

## **International Relations**

### **A Critique of Veto Power System in the United Nations Security Council**

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the veto power system in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), with the argument that it has not been favorable to the developing countries and the international system since inception in 1945. Consequently, this paper is of the view that the system has been a major force resisting the full actualization of global peace and security, and renders the global system chaotic and anarchic. Based on that, the paper is of the view that the system is undemocratic, lacks morality and transparency. However, the main objectives of this paper are to evaluate the consequences of veto system in the global system; access the trend of veto cast between 1946 -2016 by the five world powers; and stress the urgent need for its reforms or modifications. In carrying out this research, secondary sources were used, and data analyzed using descriptive method. The result and findings, shows that the close-door consensus and consultations of veto power system, have made it undemocratic and inconsistent with the initial aims of the existence of the United Nations; its exclusive nature is unfavorable to the developing countries and counter-productive to the global system. Consequently, this paper proposes a complete reversal of the system and perhaps alternated with a system that would unconditionally induct the developing countries into the global decision making process.

**Keywords:** Veto Power; United; Nations; Security; Council

### **1. Introduction**

The United Nations right from inception in 1945 after the Second World War has tried through its various agencies to engender global peace, political and economic

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stability, collective security and respect for human rights, multilateral co operations and diplomatic procedures. (Charles, 2007, P. 8).

With these, it has been able as a global body, to tackle various global issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation and indiscriminate use of arms, arms race, political hegemony, dictatorships, epidemics and disease eradication. It has also to its credit reduced the incidents of state to state aggressions, intrusions and the annexation of poor states by powerful states, and controlled global conflicts through negotiations, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. To a large extent, the global body has been the main actor resisting the possible outbreak of a third World War in spite of states' misconceptions, misperceptions, religious and ideological intolerance, human rights violations, terrorism and other crimes against humanity. In spite of these landmarks, its areas of inadequacies cannot be ignored. There are some aspects of its code of conduct that are calling for urgent reforms and modifications, to justify the very essence of its existence. One of such issues is the "Veto Power System" in the United Nations Security Council. It's a clause in the Security Council, that accords an absolute power to the five World Powers such as United States, Britain, Russia, China, and France, who are also the permanent members of the same system, to oppose or truncate any unanimous resolution taken against any State or government by the security council in times of conflicts, in a bid to resolve or deescalate the conflict, which may not be in favor of their national policy, or that of their allies, for either political, economic or ideological reasons. (Palmer, & Perkins, 2007, P.247).

However, this paper argues that the ambiguous and incoherent nature of the system had been the major reasons for global, State and regional conflict escalations. Although, the quest for collective security through a multilateral co operation, diplomacy, balance of power, alliances and all other conflict resolution mechanism, have been the major factor preventing the outbreak of a third global war. This article is of the opinion that unless world leaders and all other global, regional and state institutions, decisively collaborate to reform most of the inadequacies of the United Nations, its credibility to ensure global peace, stability and security, that would protect mankind from an impending global holocaust, could be questionable. Consequently, this paper intends giving a concise critique against the Veto System and will justify its arguments for tagging it "an injustice on the poor and developing countries". This article would also, give credence to the general belief

of its impotence to the international system since inception and thus, agree with some scholars of international relations, that it has been the major force disrupting all peace initiatives meant to salvage global crisis. A typical case note is the Syrian crisis. In addition, it would give a conceptual and table analysis of the usages of veto system by the P<sup>5</sup> from 1946-2016, the countries that were affected, the countries that frequently used it, and how it has been a major factor resisting the general yearnings for reforms. This paper will give a concise analysis of the veto power system, an assessment of the veto power system since 1963, the consequences of veto power to the globe; stress the need for reforms and challenges, recommendations, and conclusions, which proposes an unconditional induction of the developing countries into the global decision making process.

## 2. Conceptual Analysis

It is worthy to note, that article 27 of the United Nations Organization, allows the five permanent member states of the Security Council such as, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China, to counter all resolutions of the Security Council, which jeopardize their national interests and that of their allies. It was conceived in the United Nations Funding Conference (UNFC) in 1944, debated from 1944-1946 when it was finally constituted. However, the main objective of article 27, was to reduce or bring to a halt any boiling tension emanating from conflicts as a result of states misconception and misperceptions, which could threaten global peace and security or perhaps, trigger a third world war, since each of the P<sup>5</sup>, are in possession of nuclear weapons that could trigger a nuclear warfare and possibly exterminate humanity within a twinkle of an eye when not decisively and timely controlled. (Greenstock, 2008, p. 258).

Consequently, the self ambitions of these world powers have been the major epidemic force bedeviling the international society as most conflicts have been triggered, escalated and prolonged with the influence of veto power system. Like the normal saying, "power corrupts but absolute power corrupts absolutely". This is exactly the downgrading level the veto power system has reduced the international political system. This paper stresses its arguments with the institutional level of analysis which asserts that "the global idealists and moralists in a bid to prevent another world war in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, organized an International Institution which could presumably, serve as a forum for the peaceful resolution of international disputes", (Thomas Hobbs, 1651 BC). Thus, the League of Nations

was established in 1920, but never withstood the test of time. In that same bid, the United Nations was established in 1945 to diplomatically counter-balance the excesses of Nation States as they interact with one another. But if one may ask, was it able to stop all other subsequent wars such as the cold war of 1963, the Cuban missile Crisis in 1962, the Korean War, Iraqi war, Kuwait war, the conflict in Georgia, the 2009 massacre in Sri-lanka of the Tamils, the Arab Spring which sphere headed the Syrian civil war and rendered Libya and Syria to almost failed states, the Israeli/Palestine protracted wars, the forceful annexation of Crimea in the Ukraine by Russia, the civil wars in Africa such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sierra-Leon, Sudan, Liberia, Congo, and the massacre in South Africa due to Apartheid and white minority regime? The same answer is “NO”. This is as a result of the immorality beclouding the International Political System via the use of “Veto Power System”, (Security Council Resolution, 1998).

However, a conceptual tabular analysis of this paper, further illustrates the world powers’ trend of veto cast to neutralize all the United Nations resolutions to address global conflicts and wars in the interest of peace and collective security.

**Table 1. An analysis of the use of veto system from 1946-2016**

COUNTRIES	Total Number of Veto Cast between 1946 and 2016	CIRCUMSTANCES
The U.S	83	79 times regarding Israeli/Palestine conflicts, and 4 regarding ICC.
Russia/Soviet Union	133	26 regarding UN financing in Cyprus, 21 regarding Georgia, 21 regarding Balkans, 13 to support Burma, 13 for Zimbabwe(2 of its allies), 13 concerning Syria/Ukrainian crisis, 17 concerning UN resolution to MH17 crash in Ukrainian border, and 6 together with China, concerning UN demand for cease fire in Aleppo/Syria.
China	40	2 against countries supporting Taiwan, 13 with Russia to support Burma/Zimbabwe (two of its allies), 13 with Russia concerning Burma/Myanmar, 2 with Russia concerning Aleppo/Syria, 4 concerning Yugoslavia, and 6 concerning Guatemala.
The UK	32	9 with France in Suez Canal crisis, 14 in Rhodesian crisis, and 9 times with U.S /France in Rhodesian crisis.
France	18	9 times with UK concerning Suez canal, and 9 times with U.S/UK, concerning Rhodesian crisis.

*Source: (Okhovat, 2006)*

The tabular analysis of veto cast by the p<sup>5</sup> from 1946-2016, shows that,

**RUSSIA:** has the highest number of veto cast of 133, and mostly in the interest of its allies such as Cyprus, Balkans, Georgia, Zimbabwe and Syria.

**The United States:** has the second highest veto cast of 83 times, 79 in the interest of Israel, in the Israeli/Palestine crisis, and 4 times regarding ICC.

**China:** has about 40 veto cast, 9 times concerning Taiwan, 13 times with Russia in support of Zimbabwe/Burma, 13 times concerning Burma/Myanmar, 2 with Russia concerning Aleppo/Syria, 4 times concerning Yugoslavia, and 6 times concerning Guatemala.

**The United Kingdom:** has 32 veto cast, 9 times with France regarding the Suez Canal, 14 times with US/France regarding Rhodesia crisis.

**France:** has 18 veto cast, 9 times with UK concerning the Suez Canal, and 9 times with US/UK, concerning Rhodesian crisis. (Okhovat, 2006).

### **3. An Analysis of the Veto Power System**

After the horrific experience of the Second World War, the world leaders such as the United States president Franklin Roosevelt, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and the Soviet premier Joseph Stalin, held various conferences in which they narrowed down their various strategic roles played in the world war II, and their experiences. This therefore, motivated them to formulate plans that would create an international peacekeeping mission with the sole aim of preventing wars of the same magnitude in April 1946. Unlike the other global systems and institutions such as treaties, alliances, balance of power, collective and diplomatic security measures, taken by the World leaders in their various capacities and situations, the main essence of the establishment of the United Nations, is to regulate the behavioral and procedural norms or excesses of nation states with all fairness and equity, as they interact and relate with one another politically, economically and socially. The United Nations was therefore, established on a humanitarian ground to act as a succor, a defense and advocate for humanity through its numerous agencies, and as such, expected to democratically carry out its responsibilities without biases, intimidations, or any political influence and interference, while tackling the numerous global political, economic, military and social issues which threatens humanity. To a large extent the successes recorded so far by the same institution would have been complete and commendable without

reservations, if only the founders of the global system were more proactive in their foresights by creating some neutral sources for its financial and material funding for its sustenance and growth. (Palmer & Perkins, 2007, P.326).

It is indeed obvious that no system survives without adequate funding. Thus, the very quest for its capital, human and material resources to enable it meet-up with its global challenges, have been the main reasons for its inadequacies. By 1963, during the cold ideological war between the then Soviet Union and the United States, the United Nations moral, and ethical integrity to honestly and adequately pilot the global affairs without biases, intimidations and resentments was tested by “fate”. Unfortunately, like the popular saying, “where two elephants wrestle, the grass suffers”, the Soviet Union and the United States coincidentally, are the major funders and backbones of the United Nations in terms of military, financial and material resources, but because of their ideological differences, the equation of their military might to command global respect, influence, obedience, and force other nations of the globe to bow at their feet in fears and trembling, while the world stage stood abreast with perplexities and disenchantment, watching and wondering what would eventually be the fate of humanity, peradventure the cold war escalated. The world stage therefore, became a “theatre of drama” and ideological campaign with the Soviet Communist and the United States capitalist ideologies. And as expected, the quest for economic development, military alliances and defense in times of security threats, aggressions and power sustenance on the parts of vulnerable state governments, left most 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries with no option than to align with the two powers, while other states who chose to be non-aligned, survived the period under the mercies of the duo. ( Calvocoressi, 1945, p.74)

On the other hand, in 1946 when the veto power system was conceived and bestowed on the five world powers, the morality, integrity and effectiveness of the United Nations, were bought in a “platter of gold” by the P<sup>5</sup>. The reason for this assertion is because, with their exclusive power, global issues which ought to be diplomatically suppressed, had culminated in full scale wars and in most cases, the people, states and governments affected are left in disarray. The present state of “Arab Spring” and Assad’s government in Syria and other African and Asian countries, speak for themselves the menace of the onslaught. The veto power system in the UNSC, is unarguably undemocratic and unpopular and based on this

fact, it's surrounded with global discontents and controversies. This is due to the extent of injustices inflicted on the developing countries who are non veto holders. On the occasions of civil wars, revolutions and electoral systems, political leaders in the developing countries who are aligned to any of these veto holders, usually deviate from their electoral promises to become heartless dictators, tyrants and oppressors. In other words, Individuals and groups, who stood or opposed these governments, have their rights violated by unlawful detentions, arrests, torture and imprisonment without a faire trial or even in most times tortured to death. In these situations, those who bear the consequences are the innocent citizens of the developing nations (Calvocoressi, 1945, p. 77).

Conversely, for countries who chose to be non-aligned to resist unnecessary international pressures and interferences in their domestic affairs, which of course, is against the concept of sovereignty, most times, fall victims of internationally sponsored coups, civil uprisings, terrorisms, and rebellions against legally constituted governments including assassinations. This episode was recorded in the 60s in Congo under Patrick Lumumba, in Nigeria in the 70s under General Muritala, in Venezuela under Hugo Chaves, in Cuba under Fidel Castro to the extent that Fidel Castro suffered about sixty-one (61) attempts to his life, and stereo-typed a dictator and a tyrant for failing to yield to the mounting pressures from the West; and many other states equally suffered the same fate. The veto power system, not only sidelined the developing countries in the global decision making process, but encouraged some governments in the developing countries to commit genocide and mass atrocities, and democracy in these regions are more in theory than in practice. The people's voices and opinions are no longer respected, corruptions litter all over the political system of these countries, with no meaningful infrastructural, human and capital developments. Political elections are only conducted to fulfill all righteousness, and who leads a country under the influence of these p<sup>5</sup>, are decided in the bedrooms of the ruling class. (Andre, 1967 p. 12)

Can there ever be any justification to the continuous obstructions via the veto power system to the United Nations peaceful resolutions and diplomatic negotiations to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria? But for the veto system, many lives would not have been wasted in Syria, and in the Mediterranean Sea, refugee crisis and its global security threats would not have littered all over Europe and other countries. The bottom line is, these world powers do not act in the interest of humanity but for their economic, political and ideological interests.

These were the rationale behind the unwavering stand of Russia and China towards Assad's government. For instance, Syria is a major importer of Russian fire arms and defense equipments, and holds a strategically positioned Russian naval base at Tarsus on the Mediterranean Sea, which is the only naval base outside the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, China has been the second longest non-Arab investor in Syria. In summary, both countries have both economic, political and strategic interest in Syria and thus, in their interests, Assad' government has remained sacred to the extent that his use of chemical and biological weapons against his unarmed citizens, which is a crime against humanity, is justified in the security council by Russia and China who have used their veto cast to over-turn the UNSC peaceful resolutions in Syria, neither can there be any moral justification for Russia's frequent bombardment of Aleppo since the outbreak of the civil war till date, and destruction of the lives of innocent citizens mostly women and children?

in the same vein, the Ukrainian border was forcefully annexed by Russia against the concept of sovereignty and the provisions of international law. Consequently, many lives were lost and the victims internally displaced. In that same situation, the Malaysian commercial airliner carrying about 270 passengers was fired down by a Russian sponsored rebel groups in 2014, to the extent that Russia vetoed the United Nations Security Council's bid to set up an International Criminal Tribunal to investigate the crash of the airline (MH17) in the Ukrainian border in 2015. Also, the United Nations has failed to address the unlawful invasion of Iraq during the time of Saddam Hussein by the United States, The United Kingdom and Australia, while claiming he possessed weapons of mass destructions. Again, all resolutions adopted against this situation were vetoed in 2003.

In conclusion, the assertion that the wraths of the international law only fall on the weak and vulnerable countries in the global system, while the world powers remained sacred to the international code of conduct, is justified. Wherefore, veto power system is without resentment chaotic, inconsistent with the original aim of the establishment of the United Nations, and counter-productive to the global system.

#### **4. The Veto Power System since 1963: An Assessment**

The political influence of veto holders in the developing countries has propagated despotism, underdevelopment, untold hardships, avoidable deaths and much harm to the citizens. The over exploitation of the natural resources of the developing regions which of course, form the basis of the economic interest of these World Powers, has reduced them to a state of abject poverty, hunger, mass illiteracy and strife, youth unemployment and general underdevelopment. This of course, exposes the international system to terrorism and all manner of global threats and insecurities. Worse still, the world leaders are yet to establish a mechanism through which the excesses of world powers could be genuinely and adequately regulated. Based on this fact, veto power system is inconsistent, counter-productive and an indirect injustice to the developing countries. This paper is of the view, that “any global system which only believes that a particular part of the globe, either developing or underdeveloped, is only suitable for the extraction and exploration of raw materials needed for global economic growth and sustainable development, but considers it not suitable enough to partake in the global decision making, can never be credible enough to adequately pilot the global affairs in a way that would save humanity from global threats to peace and security”. (Northadge, 1976, p. 299)

The United Nations has been the only internationally recognized system which serves as a mechanism through which the diplomatic settlement of disputes, armament rivalries and arms race could be controlled and regulated. In addition, state to state aggressions, influences and interferences are expected to be controlled by this same system, to ensure equal rights, justice, equity and opportunities irrespective of race, gender, religion, ideology, development and civilizations. It has the mandate to regulate the procedural and behavioral norms of states as they relate, and tackle on humanitarian grounds, numerous global challenges in order to make the world a better place. But due to ideological differences, national interest, political hierarchy and erroneous economic and military dispositions, the world political system has become a stage of armament rivalries and nuclear proliferations. Consequently, world leaders rather than devoting their precious times and resources to issues that would foster global economic growth through creativity, innovations and research that could end global epidemic, and also, ensure equal justice for all, respect for each others' belief and ideologies, and ultimately bridge the gap between the rich and poor nations, they are more engaged with the development of more sophisticated nuclear weapons as a deterrent against global threats created by some of these highlighted global issues.

Although, veto power has been a major instrument structured to appease the world leaders in times of boiling tensions, but due to its unpopularity, exclusiveness and undemocratic nature, it has been a major setback to the justification and actualization of the set goals of the United Nations. Ordinarily, one would have been tempted to admit that the veto system has been one of the most effective diplomatic strategies that the United Nations had used to suppress boiling tensions between world powers especially in situations that could degenerate to a major global conflict and a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> world war, but the negative impacts of the system on the global system outweighs its positives. For instance, in cases where the veto system was deployed by the holders to truncate resolutions in the UNSC which is against their foreign and domestic interests and that of their allies, conflicts that were expected to deescalate to save the affected states, regions or victims from grave consequences, such as devastations, and avoidable deaths, are prolonged and almost impossible to suppress or halt. The Syrian civil war is a typical example. (Roseau, 1972, p. 72).

Though, the international law emphasizes on ethical and moral values, and condemns the use of force as an instrument for state-craft, territorial annexations, state to state aggressions, colonialism and imperialism; but, where was the international law when the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council, was challenged in the Korean war of 1962, Cuban missile crisis of 1963 and of course, the cold war 1963? The resultant effects of these wars proved that international laws and systems only apply strictly to weak states, while the powerful states violate these laws and remained untouchable. The veto power system has been the major reason why the Israeli/Palestine protracted conflict has defied all possible diplomatic solutions Proffered by the United Nations to permanently resolve the conflict, as the United States has unilaterally, vetoed in favor of Israel in all Arab/Israelis conflicts since 1970-2011. Likewise, Russia in spite of its forceful annexation of the Ukrainian border, has continued to veto against all efforts made by the UNSC, to resolve Russia/Ukrainian conflicts and wars since 2011, and vetoed against all the United Nations criminal investigations to the downing of MH17 in the Ukrainian border, and equally, vetoed severally in favor of the Syrian government since the Syrian civil war in 2011. Russia also, used the veto power system to oppose all UNSC demand to end the indiscriminant bombing of Aleppo. (Kishore, 2004, p. 25)

In each of these conflicts, the world leaders due to international politics are in most cases incapacitated to act even when the humanitarian situations in the affected areas are calling for urgent international intervention. In each of the atrocities committed by the world leaders, no clause in the code of conduct of the international law has ever convicted them to serve as a deterrent to others. Neither has the United Nations formulated any other alternative apart from the concept of “Uniting for Peace”, which is usually deployed by the General Assembly, when atrocities have been committed. On the contrary, the weak nations without international influence, suffer the brunt of the international law, even when the concept of sovereignty, stipulates that “all sovereign states can only willingly accept the trials and verdicts of the international law”, and thus, exempted from the interferences of the international forces in their domestic issues. But with no due respect to these moral principles, the weak states have become “sacrificial cows”, to the international system, which beam their search lights on all steps taken by them, while the powerful states with their veto-strength, remained sacrosanct to the international system and its code of conduct.

In conclusion, the veto power system since 1963 is unarguably, a non people oriented global policy in its approaches and uses. Therefore, the use of it in any conflict situation, or the threat of its deployment not only undermined the sovereign rights of weak and vulnerable states, but its inconsistencies have rendered it counter-productive to the global quest for an enduring equal rights, justice and opportunities for all.

## **5. The Consequences of Veto Power System to the Globe**

As earlier pointed out, the continuous interferences and influences of the veto power holders in the international system, has been the major causes of dictatorships, hegemony and the irrationality of most countries in the developing countries in Africa, Middle East, and some parts of Asia. For instance, for economic reasons, in spite of the grave consequences surrounding the acquisition of Nuclear Power, Russia and China had vetoed against all moves by the UNSC to deter Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in 2006. Likewise, Russia and China have been the two strong forces behind president Mugabe’s government in Zimbabwe to the extent that in spite of the political atrocities committed by president Mugabe, the two world powers have since 2006, vetoed against all moves made by the UNSC, to condemn the violence and intimidations the Mugabe

Government had unleashed on the civilians and the oppositions after the June 29<sup>th</sup> elections in 2008. Also, due to the continuous interferences of veto holders, the North Korean president, has focused more on nuclear acquisition to deter external threats and aggressions and consequently turned a dictator, while eliminating any one perceived as an opposition. (Mahbubani, 2004, p. 28)

The palliation of nuclear armaments by world powers has exposed the global system to perpetual wars and conflicts which emanate from lack of mutual trust and respect for one another's interests, ideologies, beliefs and territorial sovereignty. That's why, in a bid to enforce respect and create deterrence, developing states, are left with no other choice than to channel their little resources, time and energy to acquire sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. In this respect, all other aspects that would have economically, politically and socially contributed to global technological advancement are neglected. Indeed, veto system has been a major drawback to the international system, and the extent of its economic, political and social consequences, is highly unprecedented. As we narrow down its global implications, it is without reservations that this paper points out how it has been the major instrument paralyzing all resolutions meant to resolve conflicts, even when the occasions of its deployment are not morally and ethically justified. It has reduced the international system to a state of impunity and armament rivalries. (Waxman, 2009, p. 11)

To correct this trend, affected states, individuals and groups, have resorted to arms race to enforce justice, remedy an unequal global influence and recognitions, national sentiments, the struggle for co-existence, and political emancipations. To them, there is the quest to retaliate all the political and military humiliations and circumstances jeopardizing their national security and stability. For instance, as the p5 are given the exclusive right to choose and decide how the global sanctions meted on states who violate the United Nations treaties and charter laid down as guiding principles to moderate states behaviors, the weak states in the global system, are marginalized in that aspect and made inconsequential in the global affairs. Secondly, African states are only allowed three non-permanent representatives, one for; The Western Europe and Other Group (WEOG), one for; Latin America and Caribbean Group (LACG), two for; The Asian Group (TAG), and two for; The Western European Group (TWEG) and one representative. In this situation, the interest of these regions are not only sidelined, but are never truly

represented. Ironically, most of the economic materials needed for global economic growth and sustenance, are extracted from these regions. Politically, there are no vetoes without alliances. As such, most developing countries in Africa, Asia, Middle East and the Pacific, had at one time or the other, experienced dictatorship, hegemony and despotism. A typical example was the situation that triggered the Arab Spring in Tunisia which eventually spread to Syria and to all other parts of Middle East, to the extent that Syria, Libya and some developing regions including Africa, have turned safe heavens to all manner of terrorist groups in a bid to retaliate injustices inflicted on them by the global system (Kalifa, 2003, p. 15).

In conclusion, the veto power system in international politics has a lot of evil consequences to the global community. Though, the original intension of veto system was for diplomatic negotiations in times of conflicts that could escalate to a full scale war; like the assertions of Karl Max, “virtually all men can face adversity, but if you want to test the true character of a man, you give him power”. In other words, because of the absolute power accorded to the P5, rather than using it to justify the very essence of global peace, they use it to intimidate vulnerable states and governments (Palmer, & Perkins, 2007, p. 326).

## **6. The Need for Reforms and the Challenges**

Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when states became the dominant actor in international relations, the world stage has been encumbered with wars and conflicts. Even centuries before Christ, kingdoms and autonomous vassal states, have been warring and conflicting with one another. For instance, the Greeks and Italian autonomous city states lived by warring with one another for supremacy, until Mount Olympus was enshrined to accommodate all warring City States during their quarterly celebrated cultural festival. On each occasion, the city states are expected to put their differences apart until the festival was over. This festival eventually gave birth to the Olympic game of today, which in turn, became a global unifier. There were also the Peloponnesian war of 431BC, the Munich war of 254BC, the Spanish war of 1714, the Crimean war, down to the American, French and other revolutionary wars to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars and all other subsequent wars. This “Act of War”, has been the basic tool to enforce deterrence, and remedy injustices meted on the weak by the countries with strong military forces and modern-day instruments of war. In each of these periods, world leaders have mapped out strategies that would reduce the excesses of the antagonist states, and

the guiding principles regulating arms conflicts. For instance, the end of the Napoleonic revolutionary war between 1789-1815, brought about the Concert of Europe, the Vienna Treaty, the balance of power, which was used to control other power intoxicated states who may want to destabilize the peace of other states in a manner Napoleon did in Europe. This was followed by the European series of alliances which culminated in the First World War between, 1918-1919. Again, after the First World War, the League of Nations was established to act as an international guiding principle regulating states relations but its provisions and lack of total commitment by the member states, made it not strong enough to withstand the test of time. Thus, the League Covenant was only binding on the weak states, to the extent that it could not stop the aggressions of strong states against the weak ones, nor could the Wilsonian 14 Point Agenda and the provision of the Treaty of Versailles, force Germany who was known as the “Aggressor State” in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, to pay reparations. Indeed, Germany under Adolf Hitler, defiled the provisions of the treaty of Versailles for what he tagged “a global injustice and humiliations meted on a country”, and the consequences, culminated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (Watson, 1992, p. 146).

The end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, brought about the existence of the United Nations in 1945 under whose auspices the veto power system exists, but due to its inadequacies, incredibility, and exclusive nature, its usages has become detrimental to the non veto power countries and consequently, marginalized regions and states especially the 3<sup>rd</sup> world states, advocacy groups such as human rights and civil rights activists, are objectively lending their voices against the applications of veto power by a few privileged and influential countries during conflicts and wars. The existence of veto system in the international politics has rendered the effectiveness of the United Nations impotent and left the justification for its existence questionable. This impression is as a result of the nature of the peace-keeping and peace-enforcement of the United Nations which started in 1963, the rationale behind the deployment of troops in war zones and its reluctance to effectively apply sanctions when the influences of the P<sup>5</sup> and their indiscriminant use of ballistic missiles against their opponents which is an act of violation to the global guiding principles of arms conflicts, the non compliance to the United Nations Security Councils demand for cease fire in any arm conflict involving the world powers, and the reluctance of the UNSC to duly investigate all criminal offences

committed by veto holders in times of wars and conflicts (Calvocoressi, 1945, p. 77).

It is however, on record, that from 1965, the membership of the UNSC has drastically increased from 15 to 114 and coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United Nations General Assembly has increased to 193. Consequently, the imbalances between UNGA and the UNSC, has made the United Nations Security Council exclusive and undemocratic. Thus, systematically, undermines the provision of article 2 of the United Nations Charter which makes all member states equal. In addition, the trend of arms acquisition and proliferation by the P5, has left all other developing countries like Iran, North Korean, India, Israel, Palestine and the Islamic States, with no option than to channel their limited and insufficient resources, to the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction as a deterrent against external aggressions, and this in turn increased global security threats. Also because of economic interest, the p5 since 2000, have been the major export of about 71% of conventional arms. No doubt, the veto holders have through this trend, abused the provisions of article 26 of the United Nations charter which stipulates that, “in order to maintain global peace and security, the Security Council should be responsible for the formulation of the laws guiding it”. But if one may ask, who are the powers occupying the Security Council? It is the same forces engaged in the illicit global arms export and because, of the economic advantages derived from this trend, the global clarion call for atotal global disarmament and the general reform of the United Nations, “Modus Operandi”, has been too impossible to actualize for decades. And sad enough, the world’s decision makers morally charged with the responsibility of bringing succor to humanity by making rules which would make it a safer place for all, have become a major force propagating its extermination if not timely checked. Also, for these obvious reasons, the clarion call from all works of life for a total reform of the veto system or its total reversal in terms of size, exclusiveness, regional representations, categories of representation, permanent memberships and methods, have been abortive (Alexander, 2012, p. 14).

In conclusion, the spirit of favoritism and a lack of absolute commitment to their moral responsibilities to humanity, the international politics is beclouded with bottled anger and the quest for retaliations. As a result, nation states no longer have trust, respect and confidence in the system, and no longer find it morally and ethically right to adhere strictly to its principles of collective security measures, such as diplomacy and the non-use of force in times of disputes.

## **7. Recommendations**

The permanent membership of some African Nations and developing nations is long overdue. Therefore, their unconditional inclusion in the United Nations Security Council, so as to afford them the prolonged yearnings for equal rights and opportunities in the global decision making," is a global right and not a privilege". In other words, if the veto system cannot be reversed, developing nations should be accorded the veto rights.

Secondly, there has to be a total disarmament to a zero level. Not until armaments rivalries are strictly made a global taboo, nation states would never think of better alternatives of resolving states, regional and global conflicts.

Thirdly, modern technological development, have demystified the long gap between human and machine intelligence to the extent that modern technologies can now program robots and machines to alternate human exhaustive and excruciating abilities. In other words, nation states should channel their resources towards the development of sophisticated robots which could replace the deployment of human troops to the battle field all in the name of national defense.

Furthermore, the Security Council should establish a very neutral means of generating funds for its sustenance; deployment of troops for peace keeping and peace enforcement operations and materials needed for humanitarian aids and depend less on the P<sup>5</sup>, so as to control their gross misconducts.

Finally, an exclusive power to counter the power and indiscriminate use of veto system by the holders should be given to the secretary general of the United Nations. And to ensure a non abuse of this exclusive power, men and women of high moral standard like renowned elder statesmen and women, who have in their various capacities and professions either as a head states, civil rights activists and non-parochial wise men and women who would never yield to international pressures and intimidations, should be considered for the position.

## **8. Conclusion**

The main objective of this study is to make the world a safer place to dwell in. When there are no aggressions, there would be no wars, and when there are no wars, there would be no need for the proliferation of nuclear armaments and the

immoral use of veto system. In other words, when we have mutual respects for our sovereignty, race, beliefs and ideology, there will be justice, equal opportunities for all, liberty and above all, peace, security and harmony for humanity.

Finally, “power corrupts but absolute power corrupts absolutely”. According to Karl Max, “All men can face adversity, but if you want to test the true character of man, you give him power” (Andre, 1967, p. 105). In other words, veto power system in the Security Council may have been instituted to appease the P5 on the occasions of aggressions, conflicts and eventual wars, but the world leaders should consider the magnitude of its global damages to humanity. Consequently, this paper recommends the need for its reform or a possible reversal of the system.

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