NIGERIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT

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ABSTRACT

The study evaluated the content and substance of Dr. Kofi Annan's United Nations Reforms and Nigeria's chances at securing one of the two Security Council's seats allocated to Africa. We noted, inter alia, that the use and abuse of veto by the five permanent members of the Security Council have made the world more uncertain, unsafe and dangerous. We observed that the "big five" have consistently used their control of the veto to commit acts of alienation, suppression and deprivation thereby incensing hostility and irreconcilable antagonism among states. These manifest in form of extreme aggressive behaviour, interpreted by the Western powers, as terrorism. The reform initiated by the UN Secretary – General was aimed at democratising the Security Council and enhancing global peace and security. In Africa, Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt are the major contenders for the two slots. At the end of our investigation, we noted that there is growing international conspiracy against Nigeria. However, available indices favour Nigeria's candidature and calls for greater commitment and sincerity on the part of political leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Organization is an international organization, which succeeded the League of Nations. As correctly noted by Eke (2000:235), two historical events principally accounted for the establishment of the Organization. These events were World War I and the World War 11. While the World War 1 explicitly led to the establishment of the League of Nations, the failure of the league to avert the World War 11 amply precipitated the formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945.

Specifically, the UN was established in 1945 to pursue the objectives stated below:
1.   To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

2.   To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small.

3.   To maintain justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law.

4.   To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom (Deutsch, 1978:216).

Basically, the United Nations was established to enhance world peace, entrench harmonious interdependence and promote collective development among constituent states. The dream of the founders is to create a condition that would promote unity and progress, peace and security of human and material wealth of nations irrespective of size. To underscore the above, Karl Deutsch observes that among the goals, which preoccupy individuals and governments, the broadest and most common is security (Ibid: 211).

The primary organ of the United Nations charged with maintaining and enforcing global peace and security is the Security Council. At the inception of the UN in 1945, the Security Council was membered by the Allied Powers- the United States, Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). France and China were later admitted as members. The admission of China into the council was a celebrated case in a vote described by George W. Bush, the then American Ambassador to the United Nations as a "moment of infamy (Drummey, 1991:143). It was not until 1963, that the Security Council was enlarged to include the ten elective non-permanent members.

Over the years, some member nations had demonstrated gross discontents over the exclusivist and elitist stance of the five permanent members in the execution of collective security. This had prompted several reforms, which were never implemented. The idea was to democratize the Security Council and enhance greater and balanced representation by constituent regions. The most recent of these reforms was initialed by the UN Secretary General Dr. Kofi Annan. In the Report submitted by a High Level Panel in December 2003, members proposed a new vision of collective security that expanded the Security Council to twenty-four with equitable regional representation. In this study, we shall x-ray the content and substance of this reform with a view to ascertaining the suitability or otherwise of Nigeria's candidature for a permanent seat in the Security Council.

METHODOLOGY

Most scholarly works on International Institutions and Organizations are generally within the analytic purview of functionalism. Such studies are

our understanding of the laws of motion; why reform of the UN had remained largely perfunctory, superficial and illusive.

Moreover, the analytic frame enabled us to understand the internal and external dynamics that condition inter-state struggle for permanent seat bid at the Security Council by African States, and Nigeria in particular.

Much of the data we used in the study were extracts from textbooks, Internet materials. United Nation's Publications, and data from other international agencies and institutions, as well as self-report technique.

THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The security council is composed of five permanent members: China, France, Russia; the United Kingdom and the United States, and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms and not eligible for immediate re-election (see chapter V, Articles 23 of the UN Charter).

Primarily, the Security Council has the responsibility for maintaining peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN. Indeed, the Security Council is really the centre of UN disciplinary activities; while the General Assembly remains a seemingly compelling advisory body, the Security Council sees to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, both Security Council and the General Assembly, voting independently, elect the judges of the international court of justice. Again on a Security Council recommendation the General Assembly appoints the Secretary-General.

From the composition of its membership, the Security Council five non-permanent members are elected from Africa and Asian States, one from Eastern European states, two Latin American states and two from Western European and other states. In fact the distribution leaves Africa with just three non-permanent members. On the question of procedure, a decision is reached by an affirmative vote of nine members especially when such matter is not substantive issue. Indeed it requires the affirmative vote of nine members and these must include the concurring votes of five permanent members if the issue under contention is a substantive matter. It is often referred to as the rule of "great unanimity". Africa remains one of the continents without a permanent member in the Security Council. The presidency of the council is held monthly in turn by members in English alphabetical order. For details of membership and presidency of the Security Council in 2005 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Membership and Presidency of the Security Council in 2005

Month	Presidency	Membership Term/Ends
January	Argentina	31 December 2006
February	Benin	31 December 2005
March	Brazil	31 December 2005
April	China	Permanent member
May	Denmark	31 December 2006
June	France	Permanent member
July	Greece	31 December 2006
August	Japan	31 December 2006
September	Philippines	31 December 2005
October	Romania	31 December 2005
November	Russian Federation	Permanent member
December	United Kingdom	Permanent member
	United Republic of Tanzania	31 December 2006
	United States	Permanent member
	Algeria	31 December 2005

Source: United Nations Reform Debates
http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/debateindex.htm

The present structure does not favour the developing states. In fact the powerful veto- wielding permanent members dominate UN policy and frequently veto widely accepted decisions to further their own interests. We shall turn our attention to the issue subsequently.

The Use of Veto and International Security: Most member States had demonstrated great dissent over exclusive use of veto by the five permanent members in the Security Council. Since the drafting of the UN charter in 1945, a few states had persistently called for the democratization of the Security Council and use of veto. Indeed the persisting veto threat and the actual veto use rather made the world more unsafe and volatile. Under the UN charter, member states had agreed to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. Hence only the council has the power to take decisions, which member states are obligated under the charter to obey.

Basking in this unlimited power, the permanent members, during the cold war era, flaunted and brandished their prerogative publicly in council meetings. In fact between 1946 and 1989, a total of 199 vetoes were cast by members (see, http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/membership/veto/veto subj.htm). This naturally prevented the council from taking action on many important matters. However, between 1990 and March 2004, the formal use of veto had diminished dramatically, with only 17 vetoes cast. For details of the changing patterns in the use of the veto in the Security Council (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of Times Veto was Cast by Country

Period	China	France	Britain	US	USSR/ Russia	Total
Total	4-5	18	32	80	122	257
2004	-	-		2	1	3
2003	-	-	-	2	-	2
2002	-	-	-	2	-	2
2001	-	-	-	2	-	2
2000	-	-	-	-	-	0
1999	-	-	-	-	-	1
1998	-	-	-	-	-	0
1997	-	-	-	2	-	3
1996	-	-	-	-	-	0
1986-95	-	3	8	24	2	37
1976-1985	-	9	11	34	6	60
1966-1975	2	2	10	12	7	33
1956-1965	-	2	3	-	26	31
1946-1955	(1*)	2	-	-	80	83

Source: compiled by GPF and Giji Gya from the UN Information.

Between 1946 and 1971, the Chinese seat on the Security Council was occupied by the Republic of China (Taiwan), which used the veto only once (to bloc Mongolia's application for membership in 1955). One pertinent point to note is that only a minority of vetoes was cast in cases where vital international security issues were at stake. Although the post-cold war order has witnessed dramatic reduction in the number of vetoes used the permanent members have continued to pressure the Security Council through a "hidden" veto. This refers to the quiet threat of possible veto use. This is normally used in closed-door consultations, where members are compelled and/or "convinced" to shift their position to specific end to the detriment of the international public.

As was empirically noted in the United Nations Reform Debates, the permanent members use their hidden veto to control the council's agenda and prevent the council from taking up certain issues. Infact the council never discusses crises that a permanent member considers to be within its own exclusive sphere of interest. For instance, Chechnya, Tibet, Xinjiang, Northern Ireland, Sudan, Uganda, and Columbia figure among the forgotten conflicts that the council ignored. Moreover the Security Council never debated colonial wars and cold war conflicts. The same situation applied to the Algerian war or the partitioning of India because of the hidden vetoes of France and the United Kingdom. Equally, the council kept the U.S. involvement in Vietnam or the Soviet war in Afghanistan off the agenda of the council. Worse still, even when items pass through their "censorship" and

citizens from avoidable catastrophe-from mass murder, from large-scale loss of life and rape, from starvation. But when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states.

Nonetheless, the above points to the inability and / or unwillingness of the Security Council to perform its primary role of enhancing international peace and security. Moreover, the growing incidence of state-sponsored terrorism further made the world unsafe. Indeed the post cold war order has witnessed remarkable use of terrorist organizations to promote state interests in the international domain. As vividly stated in an article "State-Sponsored Terrorism" http://www.ict.org.oil/interter/frame.htm:

> In some cases, states have established "puppet" terrorist organizations, whose purpose is to act on b ehalf of the sponsoring state, to further the interests of the states, and to represent its positions in domestic or regional fronts. The patron state provides its beneficiary terrorist organization w ith political s upport, financial assistance, and the sponsorship necessary to maintain and expand its struggle.

Indeed it was the conviction of the President Bush led US government that the September 11 2001 terrorist attack was state-sponsored hence the pre-emptive attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. The most disturbing situation is that some permanent members of the Security Council are engulfed in internal acrimony and bickering occasioned largely by unilateral decision by the US to invade Iraq. Although President Bush had extended an olive branch to France, Russia and China, the international climate is still hazy as the permanent members are yet to find answer to the ongoing attempt by North Korea and Iran to develop nuclear capabilities. Perhaps, it was the growing global insecurity that necessitated the press release number GA/10334 by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to the General Assembly on 21 March 2005 outlining ambitious plan for United Nations Reform. In the Document, the secretary General proposed comprehensive strategy which he noted "gives equal weight and attention to the three great purposes of these organizations: development, security and human rights, all of w hich m ust be underpinned by the rule of law". We shall be concerned basically with issue of security.

Paragraph 246 of the Excerpt of High Level Panel's Report remarked that since the end of the cold war, the effectiveness of the council has improved but noted that the council has not always been equitable in its actions, nor has it acted consistently or effectively in the face of genocide or other atrocities. This, the Report noted, has gravely damaged its creditability. Thus, as highlighted in the Report, the challenge for any reform is to increase both the effectiveness and the creditability of the Security Council and, most

Table 3: Model A Voting Pattern in the UN

Regional Area	No of Seats	Permanent Seats (Continuing)	Proposed new permanent seats	Proposed 2-year seats (non-renewable	Total
Africa	53	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pacific	56	1	2	3	6
Europe	47	3	1	1	6
Americans	35	1	1	4	6
Totals	191	5	6	13	24

Source: UN High Level Panels Report on Threats, Challenges and Change, December 2, 2004.

Table 4: Model B Voting Pattern in the UN

Regional Area	No of seats	Permanent seats (continuing)	Proposed new permanent seats	Proposed 2-year seats (non-renewable)	Total
Africa	53	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pacific	56	1	2	3	6
Europe	47	3	2	1	6
Americans	35	1	2	3	6
Total	191	5	8	11	24

Source: UN High Level Panel's Report on Threats, Challenges and Change, December 2, 2004.

The committee which compromised 15 foreign ministers of 15 African countries was also mandated to consider the two options relating to the reform of the UN Security Council taking into account the African common position contained in the Harare Assembly Declaration of 1997; developments on the international scene since the adoption of the Harare Declaration; and the essence of the long debate held in the executive council on January 28, 2005 (Adoba and Nwekeh in *This-day* February 1 2005).

In the long run, Nigeria's preference for two permanent seats under option A prevailed. The next stage, which is more crucial, is for member states of AU to decide which two African states should bid for the slots. So far the AU has agreed to set up a committee to vet candidate states at the AU summit scheduled in Libya in July 2005. However the choice must conform with the criteria listed not only in the UN Charter, but in Kofi Annan reform package. This includes political capability, economic capability and military capability. The critical question is, does Nigeria really have a bright chance of claiming one of the slots?

Following the reform, Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa have indicated interests along with Algeria, Libya, Kenya and Senegal in the UN Security Council seats. However, the frontliners remain the first three states. When the three criteria are applied in assessing the suitability of Nigeria,

Table 5: Population size, wealth, contribution to UN peacekeeping operations and other supports

Country	Population rank	Population size (millions)	GNP rank	PKO Trp. Cont. Rank	Assessment payment timeliness
Egypt	16	64	34	34	Fair
Nigeria	10	104	52	39	Fair
South Africa	26	42	24	None	Good

Source: culled from Ellen Paine, 2004, United Nations Reforms Debates. http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/debateindex.htm

Assessment payment timeliness criteria were; Good - pays on time; Fair - does not pay on time but pays within the budget year and no major outstanding debt. Poor - does not pay within the budget year and major outstanding debts.

Therefore, with the largest black population in the world and favorable PKO, Nigeria stands a very good chance of securing a slot. However, the political will must be strengthened and other adverse socio-economic parameters must be corrected. As correctly noted by Akinyemi (2005) Nigeria is a civilian government and not a democratic government. Free election is fundamentally illusive and available socio-economic development indices still suggest that Nigeria is still in the woods flaunting primodiality and reeling on corrupt practices. Nothing can be furthered from an objective reality.

However, the growing international pressure from the United States of America, China and Russia appears to be dashing the hopes of Africa to occupy the two permanent seats, though without vetoes. These countries had been campaigning against the reforms. The US government for example was recently quoted as saying that expanding membership of the Security Council to twenty-four will make the organ lose its essence and relevance. The pressure is mounting and perhaps, these countries may decide to use once again the "hidden veto" to make the reforms still born; and hence sustain the rigid stance of the Security Council.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the proposed UN reforms and its implications for global security. We also evaluated Nigeria's chances at securing one of the two slots assigned to Africa in the reform proposal. We noted among others that the Security Council as presently constituted is generally rigid and accountable largely to the "Great Powers". Moreover, we observed that the five permanent members of the Security Council maximize the use of the veto to

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