make it a last resort or rather avoid it totally.

iv. Since no country is an island of its own, the constant need to interact with other countries on various platforms cannot be over emphasized hence the need to always maintain good and healthy relations between and among nations at all times thus advancement of neo- globalization.

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UMAR MASHAALLAH GLOBAL
NO. 9, ILE BABA AGBA ALIAGAN COMPOUND AGBAJI
E-mail:umaralabiumar@gmail.com