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Final Thesis

The relationship between the United Nations and the US is increasingly ambivalent: to what extent do the actions of the US undermine the role of the United Nations?

Final thesis presented to the academic Department of the School of Business and economic in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of the Doctorate Ph.D. in International Relations.

Atlantic International University

October/2020

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgement	5
1.0 Introduction.....	6
1.1 Aim and Objectives	8
2.0 Definitions	9
3.0 Historical Relationship Between the US and UN: A Timeline of Ambivalence.....	11
3.1 Historical Definition of the US Hegemony	11
3.2 A Timeline of Ambivalence between the US and UN.....	14
3.2.1 Discordance at Creation (1945 to 1970).	14
3.2.2. Increasing Ambivalence and Reconciliation (1970 - 1990).....	18
3.2.3 The Calm Before the Storm (1990 - 2000)	21
3.2.4 The Storm (2000 till present).....	24
4.0 US ambivalence to the UN: The Undermining Effect.....	25
4.1 Human Rights and Refugee Protection.....	25
4.2 International Peace Keeping.....	29
4.3 International Co-operation and Globalization	30
4.4 Maintaining International Justice	34
4.5. Maintaining Operations	36
5.0. Theoretical Explanation: US ambivalence and Undermining Effect.....	39
5.1 Simplistic View	39
5.2 Social View	42
5.3 Normative Complex View	43
6.0 Current and Future Consequences of US Ambivalence	47
6.1 Current Consequences	47
6.2 Possible Future Consequences.	52
7.0 Conclusion.....	56
Bibliography	59

Abstract

The thesis explored the impact of the ambivalent actions of the US on the UN. Specifically, the undermining effects of these actions were explored. Analysis of the historical relationship between the US and the UN showed that the US have always been ambivalent even from the creation of the UN system. However, utilization of fee withholding policy by the US was able to cause a reform that suited it and this restored order between the two parties. However, the US continued to take Unilateral actions outside the authorization of the UN. Additionally, the ambivalent actions of the US were demonstrated to have undermined efforts of the UN in promoting human rights, maintaining international justice, peacekeeping and stimulating collaboration among its member states. However, the theoretical explanation provided demonstrated that the inability to defer to the legal system of the UN remains the most critical factor that creates the ambivalence between the US and the UN. But the Consequences of the acts of the US was also demonstrated to be dangerous both for current situations and for the future of the international community as well. Specifically, it was shown that the ambivalence is fuelling different regional conflicts in the Middle East and that various countries are beginning to take after the action of the US. It was demonstrated that if this should continue the world's international system will be changed from its current legal; structure to a favour and "relative-power" based system.

Dedication:

This achievement is dedicated to the following people, my father James Muon Chak and my mother Mary Nyalol Jock

My wife Mary Muon

My Children:

- a) Mun John
- b) Nyabuomkuoth John
- c) Joy Nyapal John

Acknowledgement:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my heavenly father in heaven for granting me a good health and being able to accomplished my doctorate degree (Ph.D) on time. I praised your name God.

I would like to express my sincere appreciations to my Tutor Ms **Miriam James** for a substantial unwavering support during my studies.

Last but not the least, I would like to tender my gratitude to my Course advisors and the entire Atlantic International University's family. I'm so grateful to be a part of this unique and professional University.

1.0 Introduction

Ever since the United States (US) facilitated the creation of the United Nations (UN) and all its agencies, an ambivalent relationship has always been the foundational relationship between them. Historically, after the end of the Second World War, the US emerged as the most powerful and dominant state in international politics. The strength of the US economy and military power after the war outrightly superseded those of other nations (Cronin 105). Hence, the United States assumed the leadership role, becoming the world's hegemon. Creating the UN was one of the ways through which the US influenced the features of multilateralism in the international community. Furthermore, due to its influence, the US used the platform of the UN to advance its ideologies among nations besides shaping how multilateralism is defined (Cronin 107). Therefore, it can be deduced that the creation of the UN and its agencies are direct products precipitating out of the hegemonic position of the US. But right from the creation of this organization and its sub-organs, the US has always been ambivalent about the UN system (Jacobson 177). Not only this, the ambivalent approach grew and significantly increased over time, hence creating a conundrum especially if one considers the vital role the US played in creating the system. Various reasons and theories have been put forward to explain this confounding ambivalence. Some insist that the surprising ambivalence is a tactic to divert attention from the obvious link between the UN systems and the US ideological concepts that it publishes around the world. Others believe that the UN system outgrew the manipulations of the United States right from the start (Murthy 10). However, no matter what reasons and theories are given to explain the continuous ambivalence of the US to the UN

system, it remains clear that the US hegemony makes the ambivalence an undermining factor for the UN.

The extent to which US ambivalence to the UN undermines its position is not clearly defined. For example, the recent negative stance of the US on issues relating to climate change do not seem to fully undermine the importance of the current actions and policies developed by the united nations. Likewise, the current move to withdraw from the WHO did not entirely undermine the legality of the organization's actions or diminish the importance of their advice and policy in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic (BBC 2020). However, the impact on the universal acceptance of the actions of these UN organizations is sometimes affected by the ambivalence of the US. For example, despite the rallying support for the WHO after the US notified it of the imminent withdrawal, several countries and their leaders have adopted the same stance as the US in belittling the advice of the WHO. All citing the same reasons the Hegemon made while withdrawing from the Organization. On another hand, the ambivalent relationship with the UN and its system seems to cause the reverse effect of undermining the institution. For example, the recent unilateral decision of the US to reinstate the previously lifted economic embargo on Iran was widely condemned and the condemnation morally and legitimately accepted across the world (Shine and Eldad 2020). This provides a contrasting example of the previous undermining effect of the US ambivalent relationship with the UN. Therefore, this thesis seeks to fully explore the historical, current, and likely future undermining effect that the ambivalent actions of the US will have on the UN system.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

As previously stated, the study aims to analyse the undermining effect of US ambivalent actions on the UN on the UN's system. To achieve this aim, the study's objectives will be to:

- Provide a historical background to the US ambivalence to the UN
- Demonstrate how the US' ambivalent actions undermine the UN system.
- Provide theoretical analysis for the US rationale for its' undermining actions
- Explain the consequences and implications of the US undermining actions
- Describe the possible future scenarios of how the current relationship between the US and the UN will become

2.0 Definitions

The structure of the essay begins with a chapter that provides a historical account of the ambivalent relationship between the US and the UN with specific examples in each case. This section aims to provide an accurate historical background to the thesis. Understanding the history of both the UN and the US will provide an in-depth insight into the peculiar features and characters of both entities. When this is understood, it will help in critically analyzing the rationale for the ambivalent actions of the US and why it has varying undermining effects on the UN and the necessary implication for the general international community.

After this historical account has been elucidated, the thesis will provide evidence of how elements of the ambivalent relationship undermine the UN in the international community. The chapter will seek to specifically point to several instances where the UN's actions have been negatively affected because of the US ambivalent stance and a few instances of where the opposite occurred. These instances will provide examples that will be used to extrapolate and develop the thesis' analysis.

The instances presented in the previous chapter will then be applied to various theoretical principles in international relations. The principles will be used to present different rationales as to why the actions of the US are ambivalent, why the US adopts such a stance, and how its undermining effect fits consistently with theories in international relations practice.

The theoretical analysis of the actions of the Hegemony will then be followed by a detailed presentation of the consequences and implications of the US actions for the international community. The consequences presented in this section will be based on the effects that past actions and current actions have generated within the international community.

Thereafter a critical analysis of how current events, effects, and consequences will shape the future of the UN, the US, and the international community at large. This section will use present examples to extrapolate future possible scenarios and discuss how they are both positive and negative for the future of the international community.

Finally, these will conclude its analysis with a summary of all that has been said after which a set of recommendations will be presented to improve the current relationship between the US and the UN. The recommendations will be targeted towards using the improvements to preserve the international community's future in general.

3.0 Historical Relationship Between the US and UN: A Timeline of Ambivalence.

3.1 Historical Definition of the US Hegemony

To understand the historical relationship between the US and the UN, a critical look at their interdependence is paramount. To begin with, International organizations like the UN are dependent on states for resources (Berry 44). In other words, military might, finances, facilities, etc are provided by member states. Therefore, a network of collaboration exists to make international organizations viable. The position of the United States in this network is one of total dominance. In terms of the proportion of resources, the united states have always occupied the top of the pile in almost aspects. For instance, the economy of the United States has been the largest since the end of the second world war (Cronin 105). In fact, after the war, the economy of the US accounted for nearly half of the world's total economy and even now the US still holds about 23% of it (Cohn and Anil 117). These assertions paint a picture where the US is the singular dominant power in the international community. However, professional perceptions differ in that bipolarity with the USSR was considered during the cold war and current elements of multipolarity with the rise of China (Krauthamme 23). However, from an economic point of view, the evidence points out to the Unipolar hegemony of the US in the international community. Historically, the US economy has always been more than at least 50% larger in size than its nearest competitor (Cronin 109). This trend continued until the 21st century when China rose to prominence economically and has reduced the gap between them and the US. Currently, the US economy is only about 30% greater than that of China (Cohn and Anil 119). This might point to some level of a secular decline in the dominance of the

US, However, it also points to the longevity of the hegemon and how its historical influence in shaping the international relations landscape and politics.

Therefore, when considering the theory of polarity in international relations, it is important to note the amount of economic power the US wielded over its nearest competitor. For instance, during the cold which peaked in the 1970s, the USSR was the largest rival of the US. Both countries formed alliances with other countries and the world as we know it during the cold war was split between the two superpowers. At the peak of the cold war, the USSR had attained parity with the US in terms of nuclear arms (Jacobson 178). Hence, experts were quick to point this out as proof of bipolarity of international relations at the time. Bipolarity in international politics is defined as a power configuration that concentrates power with two superpowers in the international community (Badie 25). In this case, the bipolarity during this time was between the US and the USSR. However, during this time the US had a greater economic and social power than the USSR (Jacobson 181). For example, the world watches America movies and fell in love with its music. Likewise, the US dictated the world's economy. This significantly greater "Other "powers apart from military might made the USSR ultimately lose the cold war in the long run. But in recent times, the US share of the global economy has reduced significantly, however, the soft powers remain and the world is still mesmerized by its citizen's social life and education

After establishing the clear historical dominance of the US economic hegemony, its role in the UN and its ambivalent relationship can be explained using the same economic tools. As previously stated, institutions like the UN depend on states for resources, and in the case, the

US being the largest economy in the world has historically been the main financier of the UN (Jacobson 182). Hence, cementing its place as the main influencer of the UN. Although it is logically consistent to claim that the United States' contribution to the UN is because of its behemoth economy, a closer look at the proportion of UN contribution shows that the US portion is even larger than others. For example, recently the US still contributes about 15% of the World Health Organization's (WHO) budget. This shows that even in the twenty-first century, the existence and survival of the UN system is still very much dependent on the US input. Despite this influence, the US did not use its dominant position to acquire more territories after the Second World War; instead, it even relinquishes territories that it gained during the war (Jacobson 182). This historical fact is significant because, before the 1960s, the US had a clear nuclear dominance that was unrivalled and could have easily used the influence to gain several new territories. However, in exchange for this, the US used its position to compel states to it will exceptionally. This however did not mean that the United States had no clear agenda in the world of international politics. The foreign policy of the US has always rotated about the aim of gaining access to resources domicile within other state's territories for trade and investment (Hunt 100). This aim has been the major obsession of the Capitalist economy of the US since it adopted its constitution. Early in the life of the country, several treatise and agreement were established with various countries and it continues to do so even to date (Hunt 102). Every administration since then has sought to increase America's economic strength through various means. Even recently, the strengthening of the economy through several unilateral decisions by the Trump administration has been the biggest campaign point of the administration. Apart from seeking to increase its economic strength, the US also has a

messianic streak. In other words, the US believes that its ideology to be the best and expects others to emulate its actions politically, socially, and economically. The bulk of trade agreements made by the US have been with countries mirroring their political and economic system (Hunt 154). This ideology of being the world's messiah has pushed the country to take several actions that remain a dent in its history and explains the major reason the country is ambivalent to the UN. Most especially, spreading democracy has been a major political commitment of the US, sometimes even employing military interventions in some cases.

Hence, the major involvement of the US in the UN has been to universalize its goals and spread the "gospel" of its ideology through the UN system in some cases.

3.2 A Timeline of Ambivalence between the US and UN

3.2.1 Discordance at Creation (1945 to 1970).

In 1945 the creation of the UN began after the end of the Second World War. The charter that created the UN was drafted after the war and it required that most members ratify the charters as well as the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Weiss, 3). The first member to submit its ratified charter was the US and in October that year, the majority of the UN members as at then had submitted their instrument of ratification to the San Francisco Conference. Hence, the foundation of the UN was completed and the UN was formally opened that month (Weiss 3). Although the UN was an upgrade on the earlier defunct League

of Nations that failed to guarantee world peace after the First World War (Meisler 65), it had several agencies that were newly created. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were not fully functional until the 1950s. Likewise, membership of the UN did not expand until the 1960s when Africa's colonization was removed and the number of independent states multiplied (Meisler 71). Hence, the initial creation of the UN was marked by continued expansion and evolution. Also, the increased membership in the 1960s gave universal legitimacy to the UN system. The format of the UN system was developed during this time and the ideological foundation was set also. For example, the IMF and World Bank were established to manage the World's economy according to capitalist concepts and ideologies (Woods 19). Likewise, the foundation of globalisation was laid with the interconnectivity provided by the International Telecommunication Union. Likewise, the UN created several development programs to help developing countries, hence increasing the deeper integration of countries into the UN system.

In retrospect, all the ideologies present by the UN at its inceptions were in complete agreement with those of the US. Hence, pointing to the important role that the US assumed in shaping the initial ideology and foundation of the UN. Historians suggested that the reason for the totality in mirrored philosophy was since the US had extensively prepared a plan to implement a global international organization during the Second World War. Hence, they were able to present more specific ideas when negotiations while drafting the UN charter. For example, it was recorded that the USSR had reservations about integrating the UN into the social and

economic systems of Nations. This was because the USSR had different ideologies to western nations and as such was reluctant to commit to such integration. However, the US wanted a universal respect for human right and democratic process as the foundation of the UN charters and it was so (Meisler 201). In another example, the UK representative in the IMF negotiation wanted the agency to have an instrument that allows creditors to share some of the debt burden of defaulting debtors. But the US countered this and made the IMF charter included instruments that made the debtors entirely responsible for their debt (Woods 31). Several other examples abound that clearly demonstrated the imperious dominance of the US in shaping the philosophical foundation and ideologies of the UN. Furthermore, once the UN agencies were operational and functional, the US began to take advantage of the system for its purposes. For instance, greater emphasis was laid on human right monitoring in all member nation and the IMF and the other UN economic agencies facilitated the economic integration by reducing trade and currency exchange restrictions (Woods 36). Additionally, the US played a role in promoting decolonisation across the world and presented its model of decolonisation with the Philippines as an example (Jansen and Jürgen 53). The advancement of the IMF policies made the currencies of the US and other Major Powers easily interchangeable by 1958 (Woods 36). Hence, setting the tone to making them the major currencies used for international trade. However, beyond economic goals, the US sought to use the UN as a tool to

advance political and security goals. However, the cold war dashed this hope and the UN turned to forming the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for its military purpose and propaganda (Goldgeier 26). This represented the first crack in the relationship between the US and the UN. Additionally, the US used the platform of the UN and its security instruments to intervene in different local conflicts within states around the world. For example, the UN framework was highly influential in creating the state of Israel, an objective strongly supported by the US (Reich and Shannon 101). More importantly, the Korean War presented an opportunity for the US to legitimize efforts to invade and repel North Korea forces. The US worked with the UN Security Council (UNSC) to attain this legitimacy. Some historians believe that engaging in this conflict was an important objective to the US as it showed its commitment in limiting communism expansion (Stone 1951). However, it is equally important to remember that the US had already deployed forces to engage in the conflict before the UNSC gave any command for member states to help in the conflict (Stone 1951). Hence, showing that the US has already engaged its objectives without waiting for the UNSC authorization. Demonstrating that the US would have pursued this objective without the UNSC resolution itself. But getting the UNSC resolution later provided a legitimate cover for the action. This occurrence will later be repeated in the Iraqi war and the assassination of a key Iranian general in 2019. The ambivalence grew during the 1960 Congo crisis when the US suggested that the USSR contribute its quota to UN peace keeping efforts in the region. The USSR considered this negative to its interests and the UN general assembly duly rejected the proposal and the USSR was not forced to pay the dues. This event provoked a major disillusionment within the US

political class and administration. This event was the beginning of many more feelings of disappointments by the US concerning the UN general assembly. Furthermore, after more states were decolonized in 1960, the US sought to be praised for championing the decolonization policy. However, the newly "minted" countries joined groups from Latin

America and Asia to form groups with significant voting powers that looks after their own interest and not automatically support those of the US (Toye 1760). The group names G77 increasingly took opposing positions to those of the US and the US became more isolated in the UN assembly. First, the G77 supported USSR to include elements of restriction of free speech in the human rights realm which the US strongly opposed (Toye 1764). This eventually made the US lose interest in the UN general assembly. But its interests remain in the economic agencies of the UN system where it had overwhelming influence. Hence a pattern emerged where the US worked with the UN when it was favourable and ignored its resolution when they were unfavourable.

3.2.2. Increasing Ambivalence and Reconciliation (1970 - 1990)

From the late 1960s the US began to take several unilateral steps in the international community's political landscape. First the US began to bomb North Vietnam, signifying an illegitimate engagement in international conflict without the backing of the UNSC (Renouard 176). Likewise, the US intervened in the Dominican Republic crisis to stop a communist

regime at the time (Renouard 182). This action was mirrored by Israel, a close ally of the US, when it conquered Sinai Peninsula Gaza strip, West Bank and Golan Height (Shlaim, Roger, and William 92). The UN sharply condemned these actions but the US did not pressure its ally into reversing its occupation of Arab bordered lands, where Israel still occupy till date (Shlaim, Roger, and William 92). Apart from political unilateralism, the US changed its economic system from the fixed gold-based system to a flexible one, hence overwriting the previous free interchange of currencies championed by the IMF. This forces the IMF to adopt a flexible exchange rate. It would be noted that the US balance of payment problem that forced the economic change was due to the wars it had fought independently to stop communist expansion (Woods 65). The UN member states began to confront the US and other western

states and in 1973, Arab forces attacked Israel. Likewise, members of the G77 who also belonged to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) took control of oil production and increased oil prices. Apart from this, the group also tried to adopt and institutionalize a Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties and a New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Toye 1770). These would have undermined and phased out the IMF and the World Bank. This move was not in the interest of the US and this event future made the US lose interest in the UN. The G77 continued to make several stances opposite those of US, by forcing the adoption a resolution that condemned Zionism and supported an opposite stance different from that of the US on South Africa (Toye 1770). All this triggered a series of verbal attack by the US on the UN as it believes that the UN was directly motivated to

confronting and opposing its interests. However, by the end of the 1970s the US adopted a softer approach. Still the G77 continued to support several stances that against US interests.

However, by 1985 the US disinterests in the UN turned into an active campaign to subject the UN to its will. The Carter administration at the time decided that the power of the US must be exerted in the UN and that year the US withdrew from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (Gunaratne 153). Earlier in 1977, the US had initially withdrawn from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), but returned in 1980 (Gunaratne 156). However, the withdrawal from UNESCO was longer lasting and Singapore joined in the withdrawal as well as the United Kingdom. Likewise, in the same year the US stopped contributing a significant proportion of its dues to the UN, hence forcing the UN into financial crisis (Blanchfield 23). The Reagan administration totally stopped pursuing the legitimacy of military interventions through the UN and focused on significantly expanding US military might (Blanchfield 24). The mighty act of withholding funds changed the way

relationship between the US and UN. The UN started to reform its Agencies' budgets and started to give major contributors significant voice in budgetary decision making.

By making these acknowledgements, developing countries accepted that the voices of leading states were more important in managing UN system's institutions. This changed stance softens the act of US towards the UN. Likewise, the submission of China to the WHO and IMF

institutions brought a link between the communist and capitalist economies and this was a major trigger that helped reduce the hostilities between the US and the UN at the time (Blanchfield 109). Also, it signified that the world's economy was coming under a single precept described by western capitalism. Likewise, the Leader of the Soviet Republic at the time publish an article that stated that the UN was a legitimate body that should be tasked with maintaining world peace (Savranskaya, Thomas, and Vladislav 56). This stance led to a revitalization of the US in the UN and strangely the world had a high level of international peace as most of the interstate wars were ended by 1990. Likewise, major countries began to adopt democracy and capitalism, especially in Eastern Europe. This new found revitalization was exemplified by the Coalition efforts that ended the Iraqi war in 1991. The US mobilized a joint force of the Arab, European and even the Soviet states to repulse Iraq's attempted invasion (Wertheim 152). Henceforth, the UNSC became a key policy focus of the US.

3.2.3 The Calm before the Storm (1990 - 2000)

After the tumultuous relationship of since the creation of UN system, the 1990s provided a form of "second chance" to rework the relationship. The earlier mentioned collaborative peace keeping efforts in Kuwait buoyed US policy makers into integrating the UN system into their foreign policy framework. Likewise, it gave the policy makers the confidence that they have the necessary tool to manipulate the UN system to their will (Blanchfield 211). The effect of the

collaboration continued to appease the US as the UN general assembly repealed the 1975 Zionism act and the renegotiation of the seabed mining provisions of the Law of the Sea treaty (Jacobson 182). Other US-favourable reforms include the drafting of the Comprehensive (Nuclear) Test Ban Treaty. The US returned the favour by committing to the full funding of the UN system and even its review in 1993 (Jacobson 182). Finally, it seems that all will be well with the US and the UN. However, this collaboration was short lived as the US began to assert more restrictive stance on peacekeeping policies and even blocked the second term of the then Secretary General of the UN. Also, the US backed out of various treaties that it had previously helped to draft. Hence, returning to the old days of ambivalent, unpredictable, and insubordinate acts. However, the most impactful aspect of the new ambivalence is the renewed withholding of fees.

Many member nations took offense to the withholding of membership fees as the US was going against the very tenet of the UN foundation. The disregard for the membership fees made members of the UN hostile to the US and they equated this to a non-committal stance to the basic ideology of the UN. Additionally, the US had refused to contribute to the repayment of the arrears owed in the 1980s and by 1994, the US congress passed a law that limited the bill for UN peacekeeping efforts to at most 25%, whereas the percentage agreed with the UN was 30.3% (Blanchfield 106). Also, congress felt that the UN had a lot of corruption related issues with its financial management, hence a law was passed to limit the bill US pays for UN's general operations. These unilateral limits enforced by the US are in addition to the zero-nominal

growth budgets that the US had championed for adoption by the UN and a consensus budget policy as well (Blanchfield 116).

The arrears of the US accrued to the point that it might have lost its seat at the UN assembly in both 1999 and 1998 and the accompanying frustrations made states to be bolder in criticizing the US. Soon Americans were voted out of several key positions in the UN including the head of the UNDP and the exclusion of the US from the main UN budgetary body, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), and the removal of an American from the Joint Inspection Unit. Eventually, Senate members of the US congress created the United Nations Reform Act (1999) that linked the arrears to a set of reforms that will protect American Interests in the UN.

The first part of the act ensures that the UN must never create a standing Army and that it must not create instruments to borrow money. Other aspects of the Act included sections that ratified already passed US laws about the UN, including limiting the peacekeeping budget to 25% and the contributions to other agencies are reduced to at most 22% in total. The issue with the amendments were that it created a lopsided system that forced US allies to pick up the bill of the budgetary allocations shed by the US. Also, members of the UN were not sure the US would not revert to using the withholding tactics against them once again; hence it was difficult to commit to making the reforms required.

3.2.4 The Storm (2000 till present)

In the face of increasing disinterest by the US in the UN system, the decade after 2010 proved testing for the US foreign policy outlook. First the 2001 attack on the US gave it the uttermost support in the UNSC for the invasion of Afghanistan and the defeat of the Taliban (Wertheim 159). However, disaster struck when the US decided to unilaterally invade Iraq with the support of a coalition of about 50 member states (Wertheim 159). This action was reminiscent of the intervention in the Korean War and that of the bombing of North Vietnam. Here the US took decisions that were not exactly accepted by some of its allies and was rejected by the UNSC. However, this did not deter the US. Hence the years after the millennium signified a more pressing stance, where the US in some cases totally disregarded the UN in creating and executing its foreign policies and in other cases, instruments of UN is used as well. The current US administration has taken an even harder line towards international organisations. A complicating factor in all this is the rise of China in the millennium as the US come to the realization of the emergence of another super power. In general, the early part of the 2000s featured various unilateral actions by the US, while the period before 2016 was marked by a more predictable stance by the US, however the later part of present decade has been resumption of unilaterality of US decisions concerning the UN and especially in China related matters.

4.0 US ambivalence to the UN: The Undermining Effect

The continued ambivalence of the world's hegemon towards the UN is not without consequences for the international community. Also, the ambivalence is more critical to the survival, evolution, integrity, and relevance of the UN. One of the effects of this ambivalence is that it undermines the UN and its agencies in the international space. In other words, the "bad" example of the US will encourage bolder nations to disregard the UN and its resolutions. Hence, making its directives impotent and impinging on its relevance as well. Several examples of recent ambivalence exist that have resulted in undermining the actions of the UN and this section of the thesis will critically demonstrate and discuss them with evidences.

4.1 Human Rights and Refugee Protection

For the United State, the domestic policies of ambiguous human right and apparent racial inequality caused the US to adopt a firm ambivalent stance towards general human rights activities and resolutions of the UN. To gain an in-depth view of the issues, the historical rationale behind the human right actions and policies of the UN must be understood. To begin with, it must be remembered that the devastation experienced during the Second World War made the superpowers at that time draft the International Bill of Rights (IBR) as a founding and binding charter of UN membership (Meisler 204). Most noticeable reference at that time was the holocaust and other horrors that were executed at the hands of the Nazis in Europe and their allies in Asia, especially in Korea and China. Hence, it was agreed that the need to recognized international human rights was pertinent to prevent the repeat of these brutal

events. Likewise, it was hoped that the bill will ensure that states are no longer taken over by fascism and Nazism once they are bound to the human right law. Thus, making the possibility of the repeat of the massacre of the Second World War improbable. The human rights bill at the time included social and economic rights protection of all humans as well as their basic political rights. Therefore, forming the UN was based on this key resolution. Strangely, it the US president at the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt, that called for prominence to be given to human rights bill in the UN charter to ensure international peace (Meisler 207). However, despite the legal binding effect of the UN member states to respect human rights, elaborating on the specific context of the human right context was needed to guide nations in their acts. Hence, the UN Commission on Human Rights was created to elaborate on this right and inform member nations accordingly (Meisler 219). However, during the cold war, the US began to fear that the complete implementation of the Bill in the US would have implications for its national security as it feared that it would be exploited by the eastern bloc. Additionally, the American racist system at the time that supported segregation made it difficult for the US to openly support the human rights charter. Several states including the US claimed that the actions and resolutions drafted by the UN Commission on Human Rights were having unprecedented implications in encroaching on their sovereignty. Hence, eventually the US pulled out of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Despite being the founding nation to promote the importance of human right, they were also the first to leave the commission outrightly in 2018 by the Trump administration. However, it should be noted that when the UN Commission on Human Rights was created in 2006, President Bush at the time was unwilling to subscribe to its membership. The reason cited for the withdrawal was that the commission had focused on

Israel while admitting member states with histories of human right abuses, including China, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Cuba, Venezuela, etc (Brookings 2020). Apart from withdrawing its membership, the US has issued threats to withhold funds again from the commission as it is disillusioned by the work it does. However, this represents an undermining action as although the commission is not perfect, its actions in North Korea, South Sudan, and Syria. This is because the participation of superpowers gives a form of legitimacy to International Organizations like the UN and their agencies (Meisler 135). However, without the membership of the US, the international leverage that the commission has is significantly reduced and as such, undermines its effectiveness.

Apart from the pull-out from the he UN Commission on Human Rights, the US also announced that it was going to cut support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in January 2018. The agency provides support for and advocates for displaced Palestinian Refugees. The United States is the agency's highest funder, contributing over \$350 million annually (Ocampo, Melgarejo, and Zapata 33). The move was made by the president as a form of deterrent to force a peace deal between Israel and Palestine (Ocampo, Melgarejo, and Zapata 35). However, in this way, the current US administration is undermining an independent UN effort to cater for the humanitarian crisis that precipitates out of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The situation was worsened in September the same year as the administration withdrew funding totally from the organisation. The adopted method of the current administration is consistent with the funds withholding tool that the US have often used to bend the will of International organisations to its will. However, this time the US is undermining the effort of the UN using a rationale that is not associated with the actions of the

UN. This is because in claiming that Palestinians do not need the fund from the UNRWA as they are not willing to negotiate, the US is making the UN pay for the Palestinians actions. Hence equating UN as a supporter of the Palestinian stance. The similar rationale was given to move out of the he UN Commission on Human Rights because The US claimed that the commission was unduly focused on Israel when member nations of the committee themselves have pressing human right issues. But the US seem to ignore the fact that the UN must be comprised of member nations and that the UN can only advise and not enforce its resolutions on its member nations, including the US itself.

Therefore, these actions are undermining the major tenets of the foundational charter of the UN that made it a mediating body that must abstain from being engulfed in inter-state politics. In the same vein, US is undermining the efforts of the UN in promoting and encouraging the protection of human rights by refusing to co-operate with the UN Special Rapporteurs in potential human right violations within the United States (Dulitzky 153). This way the UN is unable to officially account for the level of human right protection and violation in the US. Hence, reducing the effectiveness and genuineness of the UN report on human right across the globe. This undermining effect is precipitated in the inability of the UN to functionally execute its duty in the world's most dominant hegemon. Further analysis indicates that by refusing to answer to the UN on such issues, the US is decimating the function of the UN and other International Human right watch bodies, thus making them irrelevant.

4.2 International Peace Keeping

One of the major functions of the UN, especially its security council is to intervene in conflicts where needed and avoid the proliferation of avoidable armed conflicts. However, this function has been historically undermined by the US and by extension it can be blamed for the continued non-ending saga of some armed conflicts. Starting with the historical intervention of the US in the Korean war that began before the UNSC authorized it. The US has demonstrated that intervening in state-wide armed conflicts is not only the prerogative of the UNSC but that dominant countries that can afford it can intervene at will. This example has been demonstrated throughout history. For example, some of the most recent example of this un-curtailed intervention has been the Yemen Armed Conflict. In 2017, the UN declared that Yemen is the largest humanitarian disaster in the world as the conflict lead to a level of unprecedented level of humanitarian crisis only surpassed by regional wars. However, all actions of the UN to find a resolution to the conflict have been undermined by efforts of allies of the US who continue to enjoy the support of the US despite the increased humanitarian cost. For example, without the approval of the UNSC, a Saudi Arabia led coalition has been engaging in armed conflict in Yemen and some of their actions has been classified as war crimes by amnesty international (Darwich 134). For example, they have been accused of intentionally starving the Yemenis and ordering airstrikes which amount to an average of 12 a day. Likewise, the attack of the Saudi-led coalition's attack has been targeting civilians and participants indiscriminately (Darwich 141). Apart from being emboldened by the support of the US, the US has sold billions of dollars' worth of arms to the fighters in the conflict, thus undermining the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations. The continued supply of ammunitions to the combatants is a major way of opposing efforts of the UN to find a peaceful ceasefire and resolution to the issues underlying the conflict. Additionally, by providing arms to the combatants, the US is clearly taking sides in the conflict and as such is an indirect participant.

This way the US has expanded the circle of combatants to include proxy nations, hence complicating the peace process and indirectly supporting continued violence in the region.

Perhaps another significant example was the military intervention in Iraq by a US-led coalition in 2003. The coalition had no official authorization from the UNSC and the action has been widely condemning in the world of international politics. However, the most astonishing aspects of the event was the lack of clear rebuttal for the participants of the event. It will be well noted that the US led invasion of Iraq has some elements of the late 1960s bombing of North Vietnam. In both cases, the US took no authorization from the UNSC and then simply proceeded to intervene with little care about the concerns of the UN (Wertheim 152). Similarly, after the end of the military intervention, there was no internationally agreed framework to help these battered countries. In fact, the present situation experienced in Iraq has been blamed on both the UN and the US and her allies. In this way, the US undermines the actions of the UN by increasing the scope of work of the UN to include functions that were not originally included in its charter. For example, the failure to draw up a framework to help the new government of Iraq recovers from the military invasion of the US-led coalition. The overall undermining effect of the ambivalence of the US is that the UN's failure to carry out its primary function which is to preserve international peace. This failure is well represented in the proliferation of armed conflicts across the Middle East.

4.3 International Co-operation and Globalization

Asides monitoring and ensuring peace in the international community space, the UN has the moral responsibility to help foster co-operation among member nations. In order words, the UN provides an international space where nations can collaborate and ensure the mutual progress of each other. In the light of the recent crisis in Syria and Yemen, one of the major policies that the UN has championed is the refugee protection programs. The program aims to canvass support from nations to help process the refugees and protect their human rights till they can return to their country or find new homes (Gindi 2018). Additionally, countries under the program are encouraged to volunteer to take in refugees to avoid the over working of the refugee processing system (Gindi 2018). However, the US in the regards has taken an exception to this policy in recent times. However, previous administrations had collaborated with the UN in prompting the resettlement of refugees. Most notably, the Obama had some level of agreement with the UN about taking in some refugees as do Canada and superpowers in Europe. However, this agreement was to enshrined in the US's law and policies because the present Trump administration pulled out of the previously held agreement. They cited reasons including the claim that subscribing to the program was going to the UN dictating the immigration policies and laws of the US. Hence the administration pulled out. This situation is reminiscent of the events that occurred in the middle of the 1990s. During this time, the US declined to subscribe or ratify some treaties and charters that it had been heavily involved in (Bang, Hovi, and Detlef 759). Hence, showing a free will of involvement in participating in the UN decision making and implementation system. The current administration showed a blatant disregard for UN laws protecting refugees by creating a new refugee- related policy that totally contradicts those of the UN. The new policy states that that individuals entering the United

States across the southern U.S. land border will be deemed as ineligible for asylum if they passed through another country first and did not attempt to seek asylum there before moving to the US border (Rogerson 2019). This new policy is blind to the fact that UN refugee regulation grants access to effective international protection in those transit countries (Rogerson 2019). This rule was made against the national attempt to responsibly manage US borders in the wake of the exodus of a growing number of people from Central America. People have been leaving for reasons such as extreme economic deprivation and persecution by brutal gangs hence the need for international protection. This asylum policy affects the work of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. UNHCR is not a party to any of the bilateral Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACA) concluded in recent months between the United States and the governments of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (Rogersson 2019). It as well violates international law principles by excessively curtailing the right to apply for asylum, the right to protection from persecution. It raises the burden of proof on asylum seekers beyond the international legal standards as well as limit the basic rights and freedoms of those who manage to meet the asylum conditions (Rogersson 2019). The rule is also discriminatory and offends three important international treaties namely 1967 Refugee Protocol, which guarantees the human right to seek asylum; the Convention Against Torture, which prohibits deporting asylum-seekers to places where they may face bodily harm; and the Geneva Convention on the protection of conflict-affected civilians, which requires humane treatment for civilian detainees, even in war.

Another major recent infringement of the US on the policy and actions of the UN in terms of promoting international co-operation is the arbitrary ban on immigration by the US on certain persons in 2017. In 2017, the Trump administration issued a series of executive orders aimed at banning travel of citizens from specific countries (Narea 2020). Additionally, the administration stripped off all federal funding from “sanctuary cities” and imposed strict border controls (Narea 2020). The 90-day Travel Ban imposed on citizens from seven (7) predominantly Muslim countries later reduced to six (6) and included North Korea and Venezuela. The travel bans barred individuals from such countries even with valid visas and green cards. The travel ban has been argued as violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The ICCPR provides that all people are entitled to equal treatment under the law. It offends a key part of the UN Charter which recognises that all people are entitled to equal rights under the law. The claim is that the travel ban discriminates against Muslims based on religion. This executive order also violates two treaties which the US is a party to namely the UN Refugee Convention which mandates that refugees should not be discriminated based on race, religion, or country of origin. However, the third executive order was later declared valid by the US Supreme Court. Further, in December, the US chose to leave negotiations for the Global Compact on Migration (Narea 2020). The Compact is an international agreement on managing safe, orderly, and regular migration around the globe and contains a commitment from 192 states to work to end child immigration detention.

It can be argued that the actions of the recent administrations might be an anomaly that is not characteristic of the US in terms of international collaboration. However, history has shown that the most consistent feature of the US foreign policy towards the UN is its selectivity in compiling and disregarding regulations and charters of the UN. In other words, the US selectively decides how international laws and regulations are interpreted and enforced within its realm. Any law that is determined to be opposing to the US "national security" and "Sovereignty" is expunged and others that are deemed favourable are promoted. While the selective adherence based on concerns about national security is legitimate, working with the UN to modify concerned laws would have demonstrated that the US is committed to being a member of the UN. However, the acts seen shown instead are extremely undermining and are severely impacting the effectiveness and relevance of UN system.

4.4 Maintaining International Justice

The undermining effect of US ambivalence towards the UN extends into the International Justice System. Because the sovereignty stipulates that other nations' court cannot try a nation, it is paramount a special court be created to settle legal disputes among nations. The rationale behind this international judicial system is that it provides an alternative avenue to settle disputes apart from engaging in armed conflicts. These reasons and many more are the foundational reason the International Court of Justice was established (ICJ). However, the idea of the US being subject to another system apart from its own judiciary has been unsettling to the country right from the start (Hathaway, McElroy, and Aronchick 51). Hence the United

States have always been a reluctant participant in the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Therefore, when the country has any legal charge before the court, it neither responds nor acknowledges the legitimacy of the organisation. Rather, the US had always countered such litigations with withdrawals from treaties and other form of retaliatory measures against the UN and some of its member states. For example, in recent years, the US has withdrawn from international treaties in response to three pending cases in which it is a defendant before the ICJ (Hathaway, McElroy, and Aronchick 51). The first two cases border on the US violation of the provisions of the 1955 treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights between the US and Iran. They were initiated in 2016 and 2018 respectively. The third case initiated in 2018 is a result of the official change of the US Embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv and predicated upon the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The ICJ claimed authority over the Iranian cases and the ordered some measures against the United States in the 3rd case. The United States decision is a violation of the Security Council Resolution 478 - reaffirmed in 2016 - that mandated countries who had diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw them. On the same day that ICJ issued its decision, the United States announced its decision to withdraw from the 1955 Treaty with Iran and the optional protocol on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (). The United States has a long history of withdrawing from treaties in response to ICJ rulings. For example, after the decision of the ICJ in U.S. v. Nicaragua, the US withdrew from the compulsory authority of the court (). While most of the decisions to withdraw treaties are not contrary to the provisions of such treaties, the fact that they were taken in response to opposing ICJ rulings undermines the fundamental purpose of the ICJ. The ICJ was primarily designed to

resolve disputes between states before they escalate into a confrontation. Broadly, this decision also hinders the UN efforts to maintain world peace and order. Apart from undermining efforts to create a legal system that could administer and run the international political space, US poor actions towards the ICJ has undermined the legality of the system itself. For example, some of the persecutorial charges brought to the court include those involving perpetrators of genocides and other crime against humanity. However, when the US was served to come and present evidences against a suit that claimed that American soldier committed war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US threatened to use its economic tool to blacklist high ranking members of the institution. This way, US actions projects the ICJ as biased because not everyone suspected of committing war crimes were judged

4.5. Maintaining Operations

From all the previous examples demonstrated in the thesis so far, all have been cases of the US indirectly making opposing actions to undermine the actions of the UN system. However, the ambivalences of the US that is most potent are the withholding of funds. According to the previous section, it was demonstrated abundantly that the US usually engage in using the withholding tool as a means of bending the will of the UN to its wishes. However, this tool has a direct limiting effect on the UN as it limits the availability of resources it can use to execute its function. Additionally, despite enjoying a larger share of the world's economy, the US has been pushing for a reduced due payment to the UN. This reduced payment was not even first agreed with the UN, rather an act of congress directly limited the amount of money the US can pay to

the UN and its associated system unilaterally. For example, congress agreed to cut bills for peace keeping to 25% when the current agreement at the time with the UN was about 30.3% (Bayram, Burcu, and Graham 441). This clear lack of regard for the independent structure of the UN has been demonstrated by various administrations of the US over the yeast. For instance, the current administration has been emphasizing of even reducing the cuts made to the dues that the US pays to the UN. For instance, the United States is currently the largest contributor to finance to the United Nations, donating 22% of its annual budget (Bayram, Burcu, and Graham 441). The United States approach towards the budget of the UN, in the last three years under Trump, has emphasized funding cuts. The Trump administration has consistently advocated a reduction in the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets. This is despite the \$1 billion that the US owes in arrears to the United Nations. As a result of the foregoing, the UN is currently facing a severe liquidity crisis even after cutting costs. As mentioned earlier, the US is responsible for funding a significant portion of the budgets of many of the UN agencies. This means that a cut in funding is bound to drastically affect them. For instance, the US has cut all funding support for the United Nations Population Fund. In some instances, the US chooses to support some UN agencies on the condition that its programs align with US objectives. Take, for example, the case of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). In a more drastic step, the Trump administration decided to withdraw the US from the World Health Organisation (WHO) right in the middle of the current coronavirus pandemic. Also, the decision of Trump to withdraw from the WHO will take away \$900 million in biennial contributions. The reason given by the administration was that the WHO as an agent of the UN is not catering to American needs and as such should not

enjoy American support (BBC 2020). This rather selfish stance might have been appalling despite the current pandemic, but in the historical context, it should be noted that the US had always used this tool when it generated the maximum impact. For instance, the UN Reform Act, was a tool that force the UN to change its structure and some key policies in exchange for the US repaying its indebted arrears. It should be remembered that the US introduced the tool when the UN was facing serious liquidation because of dire finances, which the US's debt was one of the major causative factors. Hence in keeping with this tradition it should then come as no surprise that the current administration borrowed such play from its history books. Moving on, the major undermining effect of the signature move is that the UN becomes incapacitated in so many ways, leaving it ultimately unable to carry out its function. Some of the functions that are undermined include the human rights and refugee helping commissions that are helping to alleviate the worst humanitarian disasters on the planet.

5.0. Theoretical Explanation: US ambivalence and Undermining Effect

The fact the US played a critical role in the establishment of the UN and its foundational Charter and policies is a deep contrast to how it relates to the organisation. How can a country "birth" such wonderful idea and still act towards it with such level disinterest and ambivalence? This confusing theme has been the focus of several theoretical exposition that has tried to establish a logical consistency to explaining this confusing stem of events. In this section of the thesis, some of the theories will be analysed and discussed.

5.1 Simplistic View

The simplistic theory of the US and UN relation is that the US only engages and collaborates with the UN when the conditions are considered favourable. In other words, the US chooses what policy to follow and what they would not subscribe to. Hence, one can conclude that the US is totally and purely selfish in its relationship with the UN. To lend credence to this view, traditional international relations theories like realism and liberalism must be applied in explaining this selfish behaviour. The tenets of realism suggest that the state is the principal actor in the international political space and that the actions of individuals and international organisation are limited in such realm (Beer and Hariman 9). Likewise, the theory states that the states value their nation interests above all other interests in dealing with other nations ((Beer and Hariman 12). Likewise, it is believed that the actors are rational thinkers and that states exist at a level of anarchy that always forces them to selfishly protect their national interests in the face of stiff interstate competition. To initially apply these concepts, it is easy to

conclude that policy makers of the US rationally conclude that the UN is just an international body that have no significant power not status in the international space. Likewise, they must be ready to protect the interest of the US in its totality because there no help coming from anywhere to help the resolve their conflict. Hence, when the policy makers see that they are at risk of running afoul of their national interest by collaborating with the UN, the policy makers will easily choose their "national interest" over the "indulgence" of the UN regulations. Likewise, the theory has also explained that the national interest of nations is intrinsically linked to gaining more power and access to resources. Hence, this can explain why the US was quick to engage in the Korean war without waiting for the approval of the UNSC as they believe that allowing the proliferation of communism will diminish their powerbase. Likewise, the same can be used to explain why the US elected to attack Iraqi. Hence the theory can explain why the US was prone to taking unilateral decisions that involve using military and economic interventions to achieve the goals of its national security even in the face of UN opposition. In a statement of fact consistent with the argument, the basic theory that underlined US foreign policy during the cold war was realism ((Beer and Hariman 29).

Another traditional theory whose elements can be used to explain the ambivalence of the US is the Liberalism theory of international relations. Liberalism is a moral-focused theory that claims that the most important function of the government is to ensure that its citizens' human right and prosperity is protected (Keohane 131). Hence, the liberalists believe that democracy is more viable form of governance than monarchy and other imperial forms of governance. Likewise, the theory eschews the impact of having a significant military power as it can be used

to oppress citizens as well as fight in armed conflicts. At the same time, liberalists believe that co-operation is easily achieved by democratic governments making it possible to ensure international peace. According to these tenets, the US initially pushed for the ascension of human right and justice as the core foundation of the UN as Roosevelt said, without them a viable international organisation is not possible (Keohane 136). Likewise, the drive of the US to spread democracy around the world can be explained as they believe that democratic nations can easily collaborate in the international space. Likewise, liberalism easily demonstrates why the US and other superpowers at the time believe that international co-operation was the key way to avoid another international worldwide armed conflict.

However, the simplistic view cannot fully explain why the US wants to collaborate with the UN but only seem to do so with great pains. For example, monitoring the UN for the implementation of the UN Reform Act was not an easy option as the US could have easily pulled out. In the same vein, none of the theories can explain why the US and other superpowers in the democratic world were heavily hostile to non-democratic nations. Also, the simplistic view seems to be unable to explain why some administration of the US was more favourable to extensively collaborating with the US, while others remain blatantly hostile. Likewise, the view is unable to explain the collaboration of the UN members in 1991 against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

5.2 Social View

The social view of the US ambivalence with the UN is based on the constructivism theory of international relations. The constructivism theory states that the experiences of nations in the international relations landscape is socially constructed (Adler 115). For example, the US might not view an arms accumulation by Canada or the UK as unfavourable. However, the same action by China might be perceived as a threat. Hence, the core of the experiences that shape the policies and acts of nations are socially interpreted. Hence this explains why the US sometimes say that the actions of the UN were not in the interest of the American people because they are socially constructed by the US in this manner with evidences they have. Likewise, it is the same reason that the US took to fighting that had no direct connection to its territoriality. But instead the advancement of communism was socially constructed as a threat to the existence of the US, hence they needed to be done with and curtailed by any means necessary. Likewise, systems or nations that socially view each other favourably have a common shared view of others (Adler 115). Applying this to the collaboration between the US and its allies, it can be seen in the coalition that invaded Iraq in 2003. In the coalition, about 50 allies of the US together joined forces to invade Iraq even though there was no concrete proof except the fact that the US viewed the Iraqi regime at the time as have extremely hostile intentions towards it. Hence, it then means that all the rationale underlying US foreign policies are all socially constructed and are always under social construction. This means that the views are subject to change depending on the prevalent social perspective (Adler 128). Therefore, leaving space for change in these social perspectives. This can explain why some US administrations have a more favourable disposition to the UN than others. For instance, the Obama

administration was more interested in working with the UN despite reservations about its policies and some of activities. Likewise, the Clinton administration tried to work with the UN to repay the arrears owed through the UN Reform Act. However, the others like the current Trump administration are uninterested in working closely with the US, hence increased ambivalence to the UN in recent years. Strangely, the era of military collaboration with the Soviets in the 1991 Iraqi war happened during the Bush Snr regime which is similar in ideology to Trump's. Hence showing that individualism places a role in interpreting the experiences and shaping policies. Likewise, the theory extends that the agency and structure of actors and the system influences each other (Adler 129). In this case, the perceived ambivalence is equally shared by the UN and the US and change is dependent in both parties altering their view. This influence of agency and structure was displayed during the implementation of the UN reform act. During that time, various officials of the UN expressed their distrust of the US concerning its word about paying the arrears when all conditions were met. This was vehemently denied by the US but they eventually did this by adding an extra condition to the third phase of the Act's implementation.

5.3 Normative Complex View

Another way to approach and explain the action of the US towards to the UN is to explore the complex conceptual theory proposed by John Ikenberry in a paper published in 2003. In the theory, Ikenberry suggested that no simple theory could be used to effectively explain the complex ambivalence of the US to UN. In the paper, he explained that the US had already entered an institutional bargain with the rest of the world. One that cannot be reversed without great cost. Likewise, the US cannot abandon the institutions without paying a price in terms of

its sense of self as the UN was moulded in the image of the US. Also, the reluctance to accept that another body greater than it has greater judicial superiority to discern and judge its matters is another complicating factor. When all these are considered, the depth of the ambivalence

appears to be unravelling. The paper further cited the theory of states behaviour in inter-state institutions. In the theory, it is determined that leading states enter such institutions to "lock-in" weaker states to the rules of the organisation (Ikenberry 52). However, the leading states usually consider ways to ensure that the institution's policies and rules have small effect on limiting their own autonomy and behaviour. At the same time, the weaker states stay "lock-in" because they expect that the generally agreed policies of the institution would limit the actions and discernment of the leading states. In other cases, these policies make the behaviour of the powerful states more predictable (Ikenberry 52). Therefore, there is an exchange of freedom from both the leading and weaker states in maintaining membership of such organisation. However, each state must access the benefits of the system and agree to commit or not. For instance, if the leading states believe that they can fully attain their objectives without the institution, then they refuse to trade any part of their autonomy or discernment to remain within such organisation. The same can be said of smaller nations that can move out to band with other smaller states or opposing leading states to attain their own interests. Hence, it shows that a set of calculation is always involved in constantly assessing the pros and cons of belonging to different international organisations like the UN. It then stands that all parties to the UN wants to be institutionalized only to a degree that ensure that their interests are well catered for. Anything beyond this is met with stiff reluctance and resistance in some cases (Ikenberry 57). To apply this concept, the level of bargaining can be seen in the US actions towards the UN

since the Korean War. For example, the US decided to invade Iraq because it believes that it could attain the objective on its own and it also did the same for the Korean War, even though authorization from the UNSC later arrived. In recent times, the assassination of Osama bi-

laden by the Obama administration and that of Iranian General Soleimani by the Trump administration had no reference or deference to neither UNSC nor any UN body. In both cases, the US set out to achieve its goals independently because it could unilaterally get it done. Although the actions of the US can be interpreted as illegal by UN standards, none of the western states complained when the Iranian general was murdered without authorization. Hence showing that they were willing to turn a blind eye because it was in their interest. This future gives credits to John Ikenberry's stickiness theory. However, when the matter related to North Korea is considered by the US, it deems it better to use the UNSC to condemn the country and limit its nuclear ability through "legal" UN backed economic sanctions.

One might then wonder why the US has not pulled out of the UN completely and merely become an adjunct member. However, the stickiness theory institutions themselves have a self-perpetuating mechanism by making the withdrawal process length and extremely complex (Ikenberry 58). An example is the current Brexit negotiations that are currently taking up to 3 years to sort out. Additionally, the link between the self-image of the US and the UN is another complicating factor that keeps the US "lock-in" while simultaneously taking various unilateral steps to achieve its aim its council. For example, the UN is tasked with keeping world peace, and as such it is difficult for the US to morally quit the organisation in total because it will seem like the UN's founding state is turning its back on world peace. Therefore, it then stands that

the US is in a relationship that it must maintain even if its actions are not exemplary of true membership.

6.0 Current and Future Consequences of US Ambivalence

6.1 Current Consequences

The ambivalent actions of the United States are not without several consequences for the international community and the UN. to begin with the withdrawal from the human rights council of the UN. The US has set a dangerous precedence that could potentially change the fundamentals of how human rights are defined. For example, the withdrawal from the council gives other superpowers like China and Russia the chance to stamp their authority on the function of this council. Additionally, the US rightly pointed that board members of the council included Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. These countries and some others have a history of abusing human rights themselves. For instance, by allowing such countries to oversee the functions of the council, the world stands at a risk of human right abuses being under-reported in some part of the world. Hence, creating a situation where the unbiased character of the UN will be compromised and the all other characters of the UN will also be questioned as well. Additionally, the foreign policy actions of the US are threatening International human rights in another way apart from allowing it to be easily manipulated. The United States has historically offered a complementary and a global leadership role in promoting human rights. However, the recent policies of the US are possible indications that the aligning with international human right standards is that of convenience. For instance, the withdrawal of the US from the UN Human Rights Council and the failure to cooperate with UN Special Rapporteurs on the Human Rights situation have both cast serious doubts on the credibility of the UN to hold powerful countries accountable. This way, the relevance of the UN is further diminished. Apart

from this, the US is also setting a dangerous precedence that other countries can adopt to further create a wide spread undermining of the UN in terms of protecting universal human right. For instance, countries whose human rights record is called into question might simply stop co-operating with the UN rapporteurs and even leave the human rights commissions as the US did. Hence effectively cutting off the proper means of keeping countries accountable for their human right violation acts.

In terms of peace keeping, the US is the major contributor to peacekeeping bill in the world. Therefore, the role occupied by the US is a sensitive position whose ambivalence has contributed to the instabilities presently occurring in the Middle East and some other regions around the world. For example, after unilaterally decimating the Iraqi Government without any tangible recovery plan, the US left an unstable state that has become the hot bed for training terrorist. Furthermore, the unilateral actions of the US emboldened Iran whose activities joined in the Syrian civil war causing further instability in the region (Wastnidge 152). Likewise, the increasing ambivalence of the US and the standoff with Russia in the matter has created a situation where the UN has been unable to create a lasting cease-fire to the ongoing conflict that has displaced millions of people. It is not surprising that the hot bed of terrorist bred the creation of the Islamic State in the region between Syria and Iraq where the actions of the US and allies and even Russia and Iran have created instability. The result of the Islamic State problem has spread beyond the region and several attacks in Europe were credited to the influence of the Islamic State (Ahram 184). Additionally, by refusing to acknowledge its

negative role in ongoing Yemen crisis, the US has also tacitly provided public support for authoritarian regimes. As such, there may be no end in sight for the Yemen war which is already the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Therefore, the ambivalence of the US has resulted in countries taking after their example and causing unilateral military interventions of their own. Additionally, the immediate effect was the proliferation of conflicts around the region which is still ongoing till date. This means that the US has created a situation where the UN has failed in its duty to mediate international peace across various regions. The direct effect on UN's ability is both external and internal. The internal effect is that the US limited financial contribution has left the UN with insufficient resources to fully dispense its peace keeping duties. Likewise, the actions of the US in unilaterally making military interventions in regional conflicts are complicating the peace mediating process. This is because before the UN can make any headway in Yemen and Syria for instance, it needs the cooperation of the US to hold the warring parties accountable and that seems impossible with the withdrawal of the US from the council and reports that incriminated US in crimes committed against Yemeni citizens. Hence the UN is unable to carry out any of its peace keeping duties or conflict resolution functions. This act contributes to jeopardizing the peace of the world.

Furthermore, the effect of US ambivalence extends to international co-operation among member nations. It was previously established that the US policy on immigration is significantly affecting the co-operation among states and setting dangerous precedence. For example, the banning of members of certain states based on their nationality was in violation of several human right policies and regulations of the UN. Hence, the blatant disregard for a policy as

sensitive as this will indirectly encourage other countries to take their own steps that will further complicate the process of monitoring the protection of human rights and collaborative efforts that the UN is mandated to facilitate. Specifically, the current ban by the present administration on selected people from countries violates three major rights treaties. Consequently, this action may create negative impression about the political commitments of the United States in international relations and systems. In addition, the decision to cease abiding with the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action related to the Iran Nuclear deal and impose sanctions is contradictory to the UN Security Council Resolution NO. 231. This is a clear undermining of the Article 25 of the UN Charter which provides that Council's decisions are legally binding. As a result, American national interests are seen to supersede UN Security council decisions.

Also, the funding cuts to humanitarian agencies by the United States would also occasion untold hardships on a million of internally displaced persons and refugees. As well, it would destabilise the already fragile countries and populations. Similarly, the intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement has some implications for the functions and credibility of the United Nations (The Guardian 2020). Climate change is the foremost issue that threatens the collective existence and survival of human beings. This underscores the importance of the Paris Agreement and the critical need for a US leadership on global climate. In clear terms, the fact that the second-largest emitter of carbon waste will pull out of the agreement effectively serves as a drawback on the efforts of the UN to deliver a multilateral and coordinated approach towards solving the present threat constituted by climate change.

Additionally, the consequences of the undermining actions of the US on the international justice system are quite dangerous as it has the potential to derail world peace. For instance, the underlying foundation of the ICJ is to act as an arbiter amongst nations. This is expected to reduce the tendencies to resort to violent process to settle their dispute. However, the US has refused to give full credence to the ICJ and it has even threatened to place sanctions on members of the ICJ panel of Judges. While it is quite true that the US will not find it palatable to defer to another justice system outside of its own. The blatant attack on the system however, is a step too far. This is because with a resonating threat against a UN appointed panel, the US is demonstrating that the rationale for creating the ICJ in the first place is not feasible. By creating this impression, countries that have similar dominance can easily quench the will of weaker states with complete disregard to injections of the ICJ. An example of this is currently paying out in the South China Sea where China is unilaterally laying claim to several islands that are disputed with its neighbours including Japan (Rubiolo 123). Several of these countries have raised their concerns with the UN and the ICJ. However, China like the US is disregarding every form of injection about its stance. This event has prompted Japan to begin to consider rebuilding its army after years of pursuing purely pacifist purpose (Rubiolo 125). Hence, the lack of a credible arbiter between China and Japan is leading both countries towards a path of military and economic collision. The same can be said of Russia' annexing of Crimea from Ukraine (Aydin and Fethi 42). The action taken by Russia in this event was unilateral and was widely condemned by most parties in the UN. However, because Russia, just like the US and China do not defer to the authority of the ICJ. Hence, there was no way to rein in the actions of the country and an armed conflict ensued that resulted in an armistice till today. Additionally, by disregarding the injunctions of the ICJ the US is invalidating previous

rulings of the ICJ system. For example, the ICJ once settled a territorial dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon during these millennia. The ruling gave the disputed land area to the relatively weaker Cameroon and the Nigeria government accepted the decision with much rancour and complain (Irwin 10). However, should the example of China, Russia, and the US be followed, Nigeria can overpower Cameroon and take back the land area it once let go. In this way, the ambivalent action of the US is creating a massive precedence that could undermine world peace and lead the world to an increased incidence of regional conflicts.

6.2 Possible Future Consequences.

The historical attitude of the US to the UN has been one of neglect/disinterest, transactional diplomacy, and cuts. This path has always been interrupted with brief periods of common solidarity and mutual support. However, if the US continues to tread this path of disinterest, renouncement of membership to charters and treaties, and transactional diplomacy with the UN, it will eventually evolve to a more openly hostile stance. History has shown that periods of sustained disinterest in the late 1970 and early 1980s left the relationship between the both parties in abject hostilities with regular confrontations recorded. Therefore, it is possible that the ambivalent policy of the US towards the UN descends to such low depths. If such is the case, several powerful countries who also abhor selfish agendas might adopt the transactional approach of the US. This increased adoption of transactional strategy may usher in a ‘power-based international legal order’ as opposed to the ‘rules-based international legal order’ which the UN espouses. As such, the UN will be conveniently used as a platform to advance various national interests and domestic policy objectives. The UN will be side-lined or engaged

depending on the immediate situation. For example, the United States treatment of North Korea and associated sanctions. The danger in this is that even conventional international laws like the tenets of human rights will be disregarded and the selective enforcement of policies and laws will prevail. Additionally, the ability of nations to wage the most powerful economic war will be a widely used tool in international politics. It then stands that weaker countries will be exploited more than ever before.

Furthermore, the continued ambivalence to the UN will make the UN seem like an arbitration or deliberation forum that has no real authority especially in matters of global significance. Consensus may no longer be reached on matters of global significance like climate change. As such, we may witness a US which does not accede to the authority of the UN in some matters where it goes against its national interests. This might endanger the world and put human civilization at risk as states will be unable to adopt a single platform to work on securing the survival of humans. Also, the case of protracted wars in some parts of the Middle East without the US being held accountable may bring about a world where the US is truly above the “international law of crime”. Hence, this would render all current international laws useless and ultimately be the downfall of the UN system. Likewise, the failure of the United States to live up to its pledge may provide political and moral grounds for other countries to follow suit.

Hence, more nations will owe the US and the sustainability of billions of vulnerable people will be jeopardized. Another possible scenario is that other nations will conveniently choose to disregard UN principles. Authoritarian countries which are notorious to human rights abuses may do so more conveniently and that will lead to a less peaceful world. This is because the actions of the US and its various administrations consistently speak in ways that denigrate the institution of the United Nations and the Human rights bodies, human rights laws, and norms. This constant attack by the US has a long-term effect on the credibility of the UN. Consequently, third-party observers may start to lose faith in the institutions and that results in less domestic support. Similarly, the fact that the US, being the leader of the world and its most dominant hegemon, as well as the most important stakeholder in the UN takes a derisive attitude towards it will make it easier for other nations to do so. If the US decides to take a hostile approach towards the UN, it opens the landscape for other powers like China and Russia to increase more of their global influence. These are nations that publicly show their disregard for human rights for instance Hong Kong Security Law by China and Crimean invasion by Russia. This might spell the end of the prominence given to the protection of human rights by the UN. Similarly, proponents of national sovereignty will increasingly question the relevance and usefulness of the UN Charter whenever a state disagrees with it. This would have a lasting impact on globalisation and the global economic integration that the world currently enjoys. A more hostile stance could produce a US that massively reduces funding for the UN budgets, demands closure of peacekeeping operations and shifting from assessed to voluntary funding, acts which are harmful to the existence of the UN. A likely scenario is also a UN that may no longer be fit for purpose. The purpose of the UN is to

maintain world peace, order, and stability. If the UN does not continually engage with stakeholders in Washington, it may soon lose its relevance on addressing matters of global interest where powerful countries are concerned.

7.0 Conclusion

The thesis considered how the US ambivalent actions have been undermining the UN. The hegemony of the US was established in economic terms as the country has the largest economy in the world and this has always been the case since the end of the Second World War. Additionally, it was established that the hegemony of the US during the cold war in terms of economic resources has always been at least double those of their nearest rival. However, recently, the gap between the economy of the US and China its rival has reduced. Therefore, the economic hegemony has been the critical factor that has been the central focus of the ambivalent relationship between the US and the UN. On the other hand, the ambivalence was not always present during the creation of the UN after the Second World War. The creation of the UN and its agencies mirror the American philosophy and it was mainly a tool with which the US sought to expand its influence across the world. Likewise, the US used the IMF and other economic organ of the UN to ensure that it had access to resources across the world and in every continent through the increasing integration of economies around the world. However, when the direct support for positions favourable to the US dwindled in the UN starting in the early 1960s, signs of ambivalence began to show. The disillusionment with the UN grew with the actions of the G77 groups whom the US believed owes its independence to its previous campaign for decolonization. Thus, by the early 1970s, the US had already taken different unilateral steps outside of the UN in the international political space. Then by the mid-1980s the US began to use the funds withholding policy to force "co-operation" from the

UN. This fund withholding practice will then dominate how the US relates with the UN and several organs in its system till the present time.

Additionally, it was demonstrated that the ambivalent actions of the US through its unilateral decisions and fund withholding were undermining the UN and its agencies in several ways, one of those was the pulling out of the UN human right council and the withdrawal of funds from the UN Palestine refugee relief agency. This action was shown to be incapacitating the UN and reducing the consensual legitimacy of the UN and its agencies. Likewise, the withholding of funds as well as several unauthorized military interventions by the US has left the UN unable to protect and ensure peace in some regions across the world. Furthermore, the US actions were shown to be limiting international co-operation through UN legal instruments as the country made some other policies and law as that were contradictory to the position of the UN. Finally, it was shown that the action contributed to undermining international justice system as well as limiting the efficiency of the UN. Further, 3 major theoretical views were applied to explain the reason for US ambivalent acts. The simple view suggests that the US selfishly pick policies that is most convenient and disregards the UN when its wishes are not honoured. However, the social theory suggests that the social construction of the UN and US Ideologies is responsible for the acts of the ambivalence, On the other hand the complex stickiness theory proposes that belonging to such legal international organisation itself demands that nations do not fully integrate it as it might infringe on its autonomy and sovereignty. In the same vein, the effect of the ambivalence was shown to severely handicap the UN in maintaining world peace as well as contributing to regional conflicts around the world. In the future, continued

ambivalence by the US was demonstrated to be enough to create a system of instability that might engulf the world in a conflagration of anarchy.

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