

# **The Possibilities of War Prevention in the Post-Cold War Era: Myth and Reality**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

It is the expectation of people and scholars alike that the end of the Cold war would usher in peace in the international system. However, the reverse has been the case, for instead of conflict attenuating in the globe, conflicts is said to have reached an alarming proportion which must be nipped. There has been thesis and antithesis on the possibilities of war prevention in post-Cold war world. The post-Cold war era and moments of disquietism is a creation of the satisfied powers. This is evidenced in the accusation and counter-accusation of the various schools of thoughts on failures of peaceful international relations. The US liberal imperialist project in the world has snowballed into more global conflicts by destroying the peace that it seeks to establish, especially in a bid to install democracy and other liberal principles, which has been harsh and hostile to the receiver nations. The realist theory which emphasizes on power politics provided the theoretical basis for this paper. The paper used qualitative data from secondary sources to argue that previous studies dwelt on things that are pertaining to war prevention in the globe but yet war kept increasing. The paper revealed that; the post-Cold war tension according to this paper is a creation of the major industrialized powers as evidenced in the not too stringent modalities on arms deals. For it took these military powers less than a year of the post-Cold war world to change their policy on arms transfer to other countries by reviewing it down ward of less than a year for approval. When it comes to legitimate purchase and demands by countries, the US begins to dilly dally and would prefer dealing with third parties. The paper concludes that for international peace to be realistic there must be attitudinal change among the major powers, if not, peace would remain elusive. The paper recommends inter alia that the great powers should be transparent on issue concerning international peace and war prevention rather than playing politics with them.

**Key words:** war prevention, post-Cold war, realism, liberalism

## **Introduction**

It is now over three decades of post-Cold war world in which many thought would bring relative peace to the international system but rather what is obtainable are coterie of conflicts that have remained unresolved, thereby resonating in the realist assumptions that the international system is anarchistic. It is believed in many quarters that the post-Cold war world offers an historic opportunity for collaboration to resolve ongoing violent conflicts and prevent new ones. However, a number of long standing conflicts are touted to have diminished, even if they are yet to be settled. It could be said that more than at any time in this century, none of the major centers of power- the United States, Russia, Western Europe, China, Japan-perceives other major powers as currently posing a serious military threat or are fundamentally antagonistic to its interests.

To be sure, the phrase “post-Cold” refers to an idea which evolved in the late 1980s and the 90s signaling that a new age of international relations had begun, given such events as the

crumbling of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. More so, the phrase became associated with the advocacy of the term “global” as substitute for “international” which informed scholarship tilting towards the globalization of the world and the jettisoning of the realist explanation to international politics; peace activists such as Galtung (1980) and others like King (1986) opinionated that international peace by peaceful means would characterize the new era, and civil society institutions (non- governmental organizations) would rise up to challenge the autonomy and perhaps even the sovereignty of nation states. The question that demands answer is that could there really be peace by peaceful means as adduced by these scholars, when it is clear that we are in the international system that is dominated by nation states and all contesting for dominance and relevance? As pointed out by the skeptics of this new world order, power relations between nations would continue to be the key to world affairs, and then, there are always the threats from non-state actors especially the violent ones (Kissinger,1994; Kennedy,1987).

What may be safely said is that certain Cold war tactics are over, for instance, détente, but the world is still a dangerous place due to entrant of new actors on the scene as well as the presence of old actors which presupposes a change in tactics. This paper explores the possibilities of preventing war in this era, when it was touted to be more peaceful than the pre 1989 era. Presently there is advancement in technology in the world and nation states are not ignorant of this fact. There are also advancements in military industrial build up (Freedman, 1998). This study will attempt to provide a brief survey of perspectives in understanding the dynamics of post-Cold war international conflict and the thesis and antithesis for war prevention in the midst of disquietism in the international system. The questions this paper seeks to answer are, who are responsible for conflicts situation in the globe? Could it be the militarily underdeveloped South or the militarily developed West? All these, we seek to interrogate in this paper.

### **Intellectual Riposte post -Cold War Conflict**

At the end of the Cold war, there were two sharply contrasting predictions for the future of human conflict realistically feared that with the collapse of the Soviet empire would unsettle the balance of power and eliminate the nuclear deterrence that had provided stability after World War 11. Mearsheimer (1990), likened the end of the Cold war to taking the lid off a pressure cooker at full power, and the contents of the pot would likely scatter all over and would affect everyone. To him old conflicts that had been held in check by nuclear deterrence which would re-emerge and take Europe back to its conflict-ridden part. Mearsheimer (1990 and 1994), argued further that Germany and Ukraine needed nuclear forces to balance their nuclear neighbours, France and Russia respectively. What Mearsheimer failed to understand was that Germany, like Japan in post-world war 11 would not want to pursue a belligerent foreign policy or be involved in arms build-up rather they prefer to align herself with the United States. Also, his submission is shallow in the sense that there is no way that old conflict can re-emerge when the nuclear armament of countries are intact, his judgment is premised on what German’s former leader did after he lost the World War 1. However, Hitler could not make use of the gas and chemical weapons at his disposal during the World War 11, being the only one that had it then, because he thought the United States had it, so Hitler was in a kind of security dilemma during that period. But this does not foreclose states from building their capabilities in post-cold war world, for war is inevitable, though it may take another dimension and states would not want to be caught unawares.

In a somewhat different but also highly pessimistic scenario, Huntington (1996) argued that conflict in the post-cold war world would follow age old fault lines of civilization, with the Muslim world versus the West as particularly unhealthy combination. Radical/ structuralist interpretations of world politics in the post-cold war world also tended towards the pessimistic.

These views focus on the ills that befell the world in the absence of a counterweight to Western economic and military power. Exploitation of the Third world will be exacerbated, because Third world countries can no longer play the Soviet card to obtain concessions from the West. Development assistance will decline; capitalism will run rampant which sure did, inequality will increase along with environmental quality and the net result will be increased turmoil and armed conflict.

The liberal perspective on the post-cold war world is much more optimistic. It viewed the passing of the Cold war world as an opportunity for ending ideological rivalry, settling military conflict, building peace on firm basis of democracy and prosperity, strengthening the role of the United Nations in the world order and reducing military expenditure (Russet & Oneal, 2001). The democratic peace theory is guilty of obscurantism as further highlighted by the realist, when liberal imperial interventions aimed at instilling democracy and restoring universal human rights in other countries in the world are considered. Doyle (1983) admits that liberalism has been a failure in Third world countries and has remained so, while Fukuyama (1992) is apt to parry the blame towards cultural dispositions in the places where liberal democracy has not yet flourished (Doyle, 1983; Fukuyama, 1992). More so, Mearsheimer (2011) outlined the problems in the American project to bring democracy to third world countries in order to achieve an international peace as per the democratic peace principles. Taking the realist perspective, Mearsheimer argues that America's liberal agenda has resulted in the superpower being at war for "two out of every three years since 1989", therefore advancing that US's liberal imperialist project to safeguard human rights and spread democracy has actually snowballed into more global conflict by destroying the peace that it seeks to establish. Mearsheimer (2011), Downs & Mesquita (2004) further adumbrated on the problems of liberal imperialism and how social engineering in third world countries has been particularly unsuccessful for the United States of America. Regardless, of the above observations, the liberals argue that the peace held together between democratic nations such as the European Union as well as the United States of America, Canada, Japan, Australia and India is directly attributable to the democratic peace theory. The question is if democracy does not work in third world countries, is it the reason for wars and conflict in the globe? That democracy worked in the advanced western countries should not be used as a yardstick to measure others when their peculiarities were not considered. The United States did take its role as the liberal hegemon and used its soft power to spread liberal ideas around the world as Nye (1990) had urged it to do but this had negative impact on international stability as rather than encouraging peace, it brought violence. In the aftermath of September 11 2001 when America came under attack from Al-Qaeda, the global hegemon turned imperial and adopted an aggressive stand towards those who did not agree with its liberal outlook of the world. This failed policy resulted in states such as: North Korea, Iran and Iraq being termed as the axis of evil. The aftermath of this was that America proceeded to invade Iraq in 2004 and due to the security threat North Korea declared itself a nuclear power whereas suspicions are rife that Iran is reaching nuclear capability as well.

However, this position of the liberals is repudiated and farfetched; for not only has the peace building which they said is strung on democratic ethos unrealistic, because what is obtainable in the globe is pseudo-democracy, that is full of pretensions and perturbation and the heavy investment in military technology by the advanced west led by the United States of America, and her allies such as France and Britain and other militarily capable powers as Russia and China and other statistics on armed conflict in the post-cold war world yield a measure of support for the realist pessimism in the former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus. In both of these areas the removal of a repressive overlay resulted in violence. However, these conflicts were attributed more to the breaking down of two authoritarian states, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, than to the decline of nuclear deterrence. Despite this, the dissolution of the Soviet

empire proceeded in a remarkable and peaceful manner compared, for instance to the end of the Tzarist, Hababurg or Nazi empires. According to Gleditsch, et.al (2001), the development of armed conflict after world war 11 to year 2000, which is from 1946-2000 led to at least 25 battle deaths in a given year. This figure includes interstate as well as internal conflicts. This statistics is quite infinitesimal compared to what is obtainable in Africa and in the Middle East as a result of terrorists' attacks and other internal conflicts. This scenario was stated by the liberalist when they pointed out that in the aftermath of the great changes in 1989, the number of world conflicts increased.

While liberalism and realism both offer certain concrete proposals for war prevention in the international system, both perspectives are not devoid of fault lines which actually exhibit some of the issues that lie within their arguments for peace. Taking the liberal democratic peace theory, which has been termed almost as good as an empirical law in international relation, has its weaknesses where it fails to address democratic states' and their attitudes towards non democratic nations (Levy, 1989:88b). Liberalists are concerned with a normative agenda such as human rights and their universal appeal which has allowed liberals to disregard the sovereignty of countries where non democratic governments prevail (Fukuyama, 1992). Liberal's such as Fukuyama have damaged the prospects of peace despite their belief in the democratic peace theory due to liberal democracy's status as the end point of human civilization, which cannot be bettered (Fukuyama, 1992). Fukuyama's claim that Islam is grave threat to liberal democratic project as well as the belief that certain value systems are hard to digest have had a negative impact on the maintenance of peace in other parts of the world where liberal democracies have taken it upon themselves to spread the universal idea of human freedom and dignity through coercive and in some cases outright militant means (Fukuyama, 1992,:44, 235).

Realists have presented their own thesis with regard to the democratic peace theory and stated that the democratic peace theory's assumptions such as democracies and their peaceful mien, decentralized distribution of power should hold when confronted with conflict of interests with non-liberal states (Jervis, 2002). However, where liberal states should act peacefully with other non-liberal states, democratic peace theory's assumptions have turned up to be vacuous, supporting the neo-realist view of security competition in the anarchic arena of international relations. Some realists such as Mearsheimer (1994) and Jervis (2002) have attributed democratic peace between democratic nations due to the security blanket provided by the United States of America, since the end of the second world war, especially those that belongs to the same alliance as them (emphasis mine), nonetheless liberals have provided their own counter argument by pointing out the successful transfer of hegemony in international politics between liberal democracies such as Britain and the United States of America at the starting point of the 20th century as a transfer of global power between both the states without any conflict and hostility between the two nations (Doyle, 1983).

Therefore, this paper is couched in the language of the realist theory which emphasizes on power politics as put forward by Morgenthau (1965 and 1985) and his intellectual co-travelers. The realists thus operate with a core assumption that world politics unfolds in an international anarchy, thus might becomes right. The dominance of the United States in the post-Cold world era is evident here; it is either you accede to their terms or you will be tagged an enemy. Not only are you labeled an enemy, they would do anything within their reach to torpedo regimes that are anti-America and adverse to the corresponding reforms they may reel out. More fundamental is the issues of arms build-up and capabilities among the major powers and these new arms must seek for an outlet that has resulted in conflicts and tensions in the globe.

It need be stated here, that the United States enjoys a preponderance of power and influence in the international system, and is thus the key player in maintaining order or

choosing to disrupt it. The distribution of power is said to determine the distribution of benefits within the international system. The great powers set the rules and create institutions to enhance their security and prosperity and guide the behavior of other states.

The paper uses the qualitative data from secondary sources to analyze events in the globe in the post-Cold war international system as it regards possibilities of war prevention. As alluded elsewhere in this paper the post-Cold war international system has been tensed up by the behaviours of the superpowers and their actions concerning pockets of wars across the globe, especially in the third world countries which describes why conflicts still persist.

#### The Nature of Conflict in Post-Cold War Era

Most conflicts in the post-Cold war world, as in the bulk of the Cold war years, have been internal conflicts. There have always been very few interstate armed conflicts classified as interstate. In recent years (Yugoslavia, Eritrea-Ethiopia and others) have been borderline cases where the warring parties have been part of the same national state. An encouraging trend is that there has not been a single interstate war in the post-Cold war era claiming more than 100,000 lives, whereas such wars occurred in earlier decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the recent past the Iran-Iraqi war of 1980-88 claimed more than one million lives.

There have been some large wars in terms of the number of countries involved, the amount of military material and the number of combat troops (notably the Gulf war of 1991 and 2003 and the Kosovo war of 1999), but neither wars claimed human life anywhere near this scale. This was as a result of advancement in military technology where precision weapons were at work; corroborating the thesis that acquiring new weapons as a continuum. It must be noted that the large wars that occurred during the cold war, after all, may also be traced to the way in which the superpowers played each other off by picking their preferred side and aid the war with the supply of finance and materials, as was the case on the war between Iraq and Iran in which the US and defunct Soviet Union played significant role. It was observed by scholars such as Tyler (2002) and Riegle (1994), that the US aided Iraq financially and otherwise, to the extent that both Biological and Chemical weapons were used against Iran in the war.

The large number of international conflicts is closely linked to the state formation process in the decolonialization period, with shifting governance structures and power coalitions and with numerous unsettled claims for secession. During the cold war any of such local conflict could become a globally significant issue if the superpowers allied themselves with the warring parties, as they did in Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, Vietnam, the Middle East and elsewhere. In the post-Cold war world the major powers have to in an unprecedented extent worked together to contain the conflict, rather than exploit them in wars by proxy. The swift and relatively one-sided war by the US from the eviction of Iraq from Kuwait would most certainly have played out differently had US and Russia rivalry being a major factor.

Many of the dire permutations for the post-Cold war have been based on projected increase in ethnic conflict. Indeed, many of the new states have been divided along ethnic lines, and the conflicts of state formation have followed that direction. Scholars averred that most countries though ethnically divided did not suffer state collapse or armed struggle (Mueller, 2000; Gurr, 2000). However, their submission, most states are at the blink of collapse presently as could be seen in most African states that armed struggles is rife.

More fundamentally, the geographical distribution of conflict shows clearly that most internal conflicts took place in poor countries. That is to say that the post-Cold war world had tripartite conflict areas: one is the long, but fairly narrow band of conflict emanating from the Balkans through the Middle East and the Caucasus to India. Most of these conflicts have an ethnic or perhaps civilization basis that may be hard to erode. It could be said that armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia has declined, even in the Middle East, there has not been a major war pitting Israel against an Arab nation since 1985, even though in the past such wars occurred about every 6-9 years. This relative peace enjoyed by Israel may not be far from the

sophisticated weapons of mass destruction at their disposal. What have befallen them recently are just light skirmishes from terrorist gangs such as Hezbollah. The second broad area of conflict is the shorter band of conflict in Central America into South America. Most of the Central American conflicts have been settled, or are in the process of being settled. The ever serious armed conflict in South America is in Colombia. The US intervened in that conflict by availing the government of the requisite military and financial aid to decimate the activities of violent non-state actors in the country (Tickner, 2007; US Department of Defense, 2012; Thomas and Dougherty, 2013). The US was involved in the Colombia conflict because of her interest in the country with regards to narcotics and others. The third area of turmoil is Africa where armed conflicts are ongoing in several countries, especially the activities Violent Non-state Actors (VNSAs) in most countries.

Furthermore, post-cold war security thinking has mostly been characterized by concerns over pernicious threats of uncertainty, asymmetric warfare and small scale contingencies. Under the new uncertainty paradigm, as well as in various homeland security conceptions and thinking, has taken on the tone of “worst-case scenario” planning. To be sure, this is a pessimistic tone, but it is probably the job of some other field to be optimistic. Asymmetric warfare has proliferated in recent years and has been extended into the problem areas of terrorism and transnational crime, more so, with the former, less so with the latter. Today, terrorists seem less interested in controlling nation-states and transnational criminals seem intent on creating narcotic-states. Small scales contingencies, referring to situations of long-term intractable conflict, fueled by numerous causes (all security threats in their own right), such as poverty and inequity environmental degradation and climate change, over-population, food, water, and energy shortages, as well as identity based and sectarian insurgencies. Nowadays, threats change rapidly unpredictably and without warning. The future strategic environment portends to be one of persistent conflicts and “ long wars” with increasingly technologically empowered state, non-state, and proxy state actors all challenging traditional military capabilities. The same proxy state actors tactics that was prevalent in the cold war era is being retained by the US in their so called war against insurgency. Londono (2010) opined that different US government agencies in Afghanistan worked at cross-purposes. For instance, the CIA funded the Hamid Karzai’s corrupt brother-Ahmed Wali Karzai, who was the governor of Kandahar city, to provide security, collect intelligence, and combat the Taliban using his militias.

The United States use of proxies in achieving their strategic goals in the globe has followed this trend from providing technical and financial aid to the Afgan Mujahedeen militants against the government of Afghanistan and defunct USSR and the Iran-Iraqi war in the 1980s were achieved by the roles the CIA played in the conflicts (Barlett, 2003; Battle, 2003; Brzezinski, 1997; Freedman, 1993; Teicher, 1993; Timmerman, 1991; Woodward, 1986).

Consequent on upon this scenario , it is admitted by observers that the world is in disarray because it squandered whatever peace dividend it deserved after the end of the cold war, for relations and ties between nations were never mended and strengthened. A huge and permanent military industrial complex remained in place. The breakdown of state control in former communist areas produced new civil and ethnic conflicts. Islamist extremism resurfaced, and indeed, the unforeseen growth of Islamist terrorism has created significant strategic challenges. It was also pointed out that in many ways the threat of nuclear devastation is greater now than during the Cold war. What scholars failed to comprehend is that we are in a world that realist ideology is dominant and discarding ones capabilities is not plausible but would be un-strategic therefore maintaining them is sound metric. This is to deter states from proliferating nuclear weapon as Iran is threatening to do, and North Korea’s test of their nuclear weapons that has generated tensions in the world (Jones & Stedman, 2017).

## **Arms Proliferation and Control**

With the end of the Cold war, conflict between the United States and Russia appears less likely. Stockpiles of nuclear war heads as well as tensions have been reduced by the hitherto belligerent superpowers, but post-1991 relations according to Hough (2004), have not exactly been harmonious. This can be attributed to what scholars described as more inroads to military technological advancement by the superpowers. Russia built a “dead hand”, which Bender (2014) stressed that Russia may still have in their possession. Ditto the US and other major powers advancing doomsday device, which automatically detonates some 50 cobalt-jacketed hydrogen bombs. Same could be said of North Korea advancement in nuclear war heads challenging the US and others.

On the other hand, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), however, poses new challenges to the international system. These categories of conventional weapons are generally used by the legitimate security forces of states, and while the control over their use may be a laudable aim, the major challenge remains the illicit proliferation that takes place, which is external to the state system. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is essentially a post-cold war problem which major powers in the international system deliberately overlooked. While large quantities of small arms and light weapons were transferred into the developing world during the cold war, it is ironic that the problem of proliferation intensified as a result of its termination. A number of developments fueled the problem. The dissolution of the Warsaw pact, the weakening and even collapse of state structures in the former War saw pact states and the resulting lack of control systems in some of these states, created in the force of supply. A similar tendency according scholars was evident in many post-colonial states in the developing world, as a result of inadequate state building and the failure by many states to build proper security systems and accountable, democratic political system. This has created a vacuum to be filled by violent non-state actors like rebels, insurgents and warlords that generally ferments and participate in intrastate conflicts and creates the demand for small arms and light weapons. While the proliferation of intrastate and especially interstate conflicts resulting from the termination of the relative global stability of the Cold war era fueled the demand for SALW (Final Report of the UN Panel of Experts, 2000:13).

To Bitzinger (1994) and others of the same persuasion in international relations and security studies, they averred that the process of globalization, being a post-Cold war phenomenon also contributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The advent of the era of global interconnectedness in terms of trade, international finance and commerce, and developments in the aviation and shipping industries according to the report by the UN panel of experts, this scenario to an extend might have enabled arms dealers to procure and transport small arms and light weapons illicitly across international borders to weak states with porous borders or weak or absence of state control systems. The report also revealed that the arms trade is often financed with resources from conflicts ridden, but resource rich states. These factors combined to increase the flow of small arms and light weapons significantly to conflict zones in Africa, East Asia and Central America (Report of the Panel of governmental Experts on small Arms, A/52/298, 1997). What is not clear on this submission is, are these small arms meant for the state to fight rebels or the other way round? How did these arms get into the hands of rebels and insurgents? My thought here is that if the major powers said that they are committed to world peace, they should do more to this SALW not getting into the hands of criminal elements.

Interrogating the US position on arms transfer policy will be illuminating in understanding the persistence of war in post-Cold war world. Throughout US history, arms transfer has been utilized as a foreign policy tool to maintain her national interest in the world. As the leading arms exporter, the US efforts was not directed towards reduction in arms

proliferation by limiting the level of weapons, sold or transferred. According to the International Insider (2019), the five largest exporters of between 2014 and 2018 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China. These counter-proliferation efforts are complicated by the “economically disabled” countries that turn to arms sales as the “cash crop” of choice. Of course, arms transfers are driven by a complicated mix of political and economic factors. Countries with political influence and economic resources will continue to procure weapons; conversely, countries without influence and financial clout will continue to be threatened. The end results are increased regional tension, instability and continued arms proliferation. For many years, the US has been actively engaged in the overseas arms market, current rankings in 2020 placed the US in the lead being the first among arms exporting nations followed by France and Germany (<https://reliefweb.int>). This is made possible with the advancement in military technology and the growth in information communication technology (ICT) (Freedman, 1998). What this portends is that in so far as the manufacturing of arms by the advanced countries is ongoing, there shall always be demands for such arms by would be belligerents.

Past events, such as the demise of the Soviet Union, the not too demands for Russian arms and US successes in the Persian Gulf wars in the 1990s and in 2003 have all contributed to make the US the world leading arms and conflict exporter (Atkins, 1994:31), emphasis mine. Why this submission? As in the past so is it in the present. In the past, to increase stability in the Persian Gulf region and to protect US vital interest, President Nixon furnished sophisticated weapons to Shah of Iran to provide a “pillar” of stability. Transfers included weapons such as the F-14 Tomcat fighter aircraft, armed with the phoenix air-to-air missiles, the E-3A airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft, and the improved Hawk (I-Hawk) anti-aircraft missile. In the present as observed by Stohl (2008), the same trend persist following September 11, 2001, the US sold close to five times more weapons through Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) to 25 countries which includes: Algeria, Armenia, Kenya, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Yemen. These FMS and DCS to these countries were preceded by the lifting of sanctions against them for acts of aggression, significant violation of human rights and romanticizing with terrorist groups. Studies revealed that in the past the US adopted similar policy in Iraq.

According to Friedman cited in Ndidigwe (2016), in 1982 Iraq was removed from a list of state sponsors of terrorism to ease the transfer of dual-use technology to the country in the Iran-Iraqi war. The US made its backing more pronounced, by mobilizing of relations with the government, supplying it with economic aid, counterinsurgency training, operational intelligence on the battlefield, and weapons. Studies showed that this same Iraq that was removed from a list of state sponsors of terrorism in the 1980s by the US for political reasons was subsequently included as sponsors of terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington.

From all indications and prevailing circumstances as regards arms deals in the globe, the US government is more concerned about maintaining the defense industrial base and maintaining jobs for American workers and having adequate military strength at home and beyond. Previously approvals for export of American weapons systems involved a lengthy process of checks and balances that could take 18 months or longer. But previous administrations took positive steps to reduce approval time frame, after realizing the delays and economic cost to the defense industry, when compared to others, for they see themselves being undercut by foreign competition through rapid approval and delivery of ordered good. The US State Department created the Center for Defense Trade (CDT) in 1990 and tasked it with accelerating the approval process to ensure the defense industry remains competitive in

the international market. In most cases the approval time was reduced in most cases to ten days and the center continues to decrease the items requiring approval for export. What could be gleaned from the above is that defense contractors and arms dealers and the manufacturers are unperturbed with the political or domestic situation in conflict driven areas. What are of great concern to them are to sale their weapons either to the state or to violent non-state actors that are prevalent in most countries now.

Therefore, post-Cold war world tension is a creation of the major military industrialized powers as evidenced in the not too stringent modalities on arms purchase. For it took these military powers less than a year of the post-cold war world to change their policy on arms transfer to other countries. But when it comes to legitimate purchase and demands to execute wars as in the case of Nigeria requesting the US to avail them arms to fight insurgency, they said it is incongruous to US Presidential Policy Directive 27 (PPD) on conventional arms transfer which is supposed to further entrench human rights and arms proliferation consideration as one of the exports approval process (US Department of State, 2014). This is despite the fact that other countries that have severe cases of human rights issues have been availed of military wares (Stohl, 2008). Ndidigwe (2016) unearthed that non democratic governments has been the major recipients of over 84 percent of the \$59 billion dollars of US arms that were sent to non-industrialized nations between 1991-95. Corroborating this assertion, Shah (2014) averred that foreign interventions be it whatever kind accompanies donor's benefit, not necessarily the beneficiary. Hirvonen (2005), opines that the West and their allies were selective on who receives their aid, especially regimes friendly to their interests and geostrategic concerns.

### **The Major Powers and International Peace**

Major Powers in the international system have made us to believe that they are committed to international peace and security, but in reality they are playing politics. The observation of Eagleton (1948:552) which is still relevant now, concerning the United Nations which is saddled with the task of maintaining international peace being in-effective. The fault he said lies on those who created and operates it, because they still preferred "the tooth and the fang to international law and order". By this allusion the major powers, the superpowers does things without recourse to stipulated international laws, but rather using various international organizations as tools in their hands to pursue their national interests.

To be sure, the satisfied powers have more often than not cited the need to maintain international peace and infringe on peoples human rights for their use of military force in other countries. According to Noris, while reviewing NATO's bombing of Serbia averred that it was Yugoslavia's resistance to the broader trends of political and economic reform and not the plight of Kosovo-Albanians- that precipitated the NATO war (Noris, cited in Chomsky, 2008). More revealing was Strobe Talbot's assertion an official in charge of Eastern Europe in the Clinton administration who averred on the reason for the bombing of Serbia being the lone hold in Europe to Clinton's administration and its ally's political and economic programmes (Chomsky, 2008). It is evident to all that humanitarian concern could hardly have motivated the US and Britain, which are at the same time were lending decisive support to atrocities well beyond what was reported from Kosovo, with a background far more horrendous than anything that had happened in the Balkans. Again what can you say of Gaddafi's Libya that the US and NATO invaded and the leader killed on the flimsy excuse of human rights violations (Jones & Stedman, 2017). The motive behind Libya invasion is not far from the resistance of Gaddafi's government of Western trends of political and economic reform. The conflict it has sparked is still ongoing in the country since the death of its leader.

The question remains why has the US not waged war against dictatorial regimes in Yemen, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia despite their anti-human rights posture? The definition of

US violation of human rights is selective and these countries are immune. This is not far from the insight given by Peck (cited in Ndidigwe, 2016) a former Director of Regan's White House Task Force on Terrorism, when asked to come up with a definition of terrorism in which Regan's government will use throughout his reign. After producing about six different definitions, which were rejected, because a careful readings, indicates that the US has been involved in some of these activities. Therefore, the US Code Title 18, section 2331 showing US definition of terrorism according to Peck cited in Ndidigwe(2016) means, activities that appears to be intended to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping. Several attacks undertaken by the US in the past and present could be seen in this light by the name they give to the issue.

## **Conclusion**

The study has demonstrated that the predictions of the imminent obsolescence of war appears to be premature. As events since the post-Cold war era in which the US and other exporters of arms have not deemed it proper to reduce their budgets on arms manufacturing and disbursement to would be buyers. Common sense dictates that a producer must always look out for outlets for her products, as such the buyers which are either state actors or violent non-state actors acquires these arms for defense or offensive purposes, the major military powers makes no bones. This observation is in contradistinction of the liberalist views on the post Cold world being built on democratic norms and ethos and the blame for conflicts in the world on the Third world countries is not tenable, but shallow. In this post-Cold war era, there has been an increase in military expenditure not only in the Third world who are the end users, but in advanced West. However, war prevention in this era is a myth because of the presence of huge permanent military industrial complex which has remained in place after the cold war. We also stressed in this study that, the anti-peace posturing and mien of the major powers, for instead of maintaining peace in the international system, they have assisted in spreading violence and to an extent terrorism to some regions. Besides, the internal conflicts that characterize the post-cold war world which are prevalent in most third world countries we have been able to capture; the attitudinal disposition of the major powers which is couched in the realist postulations. They often use the language of justice to cloak the particular interest of their own countries, or to create negative images of others to justify acts of aggression, which more often than not the reality.

This resonates with the submission that the state of nature does not tend to be a state of war if the fundamental motives of those in it do not drive them into conflict, but the reverse is the case. To this end therefore, in so far as arms production and proliferation is ongoing and there are available markets for it, war remains inevitable. The paper recommends that when it is something that has to do with war and international peace and the prevention of war, the great powers should show a modicum of transparency. Again, arbitrary sales of arms to belligerent states should be curtailed and controlled by the great powers.

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