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Sesan Adeolu Odunuga

The UN Security Council Reform

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The UN Security Council Reform and the Dilemma of the UN Member
States in a Nutshell: The hard-to-achieve Alternative

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Abstract

The Security Council of the United Nations is criticized for failing to reflect membership reality of the United Nations and acknowledge rising powers in the global system owing to the post-Cold War configuration of the United Nations Security Council. The call for the reform of the United Nations Security Council is gaining momentum among members of the United Nations with different proposals emerging from different regional layouts and economic groupings. All the proposals advocate for additional seats (permanent and/or nonpermanent) in the Security Council. However, the reform proposals focus on two issues-membership and the right to veto in the Security Council. This article discusses United Nations Security Council reform proposals and the right to veto of the permanent members of the Security Council, revealing the unrealistic nature of the reform proposals. An alternative way of balancing the veto powers of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council is attainable without having to create additional seats in Security Council.

Keywords: United Nations Security Council Reform, Regional Representation, Right to Veto, European Union External Action Service, United Nations Charter

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Introduction

According to many, the Security Council of the United Nations suffers legitimacy due to the fact that decision-making process in the SC, especially voting pattern on constitutional matters, is unrepresentative. The notion of unrepresentativeness of the Security Council extends to the UN General Assembly where member states have one vote each without any consideration for size. In his observation, Thorhallsson (2011) points to a relatively faulted systemic structure where each member of the UN General Assembly has one vote, according to article 18 of the Charter, devoid of consideration for the huge difference in size and capability among member states. However, the distribution of voting rights on the basis of a country's size (population and territorial space) and capacity (economic, political, cultural and military capacities) will be counterproductive to the purpose in Article 9 (1) of the Charter since the UN General Assembly consists of all members of the United Nations with equal representation as given in Article 9(2).¹

However, the debate on the reform of the UN Security Council has long been in existence. And it has shifted, though not frequently, over time from one narrative to another as world politics evolve. The evolution of global politics could not be halted because of the plasticity and dynamism that characterized it because actors or states will continue to prioritize national interests in the global political system in the areas of economy, politics, sovereignty, and defense. The unbalanced feature of the world system will continue to offer more to the strongest, while weak members of the world political system will continue to get less no matter the number of their contributions to the system. That is to say, the known-global power, and not the invented-global powers, will continue to use the institutions of the outcomes of the wars to exert its influence in the international system.

There are growing calls for the expansion of the UNSC membership based on the notion that the current structure of the UN Security Council does not offer equal representation to the UN Member States. There are concerns, however, that such expansion would make the Security Council "too large to conduct serious negotiations and still small to represent the UN

¹ Article 9 (Composition), Chapter IV of the UN Charter

1. The General Assembly shall consist of all the Members of the United Nations.
2. Each Member shall have not more than five representatives in the General Assembly.

membership as a whole” (Weiss, 2003:151). And in addition, it would only provide “modest improvement in equity at the expense of efficiency” (Rablen & Gould, 2017:17).

Legitimacy and Representation

The legitimacy question in the UN SC revolves around procedural flaws rather than performance (Binder & Heupei, 2015:239; Thorhallsson, 2011:141). Since legitimacy could be derived from two distinct dimensions: input legitimacy *involving procedures in decision making* and; output legitimacy *arising from performance and efficiency* (Smismans, 2013:340), the legitimacy of the UN Security Council may not be simplistically dismissed. Talking about legitimacy, and discussing the UNSC as a political-security platform, the legitimacy of the United Nations Security Council may be scrutinize under the followings: the exercise of authority from established rules (legality); socially justifiable standards of rules (normative justification) and; confirmation and recognition of position of authority by lower-ranking authorities (legitimization) which are inseparable if an authority is to be legitimized (Beetham & Lord, 2014:3).

Digressing from the question of legitimacy, the reform narratives shifted from legitimacy concerns towards a pure representation of all regions in the exclusive-permanent club of the Security Council. Different proposals from different actors or states emerged as a result of the abiding quest for the reformation of the UN Security Council with regard to representation in the two membership groups (P and NP) of the Security Council. And, in addition, the issue of voting and veto power in the UNSC. The proponents of UN Security Council reform are asking for an increase in the membership of the *international security club-for all states* as the only core modality for fair representation. After the successful increase in the membership of the UN Security Council in 1965 by creating additional five NPMs seats which increased the membership of the UNSC from ten to fifteen members, the post-WWII composition of the permanent members of the SC and the voting powers of the PMs remained unchanged still. The current structure allows any member holding a permanent seat in the Security Council to veto a decision in the SC given the consciously or unconsciously crafted texts in Article 27(3) of the UN Charter which gives privilege to the votes of the PMs on all matters other than procedural

issues.² Therefore, in order to arrive at a decision or enforce a resolution in non-procedural matters in the Security Council, the essence of four votes of the ten NPMs is tied to the voting behavior of the P-5. If one of the Big-5 votes in an opposite direction to the votes by the other eight, then the decision ends in an impasse. This gives a kind of credence to the theory by Schlichtmann (2011:99) that the world's political, social and economic problems are unlikely to be solved with the institution of war in place and not replaced. Is the attempt to get rid of the veto right feasible? Or will the expansion of the Security Council be a case of the more the merrier?

In the first part of this article, I will discuss the United Nations Security Council reform proposals and their feasibilities. In the second part, I will offer a brief description of the rights to veto in the UNSC. The third part of the article will offer an alternative, but difficult to achieve, proposal as a contribution to the call for the reform of the United Nations Security Council. Then, I will conclude that deeper cooperation amongst nations of the world and prioritization of negotiations in the settlement of conflict arising from national interests, with the view to ensuring regional and international peace and stability, would reduce potential use of veto power among the permanent members of the Security Council and invariably weaken the gap in decision making process between nonpermanent members and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The UN Reform Proposals: Less than twenty-five with no increase in veto right

The former president of the United Nations General Assembly and an erstwhile chairman of the high-level panel on threats challenges and change, Razali Ismail, proposed in 1997 that the membership of Security Council be increased to twenty-four by adding nine new seats to the current fifteen seats. He favored five new permanent seats without veto (one each for Africa, Asia, the Grulac and two industrialized States) and four NP seats (one each for Africa, Asia, the Grulac, and EE). The proposal aimed at promoting representativeness of UN members in the Security Council which in turn would give legitimacy to the SC. He opined that the reform plan will add regional flavor to the permanent caucus of the Security Council. However, will the new

² Article 27(3): "Decisions of the Security Council on all matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting."

no veto-seats to be acquired by the developing States and the two developed States offer any dramatic change in the decision making process in the Security Council? What will make them (new PMs without veto) relevant in the permanent club of the SC when the votes of the new-5 are tantamount to votes of NPMs of the Council since the voting pattern would likely remain without any change being caused to Article 27 of the UN Charter? The new five PMs would likely become redundant in the exclusive permanent club of the Security Council without a veto.

Among the Member States of the United Nations, some states argued that adding new nine seats to the Security Council would make the Council too large to make effective and efficient decisions or resolutions. This may be true to that fact that under the current fifteen members of the Security Council, compromises and exigent and successful negotiations are difficult to attain. Therefore, as the membership of the Security Council increases its effectiveness and efficiency in terms performing its purpose and functions decreases. Therefore, the notion of “the more the merrier” was denounced by other members of the United Nations. The idea of reforming the UN Security Council did not end with Razali Ismail reform proposal. It keeps resonating among the Member States of the UN, especially those in the category of the developing states.

The G4: six PSs and four NPSs are feasible

A group of four member states of the UN, the G4 (Germany, Brazil, Japan, and India), proposed to have the membership of the Security Council increased to a total of twenty-five by adding new ten seats (PMs and NPMs) to the current fifteen membership of the SC. In the proposal of the group, six permanent seats are to be added and four new seats of nonpermanent nature are to be assigned in the Security Council. In this view, not only will the body become more democratic, legitimate and representative, the composition will be altered to reflect the distribution of power in “today’s international order” by recognizing the rise of the emerging powers (Schirm, 2010:202); and also give a voice to the developing countries who make up “the overwhelming majority of the UN’s members” rather than making them “the objects of Security Council action” (Armijo, & Roberts, 2014:12). The inclusion of new six permanent seats without veto (two each for Africa and Asia; one each for Grulac and the WEOG) would ensure the presence of African, Asian and Latin American and Caribbean States in the permanent club of the Security Council. In that case, regional contribution towards decision-making process in the Security Council

would be ascertained. Regardless of how logical the proposal could be, adding six permanent seats without veto powers will render the new members ineffectual. The proposal may cleave the permanent club of the Security Council into sturdy versus puny members. What is the essence of adding new permanent members whose voting powers do not change from when they were nonpermanent members? What would they bring to the table in the exclusive international security club of the UN in terms of negotiating powers and privilege to influence decisions? Or is the idea of increasing the membership of the UN Security Council all about numbers and not output?

Going forward, according to countries GDP projection for 2017, the U.S. tops the list of countries with the highest GDP followed by China, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, India, France, Brazil, Italy, Canada, and Russia.³ The present configuration of the permanent club of the UNSC indicates that countries that were ranked 3, 4, 6, and 8 on the list of countries with the largest GDP in the world do not belong to the inner caucus of the world security body. If economic prosperity is a function of peace and stability, *inter alia*, it is therefore logical that members of the world-economic-power club also have seats in the exclusive world security club of the United Nations. However, since the suspension or reinstatement of any member of the United Nation against whom a preventive or enforcement action has been taken by the Security Council could occur only at the instance of recommendation to the United Nations General Assembly by the SC,⁴ membership of any general member of the United Nations into the exclusive Security Council of the UN depends largely on the willingness of the P-5. It means, therefore, that the founders of the United Nations, in their wisdom, consciously created a universal General Assembly where all members enjoy the same level of privilege on general founding principles of the United Nations and an exclusive Security Council saddled with the responsibility of maintaining peace and security in the world system (Weiss, 2003:148); and perhaps the reason why the first article of the UN Charter refers to “maintenance of international peace and security” and only to be followed by “cooperation” among nations of the world in Article 2 of the Charter.

³ Statistics Times. Countries GDP projection for the year 2017. International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlooks (April 2017). <http://statisticstimes.com/economy/countries-by-projected-gdp.php>

⁴ Chapter II - Membership, Article V, United Nations Charter.

The African Union: Those who do more should get more!

The 2005 reform proposal by the African Union advocates for the creation of six new permanent seats and five nonpermanent seats in the Security Council. Meanwhile, the five PMs have keen interest in making sure that the Council does not become marginalized despite its flaws (Berdal, 2003:10); even though the national interests of the P-5 becloud and prevent them from taking exigent measures on issues closest to them, however, adding new veto members would worsen the situation (Toro, 2008). The AU proposal is the highest membership proposing proposal for the reform of the Security Council. By adding eleven new seats to the existing fifteen seats in the SC, the total membership of the Council will hit twenty-six. Apart from proposing the highest possible number of membership in the Security Council, it deviates from no-veto membership reform debate of the Security Council.

The proposal wants the same privilege and voting rights enjoyed by the Big-5 for the new six PMs of the Council. That is, the new six permanent members must also possess the right to veto. Therefore, African States want two permanent seats (with veto) and two nonpermanent seats; two permanent seats (with veto) and one nonpermanent seats for Asia; one PS (with veto right) and one NPS for the Grulac; one PS (with veto) for the WEOG and; one NPS for Eastern Europe. So, the new configuration of the permanent powwow of the Security Council would reflect regional representation of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean who were never represented in the permanent caucus of the UNSC. The request for two permanent seats each for African and Asian States with right of veto may be justified on troop contribution of African and Asian countries to the peacekeeping mission of the United Nations. According to December 2017 statistics on troop-contributing countries to the UN peacekeeping mission by ranking, Italy was the only Western country in the category of UN Member States who contributed 1, 000 troops and above among the twenty-two highest ranking countries. Therefore, he who gives more should get more! African and Asian countries contribute more to the international peacekeeping mission than any of their Western counterparts in the United Nations unless there is a dichotomy between international *peace* and *security* put together in the UN Charter.

Box 1. United Nations Peacekeeping (Troops and Police Contributors)

As at December 2017, out of the twenty-two highest troop-contributing countries to the UN peacekeeping mission; fifteen were from Africa, six Asian States, and one European State. Among the thirteen countries who contributed 2,000 and above troop under same period, seven were African countries and six from Asia. Therefore, advocating for two permanent seats each for Africa and Asia with the right of a veto might not be misplaced as the two regions are the largest troop-contributing regions as far as UN peacekeeping mission is concerned. The P-5 contributions (troops only) during the period are as follows: U.S. (nil); France (735); the United Kingdom (647); China (2,419) and; Russia: (nil).

The United States and Russia did not contribute troops to the United Nations peacekeeping mission since May 2017.

Source: *United Nations Peacekeeping. Contributions by countries (Peacekeeping Missions and some Special Political Missions)*
<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>

George Orwell, in “*Politics and the English Language*”, reiterated the perils in imitating political languages as the words such as *democracy, justice, freedom, patriotism* and much more may have different meaning or definition to the original user. The word peace or security in the UN Charter in an attempt to make the world peaceful and secure may have different meaning to the war victors who designed the existing hegemonic world system after the Second World War.

However, one of the arguments against the proposal is that the permanent seat slot for WEOG would duplicate or triple the number of representation received by Western Europe. It depends, notwithstanding, on the classification of the “others” affixed to the WOG. Nevertheless, the WEOG slot is most likely going to bring Germany into the UN exclusive international security club. If that happens, then Western Europe will have triple representations (France, the United Kingdom, and Germany); whereas Africa will do with two seats, Asia will now have triple representations (China, India, and one other Asian State), Latin America and Caribbean will have one representation, Eastern Europe will maintain its one seat (Russia), and North America (the United States) will hold on to its seat.

Another argument against the proposed expansion of the permanent seats by six with veto powers is that the number of veto-wielding countries would increase in the permanent circle of the Security Council. In this case, the class-gap in the UN Security Council between the strong

and the weak would widen. There is also the likelihood that the new six permanent members would be assimilated into the so much criticized “veto culture” in the permanent club of the UNSC, thereby creating undue privilege and undemocratic advantage for the new regional members of the proposed P-11 of the Security Council over and above other states in their regions. The proposal by the AU would spread veto evenly across regions but would skew balance of power more in favor of members of the Security Council holding veto powers (Hosli, et al., 2011:25). However, the potential implication of the new P-11 would mostly be a matter of the possibility of the newly added permanent members to act in accord in the decision making process in the SC (Lund, 2010). Given the new configuration arising as a result of the proposal by the AU, there would still be lack of democratic principles and fair representation in the Security Council. What would be the rationale behind having North America holding one PS, while Asia holds three PM seats?

Expansion without Increasing the Permanent Seats: The Uniting Forces

The nonpermanent Western European members of the UN Security Council, with the exception of Germany, and the developing states of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, and Eastern Europe united under a consensus and proposed what is entirely different from other proposals. In their proposal, they acknowledged the need to reform the UNSC but not the permanent seats in the Security Council. The Uniting for Consensus wants only new ten nonpermanent seats as reform: three seats each for Africa and Asia; two seats for Latin America and the Caribbean and; one each for WEOG and EE. Given their proposal, which intends to cause change only to the NP membership and maintain the status quo ante in the permanent caucus of the Security Council, the total number of the membership of the Security Council would hit twenty-five. The group opined that the proposal of the G4 which aspires to create new permanent seats would widen the class-gap among countries in the United Nations.

The UFC argued further that the permanent seats of Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil in the SC would lead to more regional imbalance in terms of representation. There is sense in which one argues that permanent membership of Germany (who was defeated together with Italy in the Second World War) would be unfair to Italy (a member of the UN before Germany). On what basis would Germany get a permanent slot in the Security Council over and above Italy? Italy

contributes more troops to the UN-led mission than Germany. As for Brazil, in December 2017, each of Uruguay (922 troops) and Argentina (264 troops) contributes more troops to UN peacekeeping mission than Brazil (206 troops). And none of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Indonesia contributes less than 2,600 troops to UN-led mission in December 2017, while Japan, an Asian state, contributes no troop.⁵

However, since the warplanes, troops, and armaments will not crawl from the point of departure to the conflict zones or regions for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security, it is also important that we consider the UN Member States that contribute more ready-money to the coffer of the institution (UN). Troop contribution alone may not be the appropriate yardstick in determining who becomes a member of the permanent club of the United Nations Security Council. If we go by the theory of largest troop contributors, then Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Pakistan, and Nepal whose troop contributions were between 5,492 and 8,420 in 2017 should top the list of potential UN Member States for the permanent membership of the Security Council. Therefore, money plays a key role just as troop contribution; economic stature and global leadership prospect are important factors of consideration in determining which state should become a permanent member of the Security Council.

So, in terms of contribution to the UN budget, Germany's contribution is higher than that of Italy. Brazil contributes more money to the purse of the UN than any other Latin American countries. Also, each of Japan and India pays more to the coffers of the United Nations than any Asian countries.⁶ Nevertheless, Italy, Spain, and Portugal became members of the United Nations in 1955 (if we deliberately shift our attention away from the fact that European countries such as Poland, Greece, and Denmark were among the founding members of the United Nations), while Germany was absorbed into the all-nations club in 1973 under the Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic arrangement.⁷ Ethiopia and Egypt were among the founding members of the United Nations in 1945 together with Iran, Iraq, and India

⁵ The United Nations Peacekeeping Mission. Troops contribution by countries. December 31 2017.

⁶ "How much do various countries contribute to the UN Budget?" Contributions by the Member States to the UN budget. By Factly [online data].

⁷ Membership of the United Nations since 1945. Chronological Membership growth in the United Nations, 1945-present. Available on the webpage of the United Nations.

before the membership of Japan in 1956 (*see more on the membership of the United Nations since 1945 on the institution webpage*).

Voting and the right to Veto

It is never a myth that the U.S. represents the new world order, as the notion of bipolarism or multipolarism is gradually becoming a myth with the crystal global reality of the existing hegemonic power of the U.S. often exercised through the proxy hegemonic world system created after the Second World War. There are just about two world organizations: the United Nations with a “global membership, and of course the United States who possesses “global reach and power”.....as UN-led military operations take place only after “Washington sign on” (Weiss, 2003:153).

Therefore, demanding or thinking that the U.S. will share its veto power, or conclude that it should give it up and design a new decision-making mechanism (Butler, 2012:39) in the Security Council with invented-emerging countries from Africa and Asia, or from Latin America and Caribbean and the WEOG is illusory, because such supposition indirectly points towards the creation of a new world order within the global political system. Although the United Nations Security Council could be restructured to reflect more representation, in reality, however, it is a daunting task since new institutional orders often emerge only after major conflicts in real world (Armijo & Roberts, 2014:13).

Therefore, the implicit right to veto giving to permanent members of the Security Council in Article 27(3) of the UN Charter is a carefully crafted “unbroken and unshared privilege’ that excludes other members of the Security Council from exerting their influence on decisions bordering on constitutional matters which fall outside the context of procedural issues which require “an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members.....”.⁸ Given the above, however, the use of veto is increasingly decreasing among the Big-5 as they prefer to abstain from voting than casting a vote, contrary to its frequent use in the past (Okhovat, 2011:15). Meaning that the five permanent members of the UNSC now wield their powers in the form of a threat to veto a resolution in the SC without having to use it. This represents a new form of politics and power tie-up among the Big-5. What follows,

⁸ Chapter V: The Security Council, Article 27 (3) on voting rights of the permanents and nonpermanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

therefore, is that the “great proportion of what takes place in the Council is not seen publicly” as the threat to use veto in a formal discussion potentially shapes the negotiations outside the Security Council (Butler, 2012:30).

The difficult-to-achieve Alternative

Going beyond the rhetoric of the unwillingness of the Big-5 to relinquish the right to veto or share it with non-war victorious member states of the United Nations, regional organizations should step up their roles in promoting regional peace and stability in a way to balance the veto power of the P-5 of the UNSC. The purpose behind the establishment of many of the regional organizations is to ensure peace and stability in their regions, aside from economic and political reasons. If only regional organizations (EU, AU, Arab League et al.) could become stronger, "they may take up the responsibility to provide peace and security" in the world system with little or no reference to the authority of the United Nations Security Council (Rothwell, 2013). Chapter VIII, Articles 55, 53, & 54 of the UN Charter recognize the importance of regional institutions in achieving the core aim of the United Nations in terms of maintaining international peace and security.⁹ Since crisis or conflict occurs in given regions within the world political system, the success of ensuring peace and security; either through a dialogue or military efforts may rest largely on the cooperation of regional institutions. Enforcing a sanction on any member of the United Nations requires the cooperation of the regional institution in making sure that UN Security Council resolution is enforced in the region of the wanting member of the UN. Nevertheless, the UN Security Council is ever portent and significant in the process of ensuring international peace and security as many of the regional institutions or agencies are less efficient, responsive, and reliable.

Regional and inter-governmental organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the Arab League, the Organization of American States, ASEAN, Eurasia and many other Sub-regional organizations could serve as better alternatives to the maintenance of international peace and security in the world. The European Union, through its EEAS, may be a perfect example of the idea of an expedient alternative to provision of international peace and security.

⁹ Chapter VIII- Regional Arrangements, Articles 52, 53, & 54 of the United Nations Charter
<http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-viii/index.html>

The European Union as a surrogate for UNSC?

The security and defence goal of the EU covers a spectrum of security challenges such as counter-terrorism, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms export control, sea security, and many more.¹⁰ The essence of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations within and outside the EU, prevent conflict, and strengthen international security.¹¹ The EU, under the CSDP, conducts different civilian missions and military operations both in Europe and outside Europe. The European Union as a global player offers to increase “responsiveness” to crisis beyond U borders through the EEAS Crisis Response System that entails different stages of strategic planning, political dialogue, civilian and military intervention, humanitarian assistance, peace negotiations, and post-conflict resolution mechanism. These are vital and reliable instruments of international peace and security maintenance which could either complement UNSC conflict and security resolutions or serve as alternative system for ensuring international peace and security.

Since the EU launched its first mission in 2003, thirty-four U missions and military operations have been carried out on three continents. As at 2018, under the EU Global Strategy on Foreign Security and Policy, the EU is conducting six military missions/operations and ten civilian missions (see appendix 1 for more). The EUBAM in Libya was targeted at training relevant units of the Libyan law enforcement agencies on border security and management. In light of refugee crisis that rocked European cities, there is a need to offer cross-border cooperation in terms of training and re-training agencies governments in third countries. Border challenges are classified as security threats, at least to migrant-receiving countries. The EUAM in Iraq meant to assist Iraqi authority on its security reform agenda and the vision to create a stable environment in the Middle-East in the wake of terrorism brewing in the region. The mission is objectively a civilian operation aim at promoting human security (the essence of humanity) in Europe, Africa, and the Middle-East. Peace and stability is quintessential recipe for

¹⁰ Defence and policy areas of the European Union within the framework of the EU CFSP and CSDP. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/area/security-and-defence_en

¹¹ The European Union Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) under the European External Action Service. https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp_en

security. The two concepts are complementary and interwoven. Without peace, no society can attain stability. Therefore, stability is a function of peace and an indication of absence of conflict.

In order to maintain peace and create a secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the 1992 war in the Balkan region, the EU launched the ALTHEA-EUROF/BIH mission in order to strengthen peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire Balkan region. Data management plays an important role in providing security at any level of strategic planning cut across different levels of agencies of government. In this case, in offering international peace and security, the EU also launched training for the national police of the Niger Republic on data security and information efficiency. In Somalia (EUTM, since 2010 & EUCAP, since 2012); Mali (EUTM, since 2013 & EUCAP SAHEL, since 2014); and Central African Republic (EUTM RCA, since 2016) the interventions are military operations/missions aim at restoring peace to the troubled areas and maintain security. According to the outcome of the meeting of the Council of the European Union on “EU priorities at the United Nations and the 72nd United Nations General Assembly”, it was stated that, “the EU and the UN are indispensable partners to deliver peace and security, advancing human rights and sustainable development and, thus, change our lives for the better.”¹² This makes the EU looks more like a surrogate for the United Nations on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Given the fact that the EU has a “track record” in promoting and enshrining democracy, peace, the rule of law, human rights, economic prosperity and stability, the mandate to launch peacekeeping and special missions reposes in the United Nations.¹³ The EU faces limitations acting an actor for the maintenance of international peace and security and that puts its ability to provide transnational security under enormous doubt. One may be pressed, therefore, to ask about the role of the EU; other than humanitarian intervention, at the height of the crisis in Syria. Was the EU part of the arrangement that created the “de-escalation zones” in Syria in an attempt to prevent the U.S. from conducting a blitz in certain parts of Syria? Or was the security architecture of the world system designed to delegate powers to guarantee international peace

¹² The General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. The outcome of the proceeding held on 17 July 2017 in Brussels. EU priorities at the United Nations and the 72nd United Nations General Assembly (September 2017 - September 2018). Pp.3

¹³ EU priorities at the United Nations and the 72nd United Nations General Assembly (September 2017 - September 2018). Pp.6. The Council of the European Union, 17 July 2017.

and security to any regional agencies and/or members of the United Nations other than the five permanent members of the UNSC? The new world order that emerged after the Second World War did not envisage extension of military power beyond the anointed P-5 of the UNSC. And since the “hard currency of international politics undoubtedly remains military might” (Weiss, 2003:152); giving up the veto or extending the right to veto to other members of the United Nations in form of permanent membership of the Security Council may be tantamount to a pipe dream.

The African Union is privileged to provide peace and stability in Africa just like other regional organizations too are potential providers and guarantors of peace and security in their immediate regions. If the potentials to guarantee peace and stability are maximized, the outcome may reduce the high-handed resolutions and rights to veto of the UNSC. Since the ability to maintain peace and stability in the region by the regional organization would engender decline in conflict and peace and security, therefore, would crescendo. International conflicts or security challenges often have regional faces. The acclaimed First World War was a regional war which began in Europe before its escalation to the Ottoman Empire and related regions, and the ultimate involvement of the United States. Therefore, it is never a war that the whole universe must fight. As a matter of fact, Europe was the Armageddon as the war started and ended in Europe with the European actors. Most peacekeeping missions of the United Nations are conducted in Africa. The AU, for example, has the capacity to maintain peace and stability in the region, if not in the global system.

The Peace and Security Council, one of the main organs of the AU, is the "decision-making body responsible for the maintenance of Continental peace and security."¹⁴ In the communique issued by the PSC on the operation in Darfur during its 754th meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 20 February 2018, the PSC acknowledged the guiding resolution of the United Nations Security Council and the recommendations in a special report prepared by the UN Secretary-General towards reaching a ceasefire agreement between the belligerents. The caliber of countries produced by the region, with their contributions to the UNSC missions and global economic and political development, raised the calls for permanent membership of the

¹⁴ The Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The Council is responsible for continental maintenance of peace and security in Africa. It has a defense and security division; peace support operations division; crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction division; and conflict prevention and early warning division.

region in the UN Security Council (see Salisu & Omotola, 2008 for more details on the need for Nigeria, at least, to hold a permanent seat in the UNSC).

Besides strengthening regional initiatives to offer peace and stability in the regions by the regional institutions and/or agencies, it is important also that the UN Member States cooperate more in terms of prioritizing peace in their quest for national interests. If countries of the world would attach importance to the need to put their swords under sheaths and embrace negotiations and political dialogue as an alternative means to settlement of political, economic and security conflicts, the influence of the veto right of the P-5 in international security would dwindle. If Adolf Hitler had consented to the idea of finding peace in the world without the need to be appeased, the world might not witness another round of devastating war beginning in 1939.

Conclusion

Although, the permanent membership of the Global South is quintessential in the reform of the United Nations Security Council (Schlichtmann, 2011:106); because the global influence is now concentrated in Asia and not the West (Rothwell, 2013). However, geographical representation is the main idea behind the quest for the expansion of the permanent membership of the SC and it is also the same notion behind its opposition (Lund, 2010). The expansion of the permanent seats in the UNSC will not result in a balanced geographical representation still. The question of veto (if the new PMs possess veto powers) and its possible further abuse or purposeful use to suppress other members of the Security Council will continue to be of great concern in the reform process of the SC. Concretely, the request to remove the right to veto or lower its uses in the permanent caucus of the UNSC may take a form of a wild goose chase.

Therefore, regional organizations should maximize the potential advantage promoted in Chapter VIII, Articles 52-54 of the UN Charter by dramatically promoting peace and stability in their regions. This way, the veto power of the P-5 or its uses would decline since the ability to use veto depends on availability of regional security challenges which are of international importance. There are several cases of terrorist attacks in different parts of Africa with less or no interest to the global system. In other words, the use of veto or the right of veto in the Security Council is a function of conflict of international interest.

Therefore, a decline in conflict and an enhanced cooperation between and amongst nations within the international system would cause the influence of the P-5 to wane in terms of vetoing resolutions in the SC and progressively adjust the gulf in the decision-making process, vis-à-vis permanent members and nonpermanent members of the UN Security Council. Moreover, such cooperation between states would make the resolution to alter the UN Charter, which requires two-thirds majority, in the light of any of the proposed UNSC reforms more achievable.

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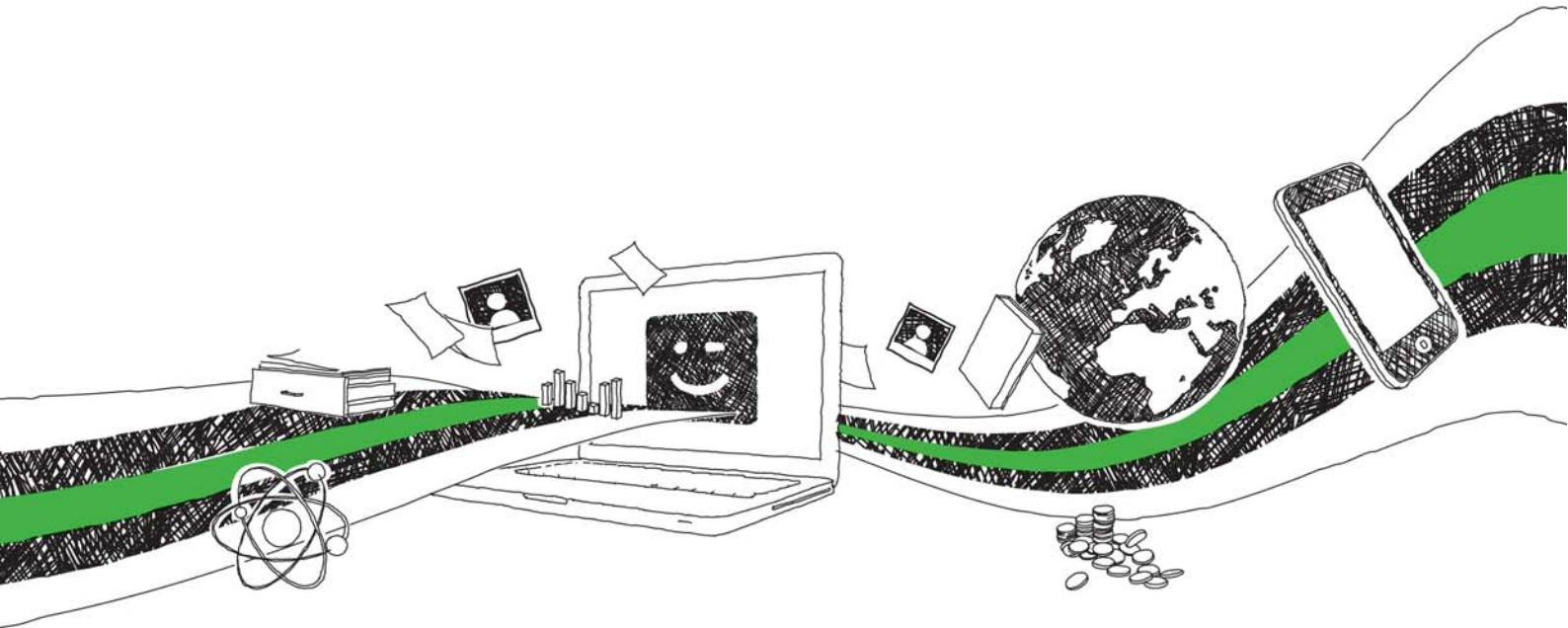
Appendix

The European Union Common Security and Defence Policy



Source: The European External Action Service (EEAS). (2017, October). EU Mission and Operations. [digital image]. Retrieved from: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en

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