

AKSU Journal of Social Sciences (AKSUJOSS)
ISSN: 2504 – 933X
Vol.4,No.2 (September) 2024,pp.86-94
DOI:https://doi.org/10.61090/aksujoss.202.022
URL: htpp://www.aksujournal.com/vol.4.2

Received: **12th May, 2024**
Accepted: 11th **August, 2024**
Published online: **1st September, 2024**

Analyzing the Paradigms Shift in United Nations Collective Security in the 21st Century

Asuquo O. Anwana
Department of History and International Studies
Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria
asuquoanwana@aksu.edu.ng

Peter Sunday Equere
Department of History and International Studies
Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria
peterequere@aksu.edu.ng

Abstract
The United Nations was formed in 1945 primarily to promote and maintain international peace and security. The inspirational statement "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" was aimed towards ensuring that the horrors of the world wars were never repeated. Seventy-six years later, we all appreciate the fact that major security threats facing mankind now and, in the years, ahead are beyond aggressive wars. These threats include poverty, infectious diseases, environmental degradation, violence within the state, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, among others. These threats emanate from state and non-state actors posing grave dangers to state and human security. It was in recognition of these realities that the then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan announced in November 2003 the creation of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges Omission to examine the main threats to international peace and security in the 21st Century as well as to recommend measures to cater for the emerging issues which constitute threats to the state and human security. The recommendations of the panel constitute ideas sealed toward a new security consensus within the purview of the United Nations. This paper is an attempt to critically analyse these new issues. The paper unit's submission argues that what is needed today is a concerted effort towards building a new security consensus between traditional allies that are feared, between states in the global North and global South and among people moved in mistrust across a wide cultural divide. The impost of the new consensus is clear: we all share responsibility for each other's security.

Introduction
The primary objective of the formation of the United Nations was to maintain international peace and security. When the founders of this global body spoke of creating a new system of collective security, they meant it in the traditional military sense; a system in which states join together and pledge that aggression against one is aggression against all, and committed themselves in that event to react collectively. However, they also understood the import of

human security which is gaining currency by the day, the indivisibility of security, economic development and human freedom. In the preamble of the UN Charter, the United Nations was created also to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and to promote social progress, better standards of life and enhanced freedom.

The main challenge for the 21st Century is to fashion a new and broader understanding, bringing together all strands, of what collective security means and of all the responsibilities, commitments, strategies and institutions that come with it if a collective security system is to be effective, efficient and equitable. This imperative is gearing towards a new security consensus – a paradigm shift to embrace all strands of state and human security. This new security paradigm must go with the understanding that the front-line actors in

dealing with all the threats facing mankind, new and old, continue to be individual sovereign states, whose roles and responsibilities, and right to be respected, are fully recognized in the charter of the United Nations. But in the 21st century, it is axiomatic more than ever before; no state can stand wholly alone. Collective strategies, collective institutions and a sense of collective responsibility are indispensable[1]. The case of collective security today requires a mere explanation of the three pillars.

Today's threats recognise no natural boundaries are connected and must be addressed at the global and regional as well as national levels. No state, no matter how powerful, can by its efforts alone make itself invulnerable to today's threats. And it cannot be assumed that every state will always be able, or willing to meet its responsibility to protect its peoples and not to harm its neighbours. However, one must appreciate the difficulty of reading a new consensus about the meaning and responsibilities of collective security. Many will regard one or more of the threats as not being a threat to international peace and security. For instance, some states in the global North believe that HIV/AIDS is a horrible disease but not a security threat or that terrorism is a threat to some states but not all. Some even think that civil wars and conflicts in the global south are humanitarian tragedies but not a problem for international security, or that poverty and diseases are problems of development, not security[2]. Differences in power, wealth and geography do determine the perception of what one sees as security threats to one survival and well-being. Difference of focus leads us to inequitable responses to threats further fueling division. Many people believe that what passes for collective security is simply a system for protecting the rich and powerful states. All said without mutual recognition of all the nuances of threats, there can be no collective security. Self-help will prevail, mistrust will predominate and corporation for long-term and mutual gain will elude mankind[3].

It was in recognising these realities that the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in November 2003 announced the formation of a High-Level Panel of Sixteen renowned personalities on the threats, challenges and change to examine the main threats to international peace and security. The panel's report brought to the front burner, the new dimensions of threats to state and human security which called for a new security consensus amongst members of the international community: towards a new security consensus. This paper examines the new security paradigms that encompass the state and human security. Towards this end, part one of this paper draws a comparison between the international system of 1945 and that of 2005, while part two examines the case for comprehensive collective security: threats without boundaries and limits of self-protection. Part three discusses sovereignty and responsibility while part four focuses on the elements of the credible security system. part five is the conclusion.

International System in the last six decades 1945 – 2005

The United Nations was created in a sport of optimism fuelled by the end of the Second World War and the will to avoid a repeat of its horrors and those of its predecessors. For many of the states traumatised by two world wars, the experiment has been successful. In the past sixty years, many parts of the world have enjoyed a considerable level of peace and prosperity. The dynamics and tensions that led to the Second World War were laid to rest, war between the great powers was avoided and a stable peace emerged in Europe. Japan, Germany and Italy were successfully integrated into the family of nations and are currently the second, third and sixth largest financiers to the United Nations[4].

In the first thirty (30) years of the United Nations, dozens of new states emerged from the colonial system that until the 1990s tied all of mankind to a handful of capitals. Assisting new states into being was a seminal contribution of the United Nations. At the formation of the United Nations in 1945, there were 51 member states; today there are about 193 member states.

The General Assembly was transformed from a body composed of states that largely resembled one another and whose membership varied dramatically. By the 1960s, developing states formed a majority in the General Assembly and through it, gained a voice in international politics largely denied them outside such forum. The second half of the 20th Century was a struggle for the viability of these new states and the well-being of their citizens. They inherited arbitrary colonial boundaries and economics designed to serve the needs of the capitalists. Political independence was the start of a race to educate and develop the professional, scientific and technological expertise to run modern state economics. All of these took place in an era of high expectations about what states could and should deliver when most models of economic development relied on Leary state control.

In the last Fifty years, life expectancy in developing states has increased and per capita income has doubled in states like Botswana, Brazil, China, South Korea, and Turkey, among others. Despite such progress, large parts of the globe remained moved in life-threatening poverty. By the 1980s, many of these new states faced crises of state capacity and legitimacy, reflected in the rise of internal wars as the dominant form of conflict. In the 21st century, these problems are far from over more than a billion people lack access to clean water, more than two billion die every year from water-related diseases, and fourteen million people, including six million children die every year from hunger. As of 2000, 95% of the critical mass of states in the global south lived below the line of poverty. Almost 30 million people in developing states live with HIV/AIDS, thereby eroding state capacity and decimating the economic activity of what should be a state's most productive group[5]. The increasing number of infected humans and soils threatens food and agricultural production.

Recolonization was only one of the forces that shaped the United Nations. The founders of the UN did not anticipate that the United States and then the Soviet Union would embark on a global rivalry, developing and deploying tens of thousands of nuclear weapons capable of destroying the world many times over. Controlling the destructive capability of Nuclear Technology and harnessing its promise became central to the work of the United Nations, as the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly was in disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. The Cold War shaped much of international politics in four and half decades of the 20th century. The rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union blocked the Security Council from playing a dominant role in maintaining international peace. Nearly all armed conflicts and struggles for liberalism were viewed through the binoculars of East-West rivalry until the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Communist rule in Eastern Europe.

However, with the United Nations, the post-1945 world would very probably have been a bloodier place. There were fewer inter-state wars in the last half of the 20th century than in the first half. Given that during the same period, the number of states grew almost fourfold, one might have expected to see a marked rise in inter-state wars yet that did not occur and the United Nations contributed to that result. The United Nations diminished the threat of inter-state war in several ways. peace was furthered by the invention of peacekeeping, diplomacy was carried out by the Secretary-General; disputes were remedied under the International Court of Justice and a strong norm was upheld against aggressive wars[6].

The dramatic but peaceful end of the Cold War opened a vista for collective security to flourish the first years after the end of the Cold War pointed towards a new soul for the United Nations. 1990, the Security Council authorized the use of force against Iraq to liberate Kuwait. The Security Council broadened the interpretation of threats to international peace and security to authorize an intervention for humanitarian purposes in Somalia. The United Nations helped bring to an end several protracted wars in Central America and Southern

Africa. That moment was short-levied. It became clear that the United Nations had exchanged the shackles of the Cold War for the straitjacket of member states complacency and great power indifference. Although the United Nations gave birth to the notion of human security, it proved poorly equipped to provide it. Long-standing regional conflicts such as Israel/Palestine and Kashmir remained unresolved failures to act in the face of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia eroded international support. Optimism yielded renewed cynicism about the willingness of member states to support the organisation[7].

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, brought with them a glimpse of the potential for renewed collective security. In September 2001, France introduced and the Security Council unanimously passed resolution 1368 (2001) which condemned the attacks and opened the way for United States-led military action against the Taliban regime in self-defence. On the same day, the General Assembly condemned terrorism and the attacks. In September 2001, the Security Council adopted resolution 1373 (2001) which obligates all member states under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to take specific actions to combat terrorism. Three months later, the United Nations presided over the Bonn Agreement, which created an interim government to replace the deposed Taliban regime. The United Nations stood behind the interim government in Afghanistan as custodian of the peace process and helped to draft the country's new constitution. The spirit of international purpose lasted only months and was eroded by divisions over the United States-led war in Iraq in 2003[8].

The 9/11 terrorist attack revealed that states have failed to keep pace with changes like threats. The technological revolution that has radically changed the worlds of communication, information processing, health and transportation has eroded borders, altered migration and allowed individuals the world over to share information at a speed inconceivable some decades ago. Such changes have brought many benefits but also great potential to harm. A smaller number of persons can inflict a greater amount of damage without the support of any state actor. A new threat – transnational organised crime, undermines the rule of law within and across borders. Technologies designed to improve daily life have been transformed into instruments of aggression and have heralded different security climates – one whose unique opportunities for corporations are matched by an unprecedented scope for destruction[9].

Comprehensive Collective Security - The Paradigm Shift

The 21st century heralded various security threats which called for a paradigm shift from traditional collective security to comprehensive collective security. In this part, the paper examines these security threats that know no geographical boundaries, the limits of self-protection in the face of these threats are sovereignty and responsibility. Today, more than ever before, security threats are interrelated and a threat to one is a threat to all. The mutual vulnerability of weak and strong has become very slang. Global economic interpretation globalisation means that a major terrorist attack anywhere in the global North would have devastating effects or consequences on the lives and well-being of the people in the global South according to the World Bank Assessment Report, the September 11, 2001, Terrorist attack on the United States alone increased the number of people living in poverty by 10 million and the total cost to the world economy exceeded 80 billion dollars. These numbers would be far surpassed by an incident involving nuclear terrorism[10].

Similarly, the security of the most affluent and powerful state can be held hostage to the ability of the poorest and weak states to contain an emerging pandemic. Because international flight times are shorter than the incubation periods for many infectious diseases, any one of the 700 million international airline passengers every year can be an unwitting

global disease carries severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) spread to more than 8,000 people in thirty countries in three months, killing almost 700. The influenza pandemic of 1919 killed as many as 100 million people, far more than the First World War. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic has killed millions of people across the globe in a matter of months. Every threat to international security today enlarges the risk of other threats. Nuclear proliferation by the State increases the availability of the material and technology necessary for a terrorist to acquire a nuclear weapon. The ability of non-state actors to traffic in nuclear materials and technology is aided by ineffective state control of borders and transit through weak states[11].

International terrorist groups like AI Qaeda prey on weak states for sanctuary. Their recruitment is aided by grievances nurtured by poverty, foreign occupation and the absence of human rights and democracy; by religious intolerance and civil violence. In recent years, terrorists have helped to finance their activities and moved large sums of money by gaining access to drugs in Countries beset by civil wars. Poverty, infectious diseases, environmental degradation and war feed one another in a deadly cycle and constitute new sources of threats to international peace and security. Poverty is strongly associated with the outbreak of civil wars, malaria and HIV/AIDS continue to cause large numbers of deaths and reinforce poverty. Diseases and poverty are connected to environmental degradation; climate change exacerbates the occurrence of such infectious diseases as malaria and dengue fever. Environmental stress, caused by large populations and shortages of land and other natural resources contributes to violence.

Transnational organised crime facilitates many serious threats to international peace and security. Corruption, illicit trade and money laundering contribute to state weakness, impede economic development and undermine democracy and human freedom. These activities thus create a permissive environment for civil conflict. The prospect of organised criminal groups providing nuclear, radiological, chemical or biological weapons to terrorists is worrisome increasing drug trade partly accounts for rapidly increasing levels of HIV/AIDS infections, especially in Eastern Europe and part of Asia. Organised criminal activities undermine peace-building efforts and fuel many civil wars through illicit trade in conflict commodities and small arms and light weapons[12].

Limits of Self-Protection and the New Security Threats

No state, no matter how strong can alone make itself invulnerable to these new threats. Every state requires the cooperation of other states to make itself secure. It is in every state's interest to cooperate with other states to address these pressing threats because doing so will maximize the chances for Reciprocal Corporation to address its threat priorities, for instance, the threat of nuclear terrorism. Experts estimate that terrorists with 50kilo grams of highly enriched uranium (HEU), an amount that would fit into six one-litre milk cartons, need only smuggle across borders to create an improvised nuclear device that could level a medium-sized city. Border control will not provide adequate defence against this security threat.

Overcoming the threat of nuclear terrorism requires the cooperation of states, strong and weak to clear up stockpiles of fissionable materials. Cooperation in the sharing of intelligence by states is essential for stopping terrorism[13]. Also, to reduce organised crimes, states must cooperate to fight money laundering, trafficking in drugs and persons and corruption. International efforts to stem these problems are only as strong as the weakest link. Ineffective collective security institutions diminish the security of every region and state. The most robust defence against the possible terrorist use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons would seek to control dangerous materials, deter and capture terrorists and address the broader threats that increase the risk of terrorist actions. Civil war, disease and poverty increase the likelihood of state collapse and facilitate the spread of organised crime, thus

increasing the risk of terrorism and proliferation due to weak states and weak collective capacity to exercise the rule of law.

Preventing mass-causality terrorism requires a deep engagement to strengthen the collective security system, ameliorate poverty, combat extremism, end the grievances that flow from war, tackle the spread of infectious diseases and fight organised crime. Thus all states have interests in forging a new comprehensive collective security system that will commit all of them to act cooperatively in the face of a broad array of threats [14].

Sovereignty and Responsibility

In signing the charter of the United Nations, States not only benefit from the privileges of sovereignty but also accept its responsibilities. Whatever perceptions may have prevailed when the Westphalian system first gave rise to the notion of state sovereignty, today it carries with it the obligation of a state to protect the welfare of its peoples and meet its obligations to the wider international community. But history teaches us that it cannot be assumed that every state will always be able or willing to meet its responsibilities to protect its people and avoid harming its neighbours.

In those circumstances, the principles of collective security mean that some elements of those responsibilities should be taken up by the International Community acting by the charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to help build the necessary capacity or supply the necessary protection what man seeks to protect all states, not because they are good but because they are necessary to achieve the dignity Justice, worth and safety of their citizens. These are the values that should be at the heart of any collective security system for the 21st century, but too often states have failed to respect and promote them. Collective security in the 21st century asserts a shared responsibility on the part of all states and international institutions and those who lead them to do just that[15].

Elements of a Credible Collective Security System

There are some basic elements of the credible collective security system. To be credible and sustainable, a collective security system must be effective, efficient and equitable. In all these respects, the multilateral system in responding to the major security threats which the world has confronted in recent decades has shown that it can perform. These elements of a credible collective security system include effectiveness, efficiency and equity.

Effectiveness

Whether by reducing the demand for nuclear weapons, mediating inter-state conflict or ending civil wars, collective security institutions have made critical contributions to the maintenance of International peace and security, although those contributions are often denigrated by those who would have the institutions do more and by those who would have them do less. Collective security institutions are not effective in isolation. Multilateral institutions normally operate alongside national, regional and sometimes civil society actors and are most effective when these efforts and aligned with common goals. This is as true of mediation as it is of post-conflict reconstitution, poverty reduction strategies and non-proliferation measures[16].

States are still the front-line responders to today's security threats. Successful international actions to battle poverty, fight infectious disease, stop transnational crime, rebuild after civil war, reduce terrorism and halt the spread of dangerous fissionable materials all require a capable and responsible state as partners. It follows that greater effort must be made to enhance the capacity of states to exercise their sovereignty responsibly. For all those in a position to help others build that capacity, it should be part of their responsibility to do so. Collective action often fails because they are hampered by a lack of compliance, erratic monitoring and verification and weak enforcement. Early warning is only effective when it

leads to early action for prevention monitoring and verification work best when they are treated as complements to, not substitutes for enforcement.

Collective Security institutions have proved particularly poor at meeting the challenge posed by large-scale, gross human rights abuses and genocide. This is a normative challenge to the United Nations: The concept of State and International Responsibility to protect civilians from the effects of war and human rights abuses has yet to truly overcome the tension between the competing claims of sovereign inviolability and the right to intervene. It is also an operational challenge. The challenge of stopping a government from killing its citizens requires considerable military deployment capacity[17].

Efficiency

Some collective security instruments have been efficient. As the institutional embodiment of the treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and of considerable long-term success in preventing the widespread Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with its regular budget of less than 275 ICS dollars stands out as an extraordinary bargain. Similarly, the Secretary General's mediation efforts through grossly under-sourced, have helped reduce international tensions. However, more collective security instruments have been inefficient. Post-conflict operations, for example, have often been characterised by countless, ill-coordinated and overlapping bilateral and United Nations Programmes, with inter-agency competitions preventing the best use of scarce resources. The biggest source of inefficiency in a collective security institution has been an unwillingness to get serious about preventing deadly violence. The failure to invest time and resources early to prevent the outbreak and escalation of conflicts leads to many layers and deadlier conflagrations that are much costlier to handle later[18].

Equity

The credibility of any system of collective security also depends on how well it promotes security for all its members, without regard to the nature of would-be-beneficiaries, their location, resources or relationship to major powers. Too often, the United Nations and its member states have discounted responding to threats to international security. Compare the swiftness with which the United Nations responded to the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, with its action when confronted with a more deadly event, from April to mid-July 1994 when Rwanda experienced the equivalent of the 11 September 2001 attacks every day for 100 days, all in a country whose population was one thirty-sixth that of the United States. Two weeks into the genocide, the Security Council Rwanda. It took almost a month for UN officials to call it genocide and even longer for some Security Council members. When a new mission was finally authorized for Rwanda, six weeks into the genocide, few member states offered soldiers. The mission was deployed as the genocide ended.

Similarly, the glacial speed at which the International Community responded to massive Human Rights Violations in Darfur, Sudan is another case of inequitable response to conflict by the United Nations. When the institutions of collective security respond in an ineffective and inequitable manner, they reveal a much deeper truth about which threats matter – Our institutions of collective security must not just assert that a threat to one is truly a threat to all but perform accordingly[19].

Conclusion

When the United Nations was formed in 1945, its primary objective was to maintain international peace and security focussing on the traditional sense of state security – containing aggressive inter-state wars and serving future generalisation from the scourge of such global wars. At the dawn of the 21st century, it became obvious that the security threats facing mankind have gone beyond inter-state wars. This means that a new paradigm of

security must be appreciated and contained collectively by members of the International Community. These new security threats include poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation which constitute economic and social threats, internal conflicts such as civil wars, genocide ethnic cleansing and other large-scale atrocities, nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons, terrorism and transnational organised crimes. In appreciation of this security threat, it became very imperative for the United Nations to widen the scope of the concept of collective security to accommodate these new realities. It was against this background that the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in taking the necessary measures to address these new security threats constituted a High-Level Panel on security threat, challenge and change.

In November 2003 after various meetings, the Panel submitted a report to the United Nations and the report was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2004 as new paradigms of collective security in the 21st Century. The Panel's report offers many insights, guiding principles and recommendations those Moret Sereon's collective considerations by members of the International Community. This paper articulated these threats as highlighted by the panel. In light of the issues raised in the paper, it is apt to submit that the central challenge for the 21st Century is to fashion a new and broader understanding, bringing together all these strands, of what collective security means and of all the responsibilities, commitments, strategies and institutions that come with it if the new collective security system is to be effective efficient and equitable.

Endnotes

[1] Richard Cohen, "The Quest for Collective Security" in Proceedings of the American Society of International Law (169) p. 66

[2] Kenneth Thompson, "Collective Security Re-examined" in the American Political Science Review Vo. 47, No. 3 (September 1993) p. 755

[3] Paul Masaldam, "Collective Security" in Harman Singh (ed.) Studies in World Order (Delhi: Kiab Mohal, 1997) p. 299

[4] William Hogan, International Conflict and Collective Security: The Principle of Concern in International Organization (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1995) p. 3

[5] Jacon Atherton, The Dynamics of International Organization (Homewood: The Dorsey Press, 1995) p. 53

[6] Inis Claude, "The Management of Power in the Changing United Nations" (Spring, 1991) p. 219

[7] Abram Appadorai, "Collective Security" UNESCO Publication, 1998) p. 8

[8] Leland Goodrich and Anne Simons, The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1995) p. 81

[9] Richard Cohen, The Quest for Collective Security, 1990. P. 68

[10] William Cohen, International Conflict and Collective Security, 1995. P. 5

[11] Fen Hampson and David Malone, From Reaction to Conflict Prevention: Opportunities for the UN System (Boulder, Co: hyme Rienner, 2002) p. 161

[12] David White, The United Nations and the Maintenance of Peace and Security (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997) p. 64

[13] Herman Johnson and Golhart Niemeyer "Collective Security: The Validity of an Ideal" in International Organization, February 1994, vol. 8 p. 16

[14] John Sisco, "The UN and Collective Security" in the Department of State Bulletin (Washington DC, vol. xxv, 1995) p. 78

[15] David White, The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, 1997, p. 66

[16] William Dorsh and Barry Blechman, Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the Emerging World Order (Washington DC, Henry Stinson Center, 1995) p. 106

[17] John Sisco, "The UN and Collective Security", 1994, p. 80
[18] Abram Appadorai, "Collective Security", 1998, p. 19
[19] Claude, "The Management of Power in the Changing United Nations", 1991, p. 222
[20] William Hogan, International Conflict and Collective Security, 1995, p. 10