

ALLIANCE AND COALITION IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THE CASE OF U.S - SOUTH KOREA

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ABSTRACT

Alliance and coalition occupy a very significant place in the study of international politics. Alliance formation is a vital tool of statecraft. It helps to enhance the capabilities of states thereby maintaining their security and survival in an anarchical international system. Alliance can also be counterproductive as they would provoke counter alliance measures. This paper therefore examined the formation of alliance and coalition with particular interest on U.S –South Korea. The balance of Power theory was utilized as a framework of analysis. The paper also went further to explain the rationale behind alliance formation as well as ascertain whether nations actually balance power or threat in their interaction as members of the international community. With the use of secondary data the paper concludes that, even though nations balance against threat perceive in form of power capabilities of their protagonist, alliance and coalition remained the most integral part of all analysis in international relations as they are aimed at guaranteeing security and survival of member states.

Keywords: Alliances, Balance of Power, Coalition, International Relations Statecraft,

Introduction

Alliances are formed by states essentially to protect themselves from states or coalitions whose superior resources could pose as a threat to them. Alliances play fundamental role in international politics because they are integral part of statecraft. They are usually formed between two or more countries to counter an adversary. Scholars of international relations over the years have devoted much time in studying alliances and coalitions since they have been seen as an important research focus in the theory and practice of international relations. This is principally because, at the center of foreign policy debates in the study and analysis of countries national interest is the issue of which nation to align with, why and for how long.

However, it is believed that Strong and weak nations alike feel the need to form alliances. The weaker states form alliance to balance power pose by a hegemon while the stronger states sometimes form alliances to ‘increase their share of world capabilities expressed in form of power’ (Mearshiemer, 2001 p.21). The central idea behind most alliances is to aggregate the capabilities of members states in such a way that would further enhance their respective interests. The desire shown and entered into by states in form of alliance may be

formal or informal. In other words, there may be or may not be treaties or pacts between them depending on the interest and situation at hand. Some alliances usually last long, while others are ad hoc in nature, once the interest is achieved such alliances cease to exist.

It is generally believed that nations go into alliance for several reasons; firstly, it could be in response to a threat, that is individuals, groups, and organizations will sometimes band together in an attempt to preserve security and stability in response to a perceived threat. Secondly, it could be as a result of similar or shared beliefs. What this means is that, people, states or group of states which share common beliefs or goals may also enter into an alliance; and thirdly, economic interest. Some states form alliance simply because of what the alliance would present economically the U.S intervention in Kuwait during the Gulf War in 1990/91 can be explained in this direction (Akinboye and Otteh, 2005). However, whatever could be the rationale for alliance formation by states in global politics. One thing is certain and settled that, there is no free lunch in the international relations. This paper, therefore, seeks to explore alliance formation and coalition in the study and analysis of international relations with primacy on the U.S- South Korea alliance. For clarity, the paper is discussed under the following subheadings, introduction, concept of alliance and coalition, theoretical framework, alliance and coalition in international relations. The paper went further to explicate whether or not nations actually Balance Power or threat in their bid to guarantee their security and survival, then the U.S-South Korea alliance and finally conclusion.

The Concept of Alliance and Coalition

The terms alliance and coalition are often used interchangeably. In strict sense, alliances are defined as formal treaty-based multilateral security arrangements between two or more countries to counter a common threat. By contrast, coalitions are defined as ad hoc cooperation and coordination among nations addressing a common threat or security issue. The distinctions between them are often ignored or thought to have little analytical value. For instance, Christopher Bladen conflates alliances with coalitions and notes, "Alliances, like coalitions in broader form, grow out of coercive and conflict situations" (Bladen, 1970 p.121). Scholars such as Walt (1985) use the term interchangeably; he posits that, states join alliances to protect themselves from other states or coalitions whose superior resources could pose a threat to them. Others such as Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan (1972) propose a broader definition of alliance and coalition to allow for such a conflation. For them there is little to gain from a restrictive definition, and a broad one offers the distinctive advantage of enlarging the scope" of a scholarly review.

Although the terms alliance and coalition are used interchangeably, there are at least three major differences between them. The first difference involves the formalization versus ad hoc nature of military cooperation; the second involves the defensive versus reactive nature of military cooperation; and, thirdly, the coverage of single issue versus multiple issue areas.

First, alliances refer to formalized and institutionalized cooperation arrangements, whereas coalitions are defined as informal agreements between states. According to Osgood cited in Ashraf, (2011:p14) an alliance is "a formal agreement that pledges states to co-operate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force." Holsti et al (1972: p17) offer a similar definition emphasizing the formalization of the alliance process thus: "an alliance is a formal agreement between two or more nations to collaborate on national security issues." Why are formal and institutional arrangements the prerequisites for military alliances? George Modelski argues that the conception of alliance connotes "military collaboration concerned with a third power" and because such collaboration requires "preparedness for joint military action and the actual involvement in hostilities on the same side they are more frequently formalized" in treaty-based agreements (Modelski, 1963 p.775). Glenn Snyder proposes a similar explanation, "according

to him the formalization adds elements of specificity, legal, and moral obligation, and reciprocity that are usually lacking in informal alignments” (Snyder, 1997:p8).

Wolfer (1968) defines an alliance as 'a promise of mutual military assistance between two or more sovereign states'. An alliance is a 'promise', which sets it apart from intentions or expectations. It involves 'military collaboration' as distinct from all non-military associations. For Morgenthau (1960) alliance is a process for manipulating equilibrium as well as a means to the end of maintaining equilibrium. Alliances differ in the, functions that they perform. Threats and counters-threats need not be explicit, but merely understood in the minds of decision makers and need not be explicitly embodied in formally signed agreements. They expect their partners to assist them in times of conflict. In this wise, an alliance is seen as a collective security arrangement among states in which all members of the alliance agree not to threaten each other, to punish defectors from this agreement whenever possible, and to collectively deal with an adversary when necessary.

William (1982) sees coalition from the individual point of view and argues that, they are a group of people who come together (usually on a temporary basis) to obtain some end and is typically a parliamentary or political grouping less permanent than a party or a faction or an interest group. The import from the above definition is that, coalitions are transient, they are informal in nature. They are based on the interest of the parties once that is achieved such a coalition seize to exist. Lifting it to the international system, states enter into coalition simply to achieve a particular objective which usually revolved around issues of strategy.

Alliances are formal associations of states for the use or non-use of military force, intended for either the security or the aggrandizement of their members, against specific other states, whether or not these others are explicitly identified (Snyder 1990). The primary purpose of most alliances is to combine the member's capabilities in a way that furthers their respective interests. Each state, thus, has an alliance policy formally negotiated with the other states of the world.

Alliances can be former and informer, former alliance is a type that nations, taking consideration of their common interests, consciously agree to enter into; such alliances clearly spell out the terms of their agreement. Alliances are sealed by formal treaties. They typically include some form of binding commitment to mutual assistance in the case of attack by a third party. Because allies expect to fight together by default, they often create standing institutions to coordinate their efforts. For example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, (NATO) is the most organized alliance in the modern world, and as such, it has developed substantial infrastructure with the capacity to protect member nations. It has a governing body (the North Atlantic Council), a civilian leader (the Secretary General) overseeing a civilian staff, and a complex multinational military structure with multiple layers of command. Alliances may seek to institutionalize and standardize their equipment, training, and doctrine to increase their ability to work together. NATO has an entire series of formal Standardization Agreements that cover everything from how to conduct psychological operations to the design of shipboard electrical power systems. Allied military forces train together regularly in peacetime to ensure that if they are called to fight together, they are prepared to cooperate effectively. The aim is to ensure collective security of members.

contributing on the concept of coalition, *Lopez, McDermott, Petersen, and Bang, (2011) view it as a situation where two or more separate parties collaborate with a set goal and common purpose. According to Meyer, Whittier, and Nancy, (1999) sees a coalition as ad hoc grouping of nations united for specific purposes. Although persons and groups form coalitions for many and varied reasons, the most common purpose is to combat a common threat or to take advantage of a certain opportunity, resulting in the often temporary nature of coalitions. The common threat or existence of opportunity is what gives rise to the coalition and allows it to exist as all parties involved see the benefit in working together. Such collaborative processes*

allow the actors of the coalition to advance forward towards their overall goal or accomplish the task that the coalition was formed around (Kazemi, Enayati, and Kazemi, 2014). The behavior and dynamics of a coalition in international relations are created by commonalities and differences within the groups joining together. Rationality, group dynamics and gender are all contributing factors of coalitional behaviors in an international security framework (Carraro, 2003).

They are meant to accomplish a specific goal. It may include countries that are rivals and wouldn't normally cooperate, but share a common interest that will be addressed by the coalition. This is true for America and Britain, who for many years, did not go into peace time alliance since both believed that the benefit derived from alliance far outweigh the consequences. However, both America and Britain have common interest at stake which is the preservation of the balance in Europe which eventually saw them fighting in one camp during the Second World War against Germany, Italy, and Japan to achieve this purpose (Ola, 1997). In addition, because of its temporary nature, a coalition will typically lack the shared infrastructure of an alliance (Khanna, Gulati, & Nohria, 1998). For example, when an alliance deploys a military force, they will generally have a single military officer designated to command the entire force. A coalition force may have a single commander, but not necessarily. In a loose coalition each country may retain control of its own forces. In that case the various commanders and their governments must negotiate with each other to achieve a coherent strategy or plans. The paper, therefore, view alliances as deliberate agreements entered into by states in form of treaties to further enhance and safeguard their security, economic and diplomatic interest. While coalitions are ad hoc arrangements entered into by state to deal with a common adversary.

Theoretical Framework

Balance of Power Theory

One of the celebrated theories in the study of alliance is the Balance of Power theory. Balance of power theory gained prominence during the emergence of the nation state system which came into being as a result of the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Thereafter, it became the most used theoretical framework for the oscillation of peace and war in Europe. This is because, at that time, there was no nation outside of Europe capable of exerting an influence in the balancing process. The simple idea behind balance of power is "equilibrium;" that is, system maintenance of a type represented by a pair of scales. When the weights in the scales are equal, balance is said to have taken place. Applied to the world of sovereign states, the concept of balance of power assumes that through shifting alliances and countervailing pressure no one power or combination of powers will be allowed to grow so strong as to threaten the security of the rest (Palmer and Perkins, 2010).

According to realist conception, power must always be determined and measured relative to the power of someone else. Balance of Power is useful as an analytical concept for assessing the overall power capabilities of states and coalitions. Liska (1962), Morgenthau (1960), Kaplan (1957) all belong to the Balance of Power school of thought. It is their position that, alliances are coalitions whose behaviour is posited upon rationally motivated agreements. According to this school of thought, nations should be more likely to join the weaker coalition to prevent formation of a hegemonic one, which is balancing rather than join the dominant one in order to increase the probability of joining the winning sides' i.e, bandwagoning. This concept was advanced by Waltz (1979: p121) in his assertion that, "Balance of power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met; first, that the order be anarchical and second, that it would be populated by units wishing to survive".

According to Morgenthau (1973), in the Balance of Power theory, nations form alliances to offset growing powers and restore the balance. To him, an alliance is always a means to an

end of maintaining equilibrium. He viewed alliance in terms of means/ends, costs/rewards arrangements. In like manner, Wright (1942) stated that the Balance of power theory is a system designed to maintain a continuous conviction in every state that if it attempted aggression, it would encounter an invincible combination of the others. Akinboye and Otteh, (2005) adds that, balance of power ensures there is a continual maneuverings among states in competing for power, thus seeking to equilibrate the disequilibrated power situations among nations-states. The ultimate goal is to ensure that an equitable proportion in the power capabilities of nation-states is maintained so that no single nation-state emerges dominant over another or sets of others. In addition, once the system is disturbed there is a balancer who ensures that the system is restored either by way of alliance or coalition. Worse still, the nation may decide to go alone if it has the capacity to do so.

At the core of creating a system of Balance of Power in international studies is the issue of protecting the security and territorial integrity of the particular nation. The implication is that, no single entity within the system should be allowed to gain enough power to dominate others. Thus, Balance of Power becomes an analytical device and a useful point of departure in this regard. Although Balance of Power theory does not prescribe a preferred model of global or regional stability, it does facilitate description of the principal power configurations that have existed over time. The theory enables us to demonstrate the power relations of major states and groups of states, whether their relation is global in interaction or limited to a region of the world. America which has since the end of Cold War emerged as the policeman of the world with her allies command a lot of power credentials a situation balance of power theorist such as waltz argues should be equilibrated with alliance to end world dominance.

Equally important in the balance of power theory is the fact that, some nations engage in alliance with others base on their personal interest or better still what they stand to gain in such a an alignment. For instance, during the Gulf war of 1990-91, the U.S led the United Nations' allied force to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation (Akinboye and Otteh, 2005). It appears America decision to evacuate Iraqi soldiers out of Kuwait territory was simply because of the quantum of oil in the region which they found useful to their own economy not because Kuwait was special to them.

In a nutshell, it can be argued that balance of power performs two fundamental functions; first, maintains stability among nations. The stability is however subject to the danger of being destabilized and restored; therefore the process of restoring the stability of the international system and the tendency of the system being disturbed is a continuous one. Secondly, balance of power fulfills the function of ensuring the freedom of one nation from the domination of another. The point here is that, the sovereign independence of nation is thus precarious and in danger which is only guaranteed by the power of one preventing the other from encroaching upon the freedom of other nation. This essentially results from balance of power.

However, one of the major criticisms of the balance of power theory is its inability to identify the parameters of measuring the power credentials of states in order to create a room for balancer to emerge. The import from the above is that, power is very difficult to measure and as such states cannot predict the exert power credentials of others which makes balancing difficult. For example, how can one explain the humiliation of United State by South Vietnam? This is because America did not understand the power capabilities of South Vietnam which led to her defeat (Aremu and Bello, 2013). Inherent in the balance of power theory is the restoration of equilibrium in the power status of nation-states, most often, a war has to be fought which leads to the disturbance of the equilibrium first before the restoration of the equilibrium later. This has been perhaps the one of the greatest undoing of the theory.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the theory has continued to wield considerable influence in international power play and thus useful in explaining alliance and coalition in

contemporary international relations. As Morgenthau (1967: p156) has observed, balance of power is “not only inevitable but is an essential stabilizing factor in a society of sovereign states”.

The Impact of Alliances and Coalition in International Relations

Alliances are universal components of relations between sovereign political entities, irrespective of time and place. In the realist point of view, the most important manifestation of the balance of power is to be found in the relations between one nation or alliance and another alliance" (Morgenthau, 1959) this is because "alliances and regional coalitions among the weak to defend themselves from the strong have been the typical method for preserving balance" (Wright, 1965). Similarly, Liska (1968) who is one of the international relations alliance theorists opined that alliances are an integral part of international relations, and in fact, “It is impossible to speak of international relations without referring to alliances; the two often merge in all but name”. Collaborating the views of Liska and that of Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan (1972) there is no significant difference as according to them alliances are a universal component of relations between political units. Since alliances are woven into the fabric of world politics, it is important to understand how they work and what holds them together or pulls them apart.

Alliances have helped states go to war, provided for their security, and opened doors to peace. Therefore, to have a clear understanding of international politics and the international system, it is vital to know how alliances work. Alliances help to preserve, manage and foster transparent relations among members and non-members, thereby making the international system more predictable and stable (Arshid, Irfan, and Tanveer, 2017).

On the other hand, alliances can also be dangerous to members and non-members alike. With World War I as a classic example, alliances can foster unpredictability and ultimately war. Alliances are instruments to manage the security dilemma (Waltz 1979). Alliances increase ‘the perceived likelihood of expected behavior to come true’. Thereby, they help to decrease the uncertainty among states. They enhance positive perceptions in the sense that it reduces the uncertainty as to what other state will do. Uncertainty, alternatively labeled as shadow of the future, is an age-old factor that causes the security dilemma. Similar to ‘fog of war’, uncertainty about burden sharing and reliability of partners (fog of alignments) causes impasse and reluctance to commit resources.

Formal alliances, such as the NATO, are aimed at addressing collective security arrangements. Alliances decrease the likelihood of defection from cooperation by their treaty-based road-map. Road-map includes guidelines or modalities serving materialization of reciprocal benefits and assessment of state commitments to common cause. These factors clear away ‘the fog of alignments’ and alliances to certain extent. The benefits provided by an alliance road-map and strategy are relatively higher in comparison to coalitions. Coalitions are ‘coalition of the willing’ kind of grouping of states. Coalitions are unstructured cooperation attempts. As structured cooperation, alliances are more predictable, binding and enforceable than rest of the cooperative relations. This is so due to alliances’ formal status and pre-arranged modalities (Arshid, Irfan and Tanveer, 2017).

Although even treaties may not always guarantee state behaviour, alliances (as treaty-based organizations by definition) decrease the uncertainty that causes the security dilemma. Future concerns may well constrain state behavior. Uncertainty about the intentions of other states is unavoidable, which means that states can never be sure that other states do not have offensive intentions to go along with their offensive capabilities. That uncertainty is a result of mutually constituting sovereignty and anarchy (Mearshiemer 2001). The security dilemma (the dilemma that the more states seek security, the more insecure they become) force states to form new alliances or to strengthen existing alliances (Jervis 1978).

Most scholars such as Walt, (1985) Laski (1962), and wolfer (1968) believe that it is the general tendency of states to balance against the most threatening state or coalition, rather than “bandwagoning” with it. States are said to balance against the strongest state or coalition. In fact, they balance against the state that poses the greatest threat to them. The level of threat a state poses to others is a function of its power, geographic proximity, offensive military capabilities and perceived aggressiveness, though the precise weight attached to each factor will vary across cases. Aggregate Power is the total power of states. The greater a state’s total resource e.g., population, industrial and military capability, and technological prowess, the greater potential threat it poses.

Offensive power is the ability to threaten the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state. States with large offensive capabilities are more likely to provoke an alliance than those that lack the capacity to attack. States that are perceived as been aggressive are more likely to provoke others to balance against them. Perceptions of intent play a crucial role in alliance, what this means is that state that possess capabilities that are threatening are more likely to be in alliance especially if such a state is a neighbour for example North Korea –China alliance and South Korea -U.S alliance.

One of the most talked about alliance in contemporary international relations is the China –North Korea alliance. Here, North Korean threat perception comes from South Korea and the US alliance. The armistice of 1953, which has never been concluded in a formal peace agreement, preserved two Koreas along a border near the thirty-eighth parallel (Sangit, 2012). The economic expansion of South Korea also created difficulties for North Korea. North Korea also perceived threat from a distant country, which is also a superpower. The US, has attempted to influence North Korea to contain the latter’s potential threat to the security of East Asia in general and South Korea in particular. North Korea has viewed the South Korea as heavily dependent on foreign powers.

In order to equilibrate these threats North Korea opted and got the support of People’s Republic of China and became an ally of China the main aim was to prepare itself against military provocation from the US and South Korea alliance. In addition to the adversarial and hegemonic system of the US and its ally South Korea, Japan also joined Pyongyang’s enemies. The continuing presence of US forces in South Korea is felt in North Korea as a formidable and direct threat to the security of the region (Park 2000). To secure itself it aligned with China to defend herself in an event of attack. It is in this wise that, Walt (1987), concludes by asserting that nations balance against threat and not power. For him states form alliances to balance threat not simply aggregate capabilities or power, where power is one condition coupled with other conditions like intentions, proximity and offensive capabilities.

United States - South Korea Alliance

The United States and South Korea had official contact under the 1882 Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, and the first diplomatic presences of U.S in South Korea was recorded in 1883 (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018). U.S- South Korea relations continued until 1905, when Japan assumed direction over Korean foreign affairs. Japan began its colonial experience in 1910, over Korea. When the Second World War ended in 1945 when the defeat of Japan, Germany and her ally became eminent, the Korean Peninsula was divided at the 38th parallel into two occupational zones, with the United States in the South and the Soviet Union in the North (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018). The inability to have a unified and independent Korea was not realizable, in 1948 two separate nations were established the Republic of Korea (R.O.K.) in the South, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the North (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018).

In 1949, the United States established diplomatic relations with the South Korea. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded the South Korea. Led by the United States, a

United Nations coalition of 16 nations went in and defended South Korea. Following China's entry into the war on behalf of North Korea later that year, a stalemate ensued for the final two years of the conflict until an armistice was concluded on July 27, 1953. A peace treaty has never been signed. In 1953, at the conclusion of the Korean War, the United States and the South Korea signed a Mutual Defense Treaty, the root of a systematic and comprehensive alliance that we are experiencing today (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018).

North Korea has posed as one of the greatest and consistent challenger of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War period due to its persistent pursuit of prescribed weapons technology and belligerence toward the United States and her allies (Park, 2000). With North Korea's advances in 2016 and 2017 in its nuclear and missile capabilities, it has evolved from a threat to U.S. interests in East Asia to a potentially direct threat to the U.S. homeland. Efforts to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons program have occupied the past four U.S. Administrations, and North Korea is the target of scores of U.S. and United Nations Security Council sanctions (Emma, Mark, Mary, Caitlin, and Wil, 2018).

To this end, the United States of America and her allies made frantic effort to denuclearized North Korea Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs in the East Asia. Initially, the Trump Administration adopting a "maximum pressure" policy that sought to coerce her into changing its behaviour through economic and diplomatic measures. Many of the elements of the officially stated policy were similar to those employed by the Obama Administration: ratcheting up economic pressure against North Korea, attempting to persuade China by far North Korea's most important economic partner and others to apply more pressure against Pyongyang, and expanding the capabilities of the U.S.-South Korea and U.S.-Japan alliances to counter new North Korean threats.

The Administration successfully led the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) including North Korea's traditional supporters China and Russia to pass four new sanctions resolutions that have expanded the requirements for U.N. member states to curtail their military, diplomatic, and economic interaction with the North Korea (Emma, Mark, Mary, Caitlin, and Wil, 2018). If North Korea succeeds many nations would sprung up with their nuclear arms proliferation. In this wise nuclear arm proliferation might lead to security dilemma which has the capacity of threatening global peace and security.

The United States and South Korea have come a long way; their friendship is based on common values and interests. The two countries over the years have worked together to curtail global and regional threats and at the same strengthen their economies. The United States has for long kept her armed forces in the South Korea for its commitment under the United States – South Korea Mutual Defense Treaty to help the South Korea defend itself against external aggression (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018). Precisely in 2 august 2013, the two countries celebrated their 60th anniversary of the U.S.-S.K alliance. This is an indication the both countries have over time share mutual cooperation in all facets of human endeavor. To this end, the forces of both countries shared joint operations between U.S. units and S.K armed forces with single a commander at the helm of affairs. The United States and the South Korea through joint operations checkmate closely the activities of North Korean as regard nuclear proliferation and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Due to mutual understanding and cooperation between U.S and SK, the South Korean economy began to developed, trade and investment ties became an increasingly important aspect of the U.S.-S.K relationship (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018).

In 2018, U.S. goods and services exports to South Korea totaled \$82.0 billion, while imports totaled \$87.3 billion (Congressional Research Service, 2019). Bilateral trade flows have increased with U.S. services exports (+\$7.9 billion to \$24.6 billion in 2018) and auto imports (+\$6.9 billion to \$22.4 billion in 2018) seeing the largest gains. Foreign direct investment (FDI) between the two countries also has increased markedly since 2012 with the

stock of South Korean FDI in the United States more than doubling to \$51.8 billion in 2017, and U.S. FDI to South Korea increasing one-third, to \$41.6 billion (Congressional Research Service, 2019).

Recently, the U.S.-S.K alliance has grown to stage of global partnership and South Korea continue to wield a lot of influence as regional and global leader. Upon this achievement S.K hosted the 2010 G-20 Summit, the 2011 Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, the 2013 Seoul Conference on Cyberspace, and the 2014 International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018). In 2017, the S.K chaired the Global Health Security Agenda Steering Group. More so, South Korea as a committed member of various international nonproliferation regimes, including the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). The S.K has pledged more than half a billion dollars towards development efforts including health security, women's empowerment, and humanitarian assistance (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018).

With the assistance of U.S-S.K alliance, South Korea's emergence as a global leader has increase dynamism in the alliance with emphasis on issue like space, energy, health, climate change, and cyber. In 2015, the United States and S.K renewed it Civil Nuclear "123" Agreement and maintain a High-Level Bilateral Commission to address civil nuclear issues of mutual interest (Arshid, Irfan, and Tanveer, 2017). This cooperation would enhanced 2016 Civil Space Framework Agreement and increases the civil space exploration between the two countries. It has also been active in the area of combating illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, and is working to establish a World Fisheries University to boost aqua-culture (Bureau of East and Pacific Affairs, 2018). Up till now, U.S- South Korea alliance has taken the form of economic, diplomatic and strategy which has made South Korea a big player in global affairs.

Conclusion

This paper x-rayed alliance and coalition in contemporary international relations. It focuses essentially on analyzing their meaning as well as the basis of their formation which is considered as an integral part of all debate in international politics. The rationale behind the formation of alliance and coalition was first provided by the Liska (1962:p.3) that "It is impossible to speak of international relations without referring to alliances and coalition; the two often merge in all but name". These are the important tools of statecraft and are evitable results of states interaction. They can help in enhancing states capability in international system thereby making them secured. At the same time they can be counterproductive i. e give room for counter alliances to emerge. Balance of Power theory proposes alliance formation as a conscious move of states to balance the preponderant power of other states which is considered dangerous for state security and sovereignty. The paper critically analyze the U.S –South Korea alliance which appears to be interest bound between members state, the paper discovered that at the center of this alliance include issues of economy, diplomatic relations and strategic matters. The aim is to protect South Korea from external aggression which is perceived to have come from North Korea-China alliance.

The paper therefore conclude that, alliance are formed by way of treaties and pacts, in some instances, it is not the consciousness or deliberate attempt of states that made them to form alliance but it emerges automatically out of states disposition to achieve security and survival. Alliance should therefore be seen as the deliberate interaction between states in bid to balance threat perceive by other protagonist. They can be formal and informal depending on the situation as most stronger state prefer informal alignment which are usually ad hoc in nature. Once the target has been achieve such arrangement seized to exist while weak state

chooses treaty based alliances which are binding on all signatories and must be observed by parties involved.

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