

The Implications of Hegemonic Struggle: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

The article is on hegemonic struggle between the US/Allies and the Emerging Powers led by China and Russia; it is aimed at identifying its possible implications for global peace and security. It adopted the Hegemonic Stability Theory as a guide and applied historical design as methodology by the review of related literature. It observed that some studies concluded that the Emerging Powers are no longer willing to be led by the US/Allies which has facilitated the reform of old and the creation of new global governance institutions, reduced global poverty, diversify export market etc.; however, we uncovered that the struggle has increased protectionism, reduced global economic growth, increased capital flight from emerging markets, increased exchange rate fluctuation and possible currency war; weakening the UN democratic ideals of constitutionalism and universalism, increased cyber war, creating counter alliance formations leading to increased arm race, deterrence and crisis bargaining coupled with geopolitical territorial revisionism/neo-neo-imperialism. The study recommends the metamorphosis of the United Nations into the global sovereign to secure the global public goods; the integration of the NDB and CRA into IMF and World Bank as the lenders of last resort and the submission of every territorial dispute/human right concerns to the ICJ and International Court of Arbitration for Adjudication.

Keywords: Implications, hegemonic struggles, global peace/security, US/Allies and Emerging Powers

1. Introduction

Scholars who have explored the sea of intellectual discourse within the confines of the struggle for power in International Relations did so through varieties of concepts to sail through such intellectual terrain. Some of such concepts are polarity, hegemonic war, hegemonic stability, power transition, the rise and fall of the great powers, emerging structures of international politics etc. (Brookes & Wohlforth 2016; Wohlforth 2008; Waltz 1993; Kennedy 1989; Modelski 1987 Gilpin 1987; Kindleberger 1973; Organski 1958). These conceptualizations while capturing salient features of the international system concludes that such patterns are cyclical with states continuing to compete in military, economic and other spheres. While some of these scholars conclude that the emergence of a hegemonic 'state' will bring about stability in the system (Kindleberger 1973); others held that it produces counter-hegemonic struggles to balance the preponderant state (Morgenthau 1986). Accordingly, the debate has been centered on which configuration works better for stability in the system; while some argued that a bi-polar system is more stable others prefer a multi-polar system (Brookes & Wohlforth 2016; Waltz 1993). The above help to sustain the argument that struggle in the system is cyclical with statesmen, nations and institutions helpless to such cyclical trends implying that instability in the system is unavoidable. The above continue to prompt nations to seek self-help as guarantee for their security and entrenching the concept of security dilemma that tends to aggravate the level of instability in the system. (Mearshemer 2006; Waltz 1993; Morgenthau 1986).

The above studies placed undue emphasis on national security, interest and power with less reference to human security; it ignore the fact that great powers are limited in number and failed to critically consider the impact of such struggle on the majority of states in the system beyond the entrenchment of the values of the preponderant state and projections for possible upcoming nations to challenge the status-quo. This study endeavors to critically appraise the problem of hegemonic struggle between the US/Allies and the Emerging Powers by taking a step further from what the listed scholars have done. The purpose being to present what it termed hegemonic-ominous-graphic – a systematic presentation of the dangers inherent in hegemonic struggles on the entire system. The study hope to uncover such implications through a historical approach based on secondary sourced data obtained by qualitative analysis of content of documents gathered unobtrusively. Such data will help to address the following questions that underlie the study; what is hegemonic struggle? how does hegemonic struggle affect the economic, institutional, cyber, strategic and geopolitical/neo-neo imperial configuration of the entire system? But the starting point shall be the clarification of the concept of hegemonic struggle.

2. Hegemonic Struggle

While Gilpin, (1987) conceives of hegemonic struggle as ‘hegemonic war’, Organski, (1958) sees it as ‘power transition’ and Modelski (1987) calls it ‘long circle in world politics’. These concepts represent the same phenomenon and is concerned with who governs the system: who controls global finance, the sea lanes and energy sources; whose idea, value and culture reigns supreme. In other words, hegemonic struggle for this study is all efforts being made by Emerging Powers led by China and Russia to alter the hegemonic/unilateral role the US/Allies have played over the years in relations of who directs affairs at the global governance institution and whose model of leadership predominates.

For the question of who rules the system to arise certain conditions must exist, some of which are ‘unprecedented growth of a rival nation in economic and military terms’; the other being a ‘relative decline in power of the dominant nation’, (Gilpin 1987). He contended further that the dominant nation is more prone to initiating ‘preemptive war’; but Copeland, (2000) asserts that ‘the rising nation is often more inclined to initiate a war to lay claim to prominence and recompenses it had been denied; the above view is also supported by Wholforth, (2008) who noted that ‘the lesser or rising states will tend to contest for leadership when they become stronger relative to the dominant state’. While the US/Allies-the dominant states are perceived to be in relative decline in some quarters and could be prompted to initiate ‘preemptive wars’, the Emerging Powers led by China/Russia represent the rising powers, due to their economic productivity and financial clout are bent on altering the uni-polar nature of the current system to a multi-polar one (Wallenstein 2007, 2013). Such efforts either by the dominant State or the rising State to contest for global leadership will in turn produce some effects or consequences, such impact is what the study termed implications of hegemonic struggles and it shall be considered from the economic, institutional, cyber, strategic and geopolitical/neo-neo-imperial angles.

3 The Implications of Hegemonic Struggles

The implications of hegemonic struggles for this study means the intended or unintended; immediate or imminent consequences of any economic, institutional and cyber measure adopted by nations on the health of the global economy, the institutional arrangement and cyber infrastructure of the system. It also represent the impacts of defense plans or strategies on peace, security and development of the system. Added is that it signifies the effects of geopolitical/neo-neo-imperial designs adopted by nations under study on the entire system.

3.1 Economic Implications of Hegemonic Struggles

Some have argued that the coming of the Emerging Powers as a counterweight to the US/Allies has produced some positive implications for the global economic order. Stressing that it has ensured the ‘increased diversification of the export market which has led to the growth of the world economy from \$336 billion in 1995 to \$3,478 trillion in 2014’; facilitated ‘global reduction of poverty’, reformed global governance institutions, increased developing countries’ voting rights at World Bank and IMF from ‘43.97 percent to 47.19 percent’ and ‘39.5 percent to 42.29 percent’ respectively. They argued further that the creation of new global governance institutions like the New Development Bank NDB and Contingency Reserve Arrangement CRA, including the China led Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank AIIB will give an impetus to growth in the global economy as it makes available alternative sources of funding for infrastructural development and guarantees the stability of the international monetary system. Adding that the \$75 billion made available by the BRICS to the IMF has helped in cushioning the effect of the global economic crisis (Nicolette 2015; World Trade organization 2015).

However, such perception ignore the fact that those gains recorded by the emerging markets are at the expense of the holders of the status quo; and that the establishment of two institutions- NDB & CRA is acting as a counter-hegemonic challenge to the US/Allies. It implies that the Emerging Powers especially China and Russia are no more willing to be led by the US/Allies. Although the US made sacrificial efforts to stabilize the global economy following the global economic crisis of 2007-9 by the provision of over \$800 billion and the multiple Swap Line Agreement with European, South American and Asian Central Banks (Helleiner 2014 and Drezner 2014); the failure to sustain such a lender of last resort role following the 2013 Eurozone crisis and the failure to extend such role to the least developed countries outside US area of interest tend to suggest US unwillingness to lead. The implications of the unwillingness to lead and to follow could manifest in the emergence of economic protectionism, exchange rate instability, immigration control and the adoption of alternative global payment system in place of the dollars.

First of all the pledge by the Group of 20 (G20) following the global economic crisis of 2007-9 that they will not resort to protectionism has been jettisoned as it has been observed that ‘17 out of the G20 countries put in place a total of forty-seven trade restricting measures...’ (Gamberoni & Newfarmer, 2009; Kegley & Blanton, 2011).

The overall implications of trade policies are that world trade is falling in volume and value terms due to loss of jobs and investment opportunities. For instance JP Morgan (2015) observed that ‘the US export in 2015 lost 50,000 jobs per month’. In other words as the global economy falls due to loss of investment opportunities arising from trade restrictive measures so will individuals lose their sources of livelihood thereby entrenching more poverty and those affected will become an easy prey for terrorist, drug gangs and other criminal elements, creating more insecurity in the world.

Moreover, nations are beginning to adopt immigration control policies to restrict the number of immigrants into their countries. The recent policy pronouncement by the US government led by Donald Trump is instructive. The policy statement banned four countries from obtaining travel visa to the US- Iran, Syria, Libya and Sudan. Again Donald Trump has also requested for the reduction of foreign aid to facilitate the Mexico Wall and in January 2017 he canceled the Trans Pacific Partnership initiative of Barak Obama which was supposed to broaden trade and investment opportunities between the US and Asian Pacific countries (Ghaisy & Zhou 2017). In South Africa immigration control measures is producing great uncertainty among the immigrants especially those from African countries and particularly Nigeria. Africanews (2017) noted that ‘116 Nigerian were lost’, 15 houses and businesses burned in two weeks occasioned by the spate of xenophobic attacks and compounding global insecurity.

Furthermore, current hegemonic struggles is facilitating exchange rate fluctuation and instability as nations bent on altering the status-quo calls for the adoption of alternative payment system to the dollar as the currency of ‘global market place’. It could be recalled that the previous two World Wars broke out in part due to the economic crisis that originated in the United States. First in 1907 the US suffered a banking collapse, prompting protectionist policy at home and export expansionist policy abroad to correct the crisis (The Economist 2015). Consequently, other nations adopted retaliatory policy measures – the beggar-thy-neighbor approach-leading to the repudiation of the liberal economic order and the ultimate outbreak of the 1st World War. Again in 1929, America suffered another economic crisis due to stock market crash that spread to other parts of the world; the policy measures followed the line of protectionism as in the first case, the rejection of the Gold Standard and the creation of multiple currency blocs-the Sterling bloc, the Gold bloc and the German bloc. While the Gold bloc countries adopted protectionist trade policies; the Sterling bloc countries depreciated their currencies. The German bloc countries on the other hand adopted rigid exchange rate control which eventually rendered their currencies inconvertible (Keylor 2006). The instability occasioned by such financial crises ultimately facilitated the Second World War.

In the same vein, the 2007-9 global economic crises started in the US due to the subprime lending practices in the real estate sector, as the crisis spread to other parts of the world nations began to implement policies to salvage the situation. The most prominent is the protectionist approach as has been pointed out above, the implication of such policy posture for global finance is that the international monetary system could degenerate into three distinct currency blocs as in the case of pre- World war II era. In this case, in the place of the gold, Sterling and German currency blocs, we could witness the Dollar, Euro and the Reminbi/Gold currency blocs. The creation of such a multiple currency blocs could facilitate the drying up of foreign loans, closure of markets abroad and the inconvertibility of certain currencies, thereby making it difficult for nations to accumulate foreign exchange to finance import of raw materials and other advanced technologies (Keylor 2006). It could further throw up the problem of how to resolve the imbalance in current account deficit and surplus in ways that does not hurt the global economy. As noted by Kindleberger, (1973) ‘as nations strive to protect their national/private interest, the world’s public interest goes down and with it the private interest of all’. For instance in a crisis situation should the deficit countries bear the whole burden of adjustment by slowing down importation, world output will decrease; thereby creating great instability that requires strong leadership commitment and the need for a global lender of last resort to stabilize. (Keylor, 2006; The Economist 2015).

More over the Swap line agreement entered into by China with over 32 other countries are indicative of the fact that members of the Emerging Powers and other countries sympathetic to their cause are already devising alternative payment system that excludes the dollars, justifying that China has heeded the call to dump the dollar. Added is that China, the highest creditor to America is gradually selling off her credit in other to delink herself from American domineering influence.

In short the economic implications of current hegemonic struggles arising from increased restrictions of global trade and migration could hurt productivity and income. It will further ‘create high corporate and national debt..., declining profitability..., weak bank balance sheet..., tin policy buffer... and exchange rate instability and

capital flow reversal' (IMF, 2016). The debt accumulation of the contending nations at both domestic and foreign level is a testament to the above point. For instance US official debt stock is put at \$20.24 trillion while those of China is put at \$4.6 trillion as at 10th of November 2017 (National Debt Clock 2017; US Government Debt 2017). And the instability the above could create as Burrows and Harris (2009) noted will "heightened risk of conflict" which will profoundly affect the institutions saddled with the responsibility of ensuring peace and security in the system.

3.2 Institutional Implication of Hegemonic Struggles

Again some have contended that the Emerging Powers challenge to the status-quo has brought profound positive implications on global governance institutions. Some of such positive impact identified includes the facilitation of the democratization of global governance institutions like the UNSC, IMF and World Bank etc., entrenched a more open and inclusive selection process of the top management of IMF and World Bank (Eliot, 2014). Added is that the emergence of the BRICS have helped greatly in the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states as they were able to prevent forceful change of leadership in Syria through the veto of the resolution calling for international intervention in Syria. It has also facilitated the integration of China into the core of United Nations activities by the increase of her budgetary contribution from 3.2 percent to 5.0 percent amounting to \$140 million in 2015 and her participation in UN Peace Keeping Operations PKO. Stressing that China has over 3000 soldiers and police men deployed with the UN, placing it ninth by size among countries providing peacekeeping (Kegley 2011; Minerva 2012; The Economist 2015).

While acknowledging the merits in the above argument, it must be pointed out that the struggle for hegemony have had and continue to have adverse implications on global governance institutions, nation states, peace and security. Some of such implications are manifest in the lack of consensus between the US/Allies and the Emerging Powers on international response to the management of global peace and security. It has become obvious that any idea generated by the US/Allies on possible response to global challenge is often contradicted by the Emerging Powers. For instance the concept Responsibility to Protect R2P which received a global acclaim at inception has been challenged by the BRICS who have come up with two different versions of the same concept. While Brazil supports Responsibility While Protecting, China has developed the term Responsible Protection. Consequently, it has become impossible for the international community to respond in a coordinated manner to atrocious crime against humanity. For instance, though it was clear that Assad Syria engaged the use of chemical weapons against his own people, but lack of consensus among the US/Allies and the BRICS renders the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Syria of no effect due to the veto by Russia and China. As such the global community could not act boldly to save the oppressed citizens of Syria and since 2011 they are daily being killed with the whole world watching helplessly. But the great powers have intervened to pursue their parochial and selfish interest (Evans 2015; Minerva, 2012).

The implication of hegemonic struggle for the UN is that the principle of collective security as enshrined in the charter is under attack. All threat to peace which should be a common concern to all will continue to erode into a concern of self-interested parties. This will further alienate the people who trusted the UN institutions to salvage their situation. Therefore, they could be forced to taking laws into their own hands as a way of defending themselves, thereby complicating the security situation in the system.

The application of sanctions which is desirable to ensure that global norms are observed is being thrown into the dust. As rival groups back up aggressive regime, sanctions against such nations or regimes become ineffective thereby encouraging more aggression which ultimately erodes the peace and stability in the system. For instance the UN General Assembly Resolution (No 68/262) criticizing the Crimean referendum was rendered of no effect by the abstention of BRICS member states and ultimately facilitated the escalation of the Ukrainian crises. More also, Russia's veto on April 19, 2017 on UNSC resolution to address North Korea's missile test did not only embolden North Korea to carry out more test, it further escalated tension in the system (The Diplomat 2017).

Moreover, current hegemonic struggle tended to reify the principle of states' sovereignty and territorial integrity, thereby giving premium to national security as against human security. This implies that repressive and authoritarian regimes will be entrenched while democracy will be relegated to the background (Chaisy & Zhou, 2017). Note that democratic values are the bedrock of the UN system: the values of freedom, universalism and constitutionalism. In other words, if authoritarianism holds sway democracy will be relegated and if this be the case, the UN system which champions democratic values will also be relegated. Note that certain scholars from Chinese extraction are already denying the universality of constitutionalism, institutionalism and democratic rule of law. Arguing that they are rotten 'western ways' which cannot compete with 'Chinese culture of state governance' (Su 2013; Yang 2013). Consequently, hegemonic struggles could destabilize the efforts of the UN at

spreading democratic values, thereby entrenching authoritarianism which begets repression and more violence.

The failure of China to honor the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) by claiming the Spratly Island 1100 miles away from mainland China and the failure to abide by the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration that ruled in favor of the Philippines as the legitimate owner of the Island reveal that China is contemptuous of UN ideals of universalism and constitutionalism. More so the call for African countries to withdraw their membership of International Criminal Court ICC prove the extent to which current struggle is having its toll on the institutional arrangement of the system and could delegitimize the United Nations (Frykberg 2017).

Ultimately, a current hegemonic struggle is delegitimizing the United Nations to the extent of being termed ‘a toothless bulldog’. For instance the UNSC Draft Resolution S/2017/315 Article 1 which states among other things that it *Condemns in the strongest terms the reported use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular the attack on Khan Shaykhun reported on 4 April 2017, expresses its outrage that individuals continue to be killed and injured by chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and expresses its determination that those responsible must be held accountable...* was vetoed by Russia on the ground that it ‘designated the guilty party prior to an independent and objective investigation’(UNSC 2017). Several other resolutions including UNSC Resolutions S/2011/612, S/2012/77, S/2012/538, S/2014/348, S/2016/1026 and S/2016846 were all vetoed by Russia and China because most of these resolutions were sponsored by US/Allies. In the same vein most resolutions sponsored by Russia on the Middle East were often vetoed by the US/Allies especially when it touches on the Israeli question. By so doing the UN system that should be a vehicle for peaceful settlement of disputes has become an avenue for power play which renders the decision there from of no effect for ensuring peace and security (UNSC 2017).

3.3 Cyber Implications of Hegemonic Struggle

It has been argued that efforts by the BRICS to build alternative Fiber Optic cable could create greater access to international data network especially to landlocked countries and lower cost of data network. Scholars further contend that it will increase the speed of data exchange between Europe and Asia as one millisecond advantage could worth up to \$100 million a year as a result of shorter route. It has further been argued that the fiber optic cable is easier to repair compared to the subsea cable adding that it could also facilitate the reduction of inequalities. To the BRICS, it is a means of securing member states from cyber espionage that could originate from the US/Allies (Nadege, 2015).

Irrespective of the above benefit which alternative fiber optic cable offers, there are other implications that do not augur well for global peace, security and development. Some of which are “digital balkanization” of some parts of the world, increased cyber security threat or what Rumer, (2016) termed “Cyber war-the new ultimate weapon”, loss of revenue accruing from intellectual property rights and the erosion of trust and confidence even among supposed allies.

In the first place digital balkanization implies that while some part of the world could have unrestrained access, some other parts could have limited access to the internet and data flow. Such limitation of access may not be connected to lack of resources rather it could be due to governmental control. In other words, the initiative for alternative fiber optic cable is to ensure a state controlled access to the internet. The above point is clarified by the view of Jiang Zamin (2005) ‘...by letting our high tech companies in to bring the internet and the information revolution to China we will be unleashing forces that no totalitarian operation can control’. He forget the aphorism that says information is power, therefore denial of information, means denial of power.

Moreover, alternative fiber optic cable could increase cyber-crime and cyber espionage rather than mitigate it, bringing about the true enactment of the movie titled ‘The Matrix’ in the real sense of it. In the first place nations will begin to engage sophisticated technologies with the hope of breaking the security that such alternative measure offer. As efforts are made towards that direction, information could leak out to the targeted parties who in turn could retaliate in kind and the circle continues. In a study conducted by Rasserri (2017), he observed that industries and governments are first and second among the top ten targeted institutions by perpetrators of cyber-crime; as they recorded “26.8 percent and 11.9 percent respectively”. He noted further that among the motivations for cyber-attack, “cyber espionage and cyber war record 9.2 percent and 4.3 percent respectively”. These acts have adversely affected targeted countries leading to loss of revenue.

Gertz (2016) and others observed that China cyber espionage involved the theft of ‘11.65 terabytes-a unit of

computer memory or data equal to one million of sensitive proprietary data from major US software companies by China's ministry of state Security.' He added that such attacks were targeted at the 'Army Information System Engineering Command..., the defense Information System Agency..., the National Ocean System Center and the Army Space and Strategic Defense Installations' (Gertz, 2016; Nakashima, 2013). Though China denied ever getting involved in such an attack, the revelations of Edward Snowden proved that Chinese data theft totaled up to 50 terabytes or five times the holding of the Library of Congress (Washington Post 2015; Gertz 2016).

On the other hand, Snowden's revelation proves how much the US has engaged in cyber espionage even against her supposed allies. The implication of such revelations is profound and shaping the policies of friends and foes alike. One of such is the breakdown of trust and straining of the relationship between the US and her allies (Wallenstein, 2013). Consequent upon the above, the European law makers have issued a threat to abandon data sharing agreement with the US and it delayed the negotiation on the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) (Kreissl & Wright 2013)

It further resulted in the decline of sales of some American products like CISCO to China and the tagging of some others like Apple I-phone as security threat to China. As such the US has lost business opportunities to the tune of between \$25 and \$100 billion annually (Nakashima, 2013). Russia on the other hand has replaced Intel system with Russian Baikal processor and Google's plan to work with Indian election officials was cancelled". The recent revelation of Russia's hacking into the US Democratic Party data base and turn of the tide of the US presidential election in favor of the Republicans and the subsequent expelling of Russian Diplomats from Washington attest to the implication of cyber espionage. (Mazzetti & Goldman, 2016). The above cyber implications have great bearing on the nations under study in relation to their strategic calculations and implications in the system.

3.4 Strategic Implications of Hegemonic Struggles

It has been contended by both scholars and defense planners world over that defense strategies have overall positive implications for the security and prosperity of nations. Some of such implications identified are that, it enhances the protection of national interest such as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. It boast national power and global influence; it enhances the economic capabilities of states as some technology serve civilians purposes; it help to secure peace by deterring aggression; it facilitates the achievement of international objectives; it enhances diplomacy and alliances and boast credibility and influence in the world ; it further helps to reassure allies against adversaries; it strengthens national morale and facilitate quick victory in the events of war (Krepinevich, 2017; Inboden, 2016; Dorman & Wilkinson 2015; US National Defense Strategy 2012;).

The above listed benefits of strategic measures while capturing some essential elements of defense strategies, failed to acknowledge the fact that some dangerous implications are imbedded in every defense strategy. Such implications could be discussed within the purview of alliance formation, increased defense expenditure, deterrence and crisis bargaining. First of all, alliance could be seen as "a formal or informal commitment for security cooperation between two or more states intended to augment each member's power, security and influence". In other words, alliance help states to increase their mutual military capabilities (Walt, 2009; Kegley et al 2011). Irrespective of the benefits accruable from membership of an alliance, it also has very dangerous implications for states involved and the global community at large. Such implications are well articulated by (Weitzman, 2004 & Kegley & Blanton 2011).

Prominent among such implications includes the fact that 'it threatens enemies and provoke counter alliance', it 'stimulate resentment and envy on the part of friends who are outside the alliance and not eligible to benefit from it'; it 'weakens a state's capacity to influence others by decreasing the number of additional partner with which it can align'; it 'entangle states in dispute with their allies enemies'; it 'preserve existing rivalries' and ultimately facilitate war rather than deter it.

A closer consideration of the above implications reveals that they are already playing out in the current struggle. For instance the expansion of NATO into the eastern part of Europe provoked Russia into an alliance with China in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization SCO as a counterweight to NATO. The implication is that of increased danger of escalation of conflict into crises as allies will do all to assure their members of their commitment to be by their side should there be any form of aggression. The preemptive deployment of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) troop to Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania is to demonstrate such solidarity. (International Institute of Strategic Studies IISS, 2016; Mearsheimer, 2016). Should Russia counter such deployment with retaliatory measures, war becomes inevitable. Moreover, alliance stimulates envy, for instance the decision by

US European allies to join the China led AIIB aroused envy and suspicion in the US to the extent of sponsoring espionage against them. Subsequent revelation of such activities strained the relationship of the US/Allies to a breaking point with threat of retaliatory measures.

Furthermore, increase in defense expenditure is another strategy to boost the capabilities of states to securing her vital interest, but this also have some adverse implications on the health of the economy and a resurgence of arm race. From the economic angle it has been observed that countries that allocate much resources to the defense sector, inadvertently neglect the agricultural and productive sectors of the nation's economy. For instance, whereas Russia has a total of 17,098, 242 square kilometer land area, 7.5 percent are arable; out of the 7.5 percent arable land, only 69.5 agricultural machinery is allocated per 1000 square kilometer (World Bank Data 2014; World Fact Sheet 2015). On the other hand, Russia has committed 5.4 percent of her GDP to defense spending; the US/Allies are responding in kind by the directive to all NATO member states to shore up their defense expense to 2 percent of their GDP (NATO 2016). The implication is that the opportunity cost of increase in defense expenditure is the expenditure in the productive economic sector that is forgone. It further implies limited job opportunities and slow down of the global economy (Perlo-Freeman 2016).

Again, increase in defense expenditure implies that other states will be forced to do the same signaling another round of arm race reminiscent of the Cold War era and reenacting the realist concept of 'security dilemma'. This explains why Putin (2015) observed that the production of high precision systems with one nation having a clear military advantage will ensure the disruption of strategic parity and destabilization in the system as other nations attempts to catch up.

From the above, Putin acknowledged the US/Allies are at advantage in high precision systems which needs to be closed down, he further acknowledged the dangerous implication of getting involved in the process of closing the gap. Nevertheless, since it is a game nations' play, they play on. Apart from the fact that China and Russia are increasing their military capabilities to catch up with those of the US/Allies, other regional neighbors are doing the same. For instance Japan is financing the construction of 'ten new Coast Guards for the Philippines and Six for Vietnam...the Philippines have signed a new defense pact that would allow America to return to its former base in Subic Bays as well as other bases' (The Economist 2015). In other words increase in defense spending could lead to the proliferation of advance weapons system coupled with the dangers of such weapons getting into the hands of terrorists thereby escalating rather than deescalating global tension and insecurity.

Nation states in position of strategic advantage use such to influence other actors in the system with the hope of deterring them from taking any course of action considered counterproductive to the interest of the preponderant power. Although deterrence is about the use of threat rather than actual application of force; such threat must be credible, well communicated and the nation issuing it must have the capability to enforce it should the target country take it for granted (Agbu & Dokubo, 2006). The attempt by rival powers to ignore the deterrence posture of its opponent degenerates into crisis bargaining which in other words is about competition in risk taking. And it emphasizes the ability of a state to convince its opponent that it is prepared to tolerate greater risk with the aim of compelling such an opponent to give up a particular course of action. For this study therefore, it is clear that efforts at deterrence on either side of the divide have degenerated into crisis bargaining. For instance an attempt by the US/Allies to deter Russia from aggression against Ukraine through sanction for the annexation of the Crimea, rather than deter Russia degenerated into crisis bargaining with Russia stepping up further to take Eastern Ukraine, thereby proving to the US/Allies that Russia is prepared to tolerate greater risk. In the same vein, as US threatens to disarm North Korea, Russian officials have authorized the mobilization of troops to the North Korean Border as a way of telling Washington that Russia is prepared to tolerate greater risk should the US take a unilateral action against North Korea (The Diplomat 2017). The advocates of such strategic doctrines of crisis bargaining and escalation forget the possibility of accident. For instance it has been reported that the latest missile tests conducted by North Korea landed in waters claimed by Japan as its Exclusive Economic Zone; should Japan interpret such as a violation of her territorial integrity and respond in kind, it could spark off great power war as China and Russia whose support North Korea is counting on will not be silent if the US/Allies declares war on North Korea.

Moreover the publication of the ADIZ and the production of A2-AD munitions by China are strategic measures to deter the US from having overwhelming influence in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea and to project China's power in the region. But the US has proven to China that it can tolerate greater risk by the deployment of naval ship to the region and the development of new weapons to break through China's A-2 AD capabilities and assure allies in the region that they can count on her (The Economist 2015; Osawa 2013).

Such risk taken has further been escalated by the US assisted European Missile Defense System and South Korean deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system. China/ Russia's protest against such defense system is a proof that they are in full support of North Korea; especially when consideration is given to the fact that effort at sanctioning North Korea whose weapons are offensive has been vetoed by Russia; yet the same China and Russia are sternly against defensive weapon being installed by South Korea. (The Diplomat 2017; Xia, 2016). The above could further heighten global arm race with regional neighbors moving beyond the production of defensive weapons to the production of offensive weapons system.

Added to the above is that current hegemonic struggles has brought about the resurgence of proxy wars reminiscent of the cold war era. The two super powers who failed to agree on collective security approach to solving the Syrian debacle have intervened based on their parochial interest. Unfortunately rather than help the situation, it has succeeded in compounding the security challenge in Syria. For instance Nebehay (2018), noted that report from UN war crime investigators indicted "Russian on attack that hit a market killing at least 84 people and injuring 150 in Atareb, ... "this attack may amount to the war crime' He added that U.S.-led coalition strikes on a school near Raqqa in March 2017 killed 150 residents'. Apart from that, the increasing danger of accident is likely between the great powers as is has been reported that US air strikes have killed dozens of Russian fighters in Syria.

3.5 Geopolitical/Neo-neo-imperial Implications of Hegemonic Struggle

The geopolitical/neo-neo-imperialistic implications of hegemonic struggle is the most profound and dangerous implication on peace and security arising from current struggles for hegemony. As earlier said, it has to do with the impact of geopolitical measures adopted by contending nations. Some of such geopolitical designs are the (ADIZ), (A2 AD), (AIIB), OBOR initiative, Eurasian Economic Integration, territorial aggrandizement on the part of China and Russia; and the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), NATO and European Union expansionist policies, the (THAAD) system of the US/Allies (International Institute of Strategic Studies IISS 2016; Xia Tao 2016; Mearsheimer 2016). But our emphasis here shall be on the OBOR and territorial/geopolitical drive by the contending nations.

First and foremost, the OBOR as a geopolitical design was initiated by President Xi Jinping of China in 2013; it stresses infrastructural interconnectivity between and among states within the region. It covers investment in road, rail, ports, and Ariel infrastructure; including facilities such as power grids, energy, pipelines and high speed fiber optic cable (Chaisy & Zhou 2017; Chinese National Development Reform Commission: Vision and Action on Joint Building of Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st century Maritime Belt 2013).

It has been argued by scholars that such geopolitical measure could 'stimulate greater stability and foster inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth... stimulate greater cooperative efforts and political will among states to address regional hazards for mutual interest... and provide potential cooperation opportunities for EU and China in the realm of human security and development'. They further contended that such a geopolitical design could help in the maintenance of 'global equilibrium' (Ghaisy & Zaou-SIPRI, 2017; Tianxin, 2016; Elliot, 2014).

However, Ghaisy & Zaou (2017) was quick to point out that such geopolitical grand design could 'exacerbate governance problem in central and Southeast Asia due to the corruption it may entrench through the perpetuation of authoritarian regime', thereby sustaining instability in the region. Besides, they noted that it could further 'intensify historic competition over influence in South Asia'.

Although the positive and partly some negative implications of the OBOR initiative was well articulated by the above scholars, but the study contends that it fails to identify how such measure affects the US/Allies global leadership position. Therefore, the study contends that the infrastructural embellished initiative is a covering cast to hide China's grand geopolitical design to dominate Eurasia and project power from there to the global stage. The above assertion is reinforced by the view of Chaisy & Zhou (2017) that such policy 'is driven by China's national interest: economic, diplomatic, financial and geopolitical'.

The above is made clearer by Tianxin (2016), when he stated that 'the New Silk Road Project reflects how China seek to position itself internationally...in Eurasia we are seeking to provide equilibrium...where not one single major country in Eurasia have dominance'. The above, points to the fact that the OBOR rather than be an altruistic project is a grand design to curtail the influence of the US/Allies in Eurasia. This is to pave the way for China who is prepared to make available \$900 billion for the initiative to have dominance in the region; as the countries benefiting from such Chinese led initiatives will have no option but to show allegiance and loyalty to China their benefactor. So, as the Marshal Aid Plan gave the US influence over her West European allies, so will

OBOR give China influence over Eurasia. Subsequently, the OBOR could keep Eurasia out of US orbit into the orbit of China and Russia. On the other hand, the US/Allies may not fold their hands and permit such to happen; and in devising strategies to prevent such from happening, major conflict could ensue and if not well managed could eventually lead to a global war.

In the second place, revisionism and territorial aggrandizement or what could be termed the emergence of empires with effective occupation could result from such struggle. Although it has been argued that ‘two levels of hierarchy’-economic hierarchy led by China and security hierarchy led by the US- exist in Asia; and that such levels of hierarchy could only promote cooperation between the major powers rather than conflict; since, in their view China has ‘no territorial ambition’, ‘political ideology’ and ‘reason to change the economic order it benefits from’ (Ikenberry, 2014; Manning, 2013; White, 2013). But the above argument ignores the possibility of China using her soft power to project its hard power. Brooke & Wohforth, (2016) noted that ‘Beijing has used its new wealth to attract friends, deter enemies, modernize its military and aggressively assert sovereignty claim in its periphery’. The above manifest itself in the policy posture that China has adopted, for instance the ADIZ, A2AD, AIIB, OBOR etc. The aim being to deny the US/Allies free operation in the region and the imposition of her will within the areas it sees as her sphere of influence.

Mearsheimer (2016), buttressed the above point thus: ‘an increasing powerful China is likely to attempt to push the United States out of Asia much the way the United States pushed European powers out of the western hemisphere’. Once China succeeds in pushing the US out of the region, it will begin to lord it over her regional neighbors and ultimately be tempted to expand her territories by effective occupation. The fact that China is laying claim to series of territories in the region –the Spratly Island, the Senkaku and reefs and atolls of the South China Sea etc. (The Economist July 2015), renders the argument that China has no territorial ambition inconsequential; and reinforces the view that hegemonic struggles could lead to revisionism.

Ikenberry (2014) and others ignore the view that China’s growth in power and influence could ultimately lead to the reunification of Taiwan with mainland China. The former Chinese president Hu Jintao had stated in 2007 that ‘the two sides of the straits are bound to be reunified in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’. In Mearsheimer (2016) view ‘nationalism as well as realist logic give China powerful incentives to put an end to Taiwan’s de-facto independence and make it part of reunified China’. In line with the above view, China had in 2000 outlined the condition upon which force will be used against Taiwan, they include the following:-

If foreign forces invade Taiwan
If there is clear act of separation and
If the Taiwan authorities refuse to negotiate forever
(Nigeria/China: A Dialogue on Bilateral Ties 2005).

It has been argued that in a situation of China’s forcible reunification of Taiwan with the mainland, Taiwan will be helpless since ‘Washington is not obliged by treaty to come to the defense of Taiwan if it is attacked by China or anyone else’ (Mearsheimer 2016). The above argument stems from the work of Thucydides on the Peloponnesian War (the Milean Dialogue), the key part of the dialogue that relates to our analysis states that ‘the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept’ (Tim Dunn & C. Schmidt 2008).

Nevertheless, the study argues that the strong don’t always have their way; the Milean dialogue which most realist scholars anchor their argument failed to tell the outcome of the Peloponnesian war. Indeed the outcome showed that Athens could not subjugate the Milo because they were able to obtain help from Sparta another great power with which Athens was humiliated in defeat. If Milo could get help from a great power, it implies that should China forcibly annex Taiwan, powers like the US may likely come to her aid. Although it has been argued that Taiwan is not into an alliance with the US, but if recent invasion of Kuwait by Iraq is anything to go by, even without a formal alliance, Taiwan could be aided by the US considering the special relationship between the two from the onset. So, as Athenian troops and the Iraqi forces could not subjugate their weaker neighbors due to outside help, so may it be impossible for China to succeed in subjugating Taiwan considering the possibility of US assistance to Taiwan which is reinforced by the recent \$1.42 billion arm sale deal between the US and Taiwan. But the key is that China will be tempted to take Taiwan by force as she becomes predominant in the region and the US/Allies may not be silent in such an occasion, the result could be great instability in the entire world.

Furthermore, such revisionist policies and empire building approach has become evident in the policy posture of

Putin Russia; and such policy posture is reminiscent of Adolf Hitler grand design which has to do with the reversal of what they called the ‘unjust verdict of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference that implied the recovery of all German speaking region of central Europe’ (Keylor, 2006). The strategies adopted by Hitler towards the realization of his objectives correspond with the strategies being adopted by Putin towards greater Russia. For instance Hitler warned that he regards Franco/Soviet alliance as a threat to German security; in the same vein Putin has warned that NATO eastward expansion is a threat to Russian security. Consequently, as France ratified her alliance with the Soviet Union, Hitler annexed the Rhineland. Similarly, following the negotiations on possible Ukraine membership of the EU Putin effectively occupied the Crimean region after organizing a flawed referendum like Hitler did in his bid to the annexation of Austria. Putin’s role in Eastern Ukraine is also closely related to the role played by Hitler in Czechoslovakia. In all these, European powers in a bid to avoid another war appeased Hitler by failing to intervene on behalf of subjugated people; in the same way western powers have not been able to come up with effective policy to deter Putin and force Russia to relinquish annexed territories.

Consequently, the study argues that Putin may be tempted to take more territories especially as Russian speaking citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are calling for reunification with greater Russia (Lanoszka, 2016). At such provocations, the US/Allies may not be able to hold their peace, considering their treaty obligations. Subsequently, an attempt by those nations to assert their independence against revisionism on the part of Russia in the hope that their allies will be of help could create instability in the region which in other words could lead to a 3rd World War in the same way Hitler’s territorial drive led to the Second World War. So whereas, all the other implications could be negotiated to avoid a major catastrophe, geopolitical implications bordering on territorial acquisitions and ownership are core interest of states and states are ready to go to war to protect it.

Besides, such geopolitical designs could lead to what the study terms **neo-neo-imperialism**: a double edged imperialism that placed the dominated in-between the two dominant imperialists (the Western and Sino/Russian imperialists) with active collaboration of the comprador class. Igwe, (2013) while commenting on the BRICS in his piece Africa in the Second Phase of Slavery comparatively placed Washington Consensus (Structural Adjustment Programme) and Beijing Consensus (Commitment to innovation/experimentation, wealth distribution and stress on Sovereignty) in perspective. By so doing, he was able to point out that China took a different part to development and liberalization and urged that Africa should do the same. Stressing further that Africa should do all to shake off the vestiges of western imperialism rather than contracting new imperial structures. But he failed to underscore the point that since Washington Consensus help in the entrenchment of western imperialism, Beijing consensus could also lead to the entrenchment of Sino/Russian imperialism, thereby bringing about the second phase of slavery as his title suggest. The fact that Africa has become a dumping ground for substandard Chinese products and Russia’s annexation of the Crimea/eastern Ukraine add currency to the above view. This could explain why Bond (2013) referred to the BRICS as ‘sub-imperialists’, noting that China’s economic projects has resulted in overcapacity in the steel sector and the closure of Evras Highveld and Arcelor Mittal leading steel producers in South Africa.

Though it has been argued that China has advanced infrastructural aid to African countries for development purposes, but such aid are not without strings attached. For instance the \$4 billion loan to Angola facilitated the oil exploitation right granted to Chinese oil companies and the mining rights in DR Congo secured by China Rail Way group was tied to loan from China, Sun, (2014). According to Yang Tei, ‘when we provide Africa assistance of RMB1 billion we get service contract worth USD1billion from Africa’ (quoted in Sun, 2014). The above suggest that China’s aid to Africa is not altruistic but a neo-neo-imperial design as western aid is perceived.

On the other hand, the entrenchment of neo-neo-imperialism has become evident in the new defense pact signed between the Philippines and the US and the call for the latter to return to their old military bases. Moreover the building of missile defense systems in South Korea, parts of Eastern Europe and the establishment of new command structures like African Command by the US goes a long way to explain the extent to which neo-neo-imperialism is being entrenched by current hegemonic struggles. And in no distant time these same nations will be devoting funds in campaign for these neo-neo-imperial structures to be dismantled.

Conclusion

The study was on the efforts of the Emerging Powers especially China and Russia aimed at altering the hegemonic role the US/Allies have played since the end of the Second World War. Its emphasis was on the possible implications of such a struggle from economic, institutional, cyber, strategic and geopolitical/neo-neo imperial angles.

The study discovered that the struggle is slowing down global economic growth, increasing unemployment and

poverty, coupled with exchange rate volatility, creation of multiple currency blocs/currency war; delegitimizing the United Nations through unilateral national actions; threatening the cyber space and national cyber infrastructure; creating counter alliance formations, increased arm race leading to the economic problem of the forgone alternative (Pirlo-Freeman 2016); and deterrence policies/crisis bargaining that could lead to miscalculation and war. It has produced geopolitical territorial revisionism in Eastern Europe/Asia and further producing neo-neo imperial impact that have seen the resurgence of imperial military and economic super structures in territories beyond the territorial spheres of the great powers. The study concludes that the current struggle is gradually reordering the structural arrangement of the international system and that its implications beyond what has been seen will be profound holding a very bleak future for global peace and security.

From the institutional sphere, the researchers conclude that the UN Charter and international law is key to ensuring global peace and security since all the contending nations called upon their opponents to adhere to international law and the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. On the geopolitical sphere the researcher concludes that the struggle is playing out more in Asia and Eastern Europe, stressing that geopolitical struggle for territorial revisionism is most critical for peacefulness or otherwise of the international system. While the neo-neo imperial super structures being entrenched by the great powers may be expedient for now, it will demand great resources from the host nations in no distant time to dismantle.

To mitigate the above listed implications, the article recommends that the core and foundational principles of the United Nations of collective security be upheld and that the UN be recognized as the global sovereign with all the paraphernalia of power to function as the global leader to guarantee the public goods of security and with ability to sanction free riders/aggressors. This will go a long way to limit global arm race/security dilemma thereby eliminating the possibility of accident and war.

Second, the New Development Bank and Contingency Reserve Arrangement created by the BRICS should be integrated into existing global governance institutions of International Monetary Fund IMF and World Bank with capital base raised to between \$15 and \$25 trillion. This will ensure liquidity of the international financial system and enhance the ability of these institutions to function as the global lender of last resort or the bankers' bank in times of global economic crises. And the said institutions should be reformed to ensure equity in voting rights or what could be termed **participation-equilibrium** in the determination of the appointment of top management staff of the institutions.

The democratic ideals of human rights, legalism, constitutionalism and universalism should continually be promoted with greater vigor as a way of putting the principles of human security in the front burner thereby laying less stress on national security, a concept that has led ruthless statesmen to carry out dastard acts against their fellow countrymen. Forgetting that without the human elements nation states are empty geographical space and leaders cannot lead empty geographical space. No wonder it is said in our local parlance that 'a king without followers is like a tree attempting to make a forest'.

Constitutionalism, universalism and legalism helps in the accommodation of diversity which has been the spice of our world; through the above listed concepts conflicts could easily be resolved diplomatically and through judicial procedures; therefore nation states should support the functionality of already established legal institutions of the International Court of Justice, the International Court of Arbitration and the International Criminal Court to ensure that the sanctity of the human person irrespective of culture, race and tribe is respected world over and that the procedures of redressing any form of abuse is effective.

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