



Proxy War and Global Security: A Critical Analysis

¹Shedrack C. Igboke, ²Nwagbo Samuel N. C & ³Ezeanya Emeka V
^{1,2} & ³Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Anambra State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's E-mail: sc.igboke@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

Over the years, proxy wars and alliance has been an instrument used by major and minor powers to achieve their foreign policy objective and as well market their product. The paper seeks to x-ray the nexus between proxy wars and global security. This link can be seen in the examination of the role played by major powers during the cold war between the US and USSR, as well as in the ongoing series of conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, Saudi Arabia and Iran, especially in Yemen and Syria. The main thrust of this paper is to reveal how proxy wars and alliance pose a threat to global peace and security. It has also been realized that this would reduce discord and conflict among states. The study was anchored on the power theory to address the conflict among nation states. The research methodology used was qualitative. The work is descriptive in nature and we made use of secondary sources such as textbooks, internet materials, magazines and newspapers. The study found out that proxy wars and alliance among nations either directly or indirectly is threat to global peace and security, citing the case of Russia and Ukraine, Syria and Yemen, Israel and Palestine, etc. The paper concluded that integration among nation states was the bed rock of the global peace and security. It was recommended that United Nations, Arab league, African Union, and other regional organizations should be strong to carry out their aims and objectives effectively without fear or favour. It was also recommended that states should desist from the actions and inactions that are threat to global peace and security.

Keywords: Proxy War; Global security; Cold War; Superpowers and Foreign policy

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Introduction

Proxy conflict represents a perennial strand in the history of warfare. The appeal of ‘warfare on the cheap’ has proved an irresistible strategic allure for nations through the centuries. However, proxy wars remain a missing link in contemporary war and security studies. They are historically ubiquitous yet chronically under analysed. Proxy wars are defined here as the indirect engagement in a conflict by third parties wishing to influence its strategic outcome (Freedman 1989). However, this prevents confusion with direct intervention or covert action. Theoretically, it will be argued that recourse to proxy war has been a perpetual element of modern warfare, and will continue to be so, because of the liberal foreign policy agenda pursued by the West and their allies.

According to Johari (2013), the appeal of proxy war is undiminished in the post- 9/11 world whereby states ‘with or against’ the United States, in President George W. Bush’s dichotomization of world politics, jostled to secure their own strategic interests as the War on Terror came to dominate the discourse of international relations in the early twenty first century. As state sponsor of terrorism coalesced to form Bush’s self- proclaimed ‘axis of evil’, the mode by which both the ‘coalition of the willing’ and the constituents of the axis (and, significantly, their allies) could further their strategic aims has manifested itself in large part through the wider employment of proxies. Yet, it is not just superpowers that have shaped the terrain of proxy warfare. Given its lower- cost, often lower- risk, mode of conflict engagement, non- state actors including terrorist groups and more recently private security companies have been utilized as proxies.

During the Cold War, war by proxy was a key strategy of indirect conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The purpose of these proxy wars was to either maintain or change the balance of power between the superpowers/great powers in conflict areas outside the central front in Europe (Joshua, 2005). Within the condition of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to avoid direct confrontation between their conventional military forces in regional conflicts out of a fear that it would escalate to nuclear



war. The Cold War occurred with the structural conditions of bipolarity based upon strategic and ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. This condition, and the competition it entailed, largely determined the strategies of the United States and Soviet Union. In this condition, both powers engaged minor powers rather than each other directly. This entailed limited, indirect wars via proxy forces to minimize the threat of direct confrontation between the superpowers for fear of escalation. Since the end of World War II, interstate war between major international powers has become highly unlikely as a tool of foreign policy. Instead, as experienced during the Cold War, major powers come into conflict indirectly through third parties in what are local internal conflicts in order to accomplish their national interest. The United States and the Soviet Union used foreign governments and international organizations as proxies, such as during the United Nations operation in the Congo in 1960 and the Angolan Civil war in 1975, to influence and alter the outcome of a local conflict to suit their national interests and alter the regional balance of power (Johari, 2013).

Today, there is a new potential great power on the horizon in China, based on their growing economy, military capabilities and regional control. This is the main causes of the clash between China and America especially after Cov-19 pandemic. Busby (2020) imports that before above-mentioned incidence, the United States of America and the People's Republic of China (PRC) are already engaged in protracted trade rivalry, which spread into political and military realms and increasing array of other realms, such as technology, finance and education (Christensen, 2020). This ugly trend led to proxy war as a result of China's strategic competition. Moreover, Africa and other World Countries is the main venue for United States – China strategic competition, as it was during the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. China has significantly altered the strategic context in Africa and Beijing's motives have become more transparent. China's growing industries and middle class demand new energy, markets and raw material suppliers. Africa is the central/rallying point to meeting these demands. Since China has become ever more intertwined in the global economy, China has acquired vital interests in more and more regions around the globe. As vital interests increase, China has shape



the international order in ways favourable to its political interests even if they are counter to United States vital interests. For the first time in United States history, the words national strategic interest and Africa have recently appeared together in government documents and statements (Stone, 2010). In September of 2008 a new unified combatant command known as African Command (AFRICOM) was established with an area of responsibility solely dedicated to the African continent. Africa's exports of crude oil to the United States in 2007 exceeded those of the Persian Gulf, further emphasizing the continent's strategic importance to the vital interests of the US (Johari, 2013). In accordance with their national interests, the United States and China are looking for stable supplies of energy from as diverse a set of suppliers as possible and Africa is one of the largest regions of potential crude oil supplies. The United States' and China's involvement in Africa have the potential of resulting to conflict. Direct conflict between the two major powers is due to the advent of nuclear weapons, the economic and human cost of a direct war between two major nuclear powers. The danger of beginning a catastrophic major war between the United States and China will limit the two to local theatres. The strategy of war by proxy may be utilized to preserve the "peace" between the two powers directly.

Conceptual Clarification

Proxy War

A proxy war is an armed conflict between two states or non-state actors which act on the instigation or on behalf of other parties that are not directly involved in the hostilities. In order for a conflict to be considered a proxy war, there must be a direct, long-term relationship between external actors and the belligerents involved. According to Loveman (2002), Proxy war is a strategy for managing indirect conflict between superpowers via violent struggle between regional or local actors. The use of proxy war strategies is a key in preventing a direct conflict between nuclear superpowers in a major war and these strategies have contributed significantly to make the outbreak of total war less likely (Stone, 2010).

Proxy war occurs when a major power instigates or plays a major role in supporting and directing the conflict situations in other countries. The supply of arms and military relations with a foreign government or insurgent groups with the intent of influencing the affairs of a foreign conflict is one of the factors that facilitate indirect conflict via proxy between superpowers. The supply of arms does not automatically lead to direct involvement by a superpower in a conflict as was thought prior to World War II (Adekunle, 2009)

On the contrary, it is usually a substitute for direct involvement because it allows a superpower to back one side in conflict to fulfill national interests without becoming embroiled in the conflict situation (Loveman 2002:21). This method equally helps the superpower to advance its interests in foreign territory while keeping aloof from the warfare therefore, allowing it not implicated in consequences of its outcome perhaps directly involved. Iran's relationship with Houthi rebels in Yemen is a good example of proxy war because Tehran primarily provides weapons and funding, not large numbers of its own troops (Johari, 2013)

The current War between Russia and Ukraine is a good concrete example of Proxy War because U.S and her Western allies is directly providing weapons, military hard ware, billions of dollars, etc. to Ukraine troops (Shedrack & Azubuike, 2022) Further imports that the Russia invasion of Ukraine is regime change of Pro-U.S President Volodymrzelensky. According to Muhammad and Nilufar (20220), the reason behind the Russian invasion is that, Russia is threatened from Ukraine being a liberalized Country, out of the Russian influence, and seeks cooperation with the Western Countries in trade, security, and politics including the possibility of access to NATO and the EU, which threatens Russia's national security and these reasons push her towards this military operation with the aim to establish a new Ukrainian government loyal to Russia. The United States also engage in it in its operations in the Middle East and Africa. For instance, in supporting the Kurdish "people's protection unit" against the Islamic state Syria and working with armed groups in Libya to fight terrorists there and anti-Gadaffi rebels as well for regime change in 2011(Eze,2017;61).



In this regard, much of the U.S. struggle against terrorism in parts of Africa and the Middle East involves working with Local forces or governments to get them to more aggressively go after groups linked to al-Qaeda or the Islamic state.

The differences Between Proxy War and Alliance

However, there are also difference between proxy war and alliance. Alliance occurs when major and minor powers work together with each other, making significant contributions according to their means (Johari, 2013). It is a formal agreement among sovereign states for the purpose of coordinating their behavior to increase mutual security. The Washington's close work with Kabul against what is left of Al-Qaida and the Taliban more closely resembles a traditional alliance because of the major U.S. role, with thousand as of American troops and hundreds of air strikes. Meanwhile, Iran's relationship with Houthi rebels in Yemen is proxy war because Tehran primarily provides weapons and funding, not large numbers of its own troops.

Global Security:

The term global security refers to the amalgamation of measures taking by states and international organizations such as the UN, Arable League of nations, AU, NATO and others to ensure mutual survival and safety (Dobbins, 2005). These measures include military actions and diplomatic agreements such as treaties and conventions. As cold war tension receded, it became clear that the security of citizens was threatened by hardships arising from internal state activities as well as external aggressors. However, to enhance international security and potential threats caused by terrorism and organized crime, increased cooperation among police forces internationally has been applied. The international police, INTERPOL, shares information across international borders and this cooperation have been greatly enhanced by the arrival of the internet and the ability to transfer documents, films and photographs worldwide instantly.



Components or Forms of Proxy War

1. **Provision of Manpower:** Proxy wars are similar to most other forms of war much as the provision of manpower is often seen as essential to the outcome. Since proxy interventions occur within other categories of war, such as a civil war, benefactors usually perceive the need to provide help in terms of indirectly bolstering the number of 'boots on the ground', via a surrogate force or non-combatant military advisers (Dayal, 1976). However, USSR made prolific use of manpower as a form of proxy assistance. As the Cold War progressed, they permitted their military advisers in proxy conflicts to engage in an ever more expansive array of activities. Routine technical assistance and the giving and receiving of intelligence material were a repertoire soon expanded to include operational planning for foreign militaries (Fawole, 2003). By 1978, more than 40,000 Cuban troops were acting as Soviet surrogates in proxy conflicts across the Third World. At the height of Cuban involvement in the Angolan Civil War in early 1976, advisers from Havana were being flown into the country at a rate of 200 a day. Cuban military personnel had become the favoured surrogate force during Soviet proxy wars. During the Cold War, Cubans were deployed to Libya, Yemen, Angola, Ethiopia, Benin, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Grenada and Nicaragua. However, the use of Cuban surrogate forces was not exclusive. Egyptian pilots had been trained to fly Soviet planes during the Nigerian Civil War, while Czechoslovakian troops and military advisers had been utilized on numerous occasions in African war zones (James, 2005).

More so, a major task that the provision of manpower can fulfill is a coup/counter-coup function. On several occasions, the USSR sponsored proxy forces in the Third World that were utilized to protect allied regimes from coup threats. For example, in June 1966, the president of Congo-Brazzaville (modern-day Congo), Massama Debat, was given an armed guard by Cuban surrogate forces when the Congolese army seized control of the capital as part of a military coup. This Cuban protection, and the threat of an escalation of Cuban

manpower in support of Debat, eventually led to the collapse of the coup attempt (Scott, 1986).

- 2. Provision of Material:** The supplying of military materials, such as arms, ammunition and other military technology by benefactors to their chosen proxies is the prime way for benefactors to get others to do the fighting for them. It is the provision of means to ensure a specific end without having to engage in the messy business of war- fighting themselves (Herry, 2008). The delivery of weapons is the most potent symbol of proxy war as arms-length conflict engagement. Between 1965 and 1972, the USSR exported approximately \$6.5billion worth of weapons to countries in the Third World, nearly half of which went to North Vietnam during the war against the Americans. More so, Eze (2017) imports that between 1979 and 2003, the U.S has provided Egypt with about 19 billion dollars in Military aid, making Egypt the second largest non-NATO recipient of U.S military aid after Israel. Eze further avers that Egypt received about 30 billion dollars in economic aid within the same time frame. This contributed to the proxy war in Middle East and African countries.
- 3. Provision of Financial Assistance:** If the motives for sending money to a warring faction in an existing conflict are not explicitly humanitarian or for development reasons and are perceived to be for the broader strategic reasons of furthering a war aim, then this can be seen as a form of proxy intervention. Some proxy war benefactors have taken this financial motive and utilized huge amounts of their economic resources to assist a chosen proxy. For example, one estimate of total Soviet financial provision to Third World proxies (*excluding* its foremost proxies in and North Korea, between 1955 and 1980 puts the figure at around \$51billion (Robert, 1981). Contemporary developments in the world system, prompted by the influences of globalization, have ensured that the provision of money in a proxy war setting need no longer necessarily be restricted to an understanding of financing surrogate forces that have been physically deployed to war zones. Financial assistance is undertaken in many cases for the purposes of allowing allies to train security forces that can then be utilized as proxies by the benefactor. This was a primary use of such money during the Cold War. For



example, the Pentagon spent \$17.2million in 1962 alone on military assistance to just six countries: South Vietnam, Iran, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and the Philippines (Morton, 1966).

- 4. Provision of Non- Military Assistance:** Joseph Nye famously conceptualized the notion of ‘soft power ’in world politics as constituting ‘the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments (Nye, 1990). This occurs when particular groups in a Country label itself terrorist organization in order to attract the attention of international community or enemies of their Countries. It arises out of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies.’ Nye’s analysis of soft power is useful to engage with when assessing forms of influence other than traditionally coercive military mechanisms, primarily because it requires us to assess the means by which proxy forms of intervention can be sought. The fundamentally indirect nature of proxy wars means that they need not automatically be categorized as a perpetual ‘hard power’ type of intervention. Military assistance is not always offered. Furthermore, coercion may be an underlying current in many such wars, but that does not discount the possibility of a proxy’s willingness to seek a benefactor’s help because of the attractiveness of their political worldview, or indeed a benefactor emphasizing the appeal (or legitimacy) of their particular ideology as a source of attracting allies in strategically important areas. For example, political encouragement via the nurturing of Marxist- Leninist vanguard parties became an important additional strand in the Kremlin’s attempts to consolidate its influence in the Third World during the Cold War (Johari, 2013). The marketing of both communism and liberal democracy during the mid- twentieth century by their respective superpower champions became integral strands of soft- power influence as they attempted to shape the ideological preferences of other states in the world.

Reasons for Proxy Wars



A; To reduce the cost

States use proxies for many reasons. For instance, the United States, the issue is often cost: Locals fight, and die, so Americans do not have to. In addition, because they are local, proxies are often (though not always) more accepted by the affected communities. Therefore, they can better gain intelligence from those communities and are less likely to promote the sort of nationalistic backlash that so often accompany foreign interventions. If the proxy is a guerrilla force, they often know the terrain better and can blend in with the population in a way that foreigners never can. Most states lack the power-projection capacity of the United States and turn to proxies as a way to influence events far from their borders (Scott1986). Iran lacks a navy or massive airlift capacity necessary to sustain large forces in Yemen: Supporting the Houthis, however, gives Tehran influence there nonetheless.

B; Limitation of escalation

Proxies also offer a way of fighting that can limit escalation. States often deny that they are supporting proxies – Russia, for example, claims not to be involved in Ukraine despite funding an array of groups opposed to the government of Kyiv, arming and supporting them with its own forces (Wang, 2015). At times, other states may not know about foreign support or at least the extent of support, but in others it is a convenient fiction; Not knowing, or at least not having to know because a rival trumpets its support publicly, allows a government not to respond when it would prefer to avoid the matter. The United States cooperated with Pakistan on counter terrorism and operations in Afghanistan and Islamabad’s denials that it is providing massive support for the Taliban allow a façade of amity. All this makes escalation harder or at least limited to a certain arena. Israel, for example, has warred repeatedly against the Lebanese Hezbollah but has not struck Iran directly despite Tehran’s massive financial and military support for the group. But if Iran rather than Hezbollah attacked Israel with a missile, then Israel would feel compelled to strike Iran itself. This is especially important for Iran, which cannot match Israel economically, military, or even diplomatically given the Islamic Republic’s global pariah status.



Problems of Proxy Wars

Yet for all these advantages, proxy warfare has many risks. Despite the power asymmetry, proxies almost invariably act according to their own interests and impulses. Right after 9/11, the United States asked the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, its key Afghan ally made up primarily of minorities, not to take Kabul so that a force composed of ethnic Pashtun. Afghanistan's dominant community could do so and assuage the fears of minority dominance. The Northern Alliance did so anyway. In another case, the United States sought to kill Islamic State fighters as its local Kurdish and Arab proxies retook their territory, but the proxy was often pleased to let the fighters slip away from key strongholds like Raqqa and gain the territory without a bloody battle. They wanted the territory, not a high body count. This independence creates a tension for a proxy's patron. A stronger group is a more effective proxy, but a more effective proxy has a greater ability to stay independent.

Methodology

This article is qualitative in approach. It therefore adopted ex-post facto research design. Ex post facto literally means fact that is existing afterwards (Simon & Goes, 2013) and are connected to the existing happenstances or reality. Ex-post facto research method engaged in the critical investigation of already existing literature (documentaries) to understand how variables (independent variable, in this study proxy war) are responsible for the manifestation of given political phenomena (dependent variables; in this study global security) in a given sphere. It also describes the present on the basis of the past and upon which the future events or occurrences can be anticipated in line with the findings made (Nwagbo, 2021). According to Kerlinger and Rint (1986), in the context of social sciences research an ex post facto investigation attempts to reveal probable relationships by observing an existing condition(s) or state of affairs and searching back in time for plausible contributing factors. In other words, cause and effect relationship is being established. Data collection was done through secondary sources. It focused primarily on documentary methods of data collection such as books, journals, seminar papers, workshop papers, newspapers, periodicals, internet materials, webpages of some relevant

organizations and ministries. We utilized descriptive method of data analysis in presenting and analysing relevant data. Being non-experimental and qualitative study, descriptive analysis helped us to present and analyse data collected from secondary sources in a simple but logical manner to avoid unnecessary ambiguity. It helped to critic already existing literature while linking it up with the contemporary political development through which findings and recommendations were made.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on power theory. Power theory is designed on the development of an effective military power by the state. The power theory of the state was first developed by the historians like Heiririch Von Tretscike and philosophers like Freidrich Neitzsche in the nineteen century. It was subsequently upheld in the 20th century by the other theorists. Writing on the essence of power, Kauffman (1991) posits that, the primary purpose of the state was the cultivation, not of the mental and moral energies of the nation, which was a by-product, but of the highest power. The real social idea of the state is not the community of free willing men but victorious war. The state reveals itself in its true essence; war is the state highest performance in which its special nature reaches its fullest development.

The power theorists recognize the fact that power is central to the existence of any state. Just like human who have been inevitable and irresponsible urge for power so it is with the state. This point was emphasized by Thomas Hobbes, when he asserted that the general inclination of all mankind was the perpetual and restless desire for power that ceases only in death (Johari, 2013). A great theorist, Hans Morgenthau (1996), conceives of power as being central in the relation among nations when in his famous maxim that whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim as each nation's national interest can only be defined in terms of power. From the stand of power theorists, power is seen to be central to politics and a government can stand both in domestic and international affair, when such government possesses effective power. Though, from most positions of the theorists, it is crystal clear that power has to do with the use of severe of deprivation for non-conformity. At the international scene, power is

used overtly or covertly to achieve national interest. In this regard there is no morality or displace of conscience rather advancement of the well-being of the state and its citizens.

Power theory was adopted in this paper because proxy war is an indirect tactical displace of power by strong nation to accomplish their national interest especially by manipulating the weak nations. This is usually done through supply of arms, funding, military equipment, etc. to the warring nation(s) to achieve a deliberate foreign policy. It is observed that great power states especially the United States and former Soviet Union advanced proxy wars through support of civil wars, guerrilla groups, National Liberation Movements, such as popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and insurgent groups or assistance to a national revolt against foreign occupation. For instance, the British government partly organized and instigated the Arab Revolt to undermine the Ottoman Empire during World War 1. The civil war in Syria is by proxy between US and Russia. Syria is Russian ally in the Middle East during the cold war that needs to be protected at all cost. US and her allies went regime change in Syria (Eze, 2017).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Proxy Wars and Global Security

Proxy wars have a huge impact, especially on the local area. A proxy war with significant effects occurred between the United States of America and the USSR during the Vietnam War. In particular, the bombing campaign, Operation Rolling Thunder destroyed significant amounts of infrastructure, making life more difficult for North Vietnamese citizens. In addition, unexploded bombs dropped during the campaign have killed tens of thousands since the war ended, not only in Vietnam, but also in Cambodia and Laos. Also significant was the Soviet–Afghan War (see Operation Cyclone), which cost thousands of lives and billions of dollars bankrupting the Soviet Union and contributing to its collapse. The proxy war in the Middle East between Saudi Arabia and Iran is another example of the destructive impact of proxy wars. This conflict has resulted in,

among other things, the Syrian Civil War, the rise of ISIL, the current civil war in Yemen, and the reemergence of the Taliban (Johari,2013). Since 2003, more than 500,000 have died in Iraq. Since 2011, more than 220,000 have died in Syria. In Yemen, over 1,000 have died in just one month (2012). In Afghanistan, more than 17,000 have been killed since 2009. In Pakistan, more than 57,000 have been killed since 2003. In general, the lengths, intensities, and scales of armed conflicts are often greatly increased when belligerents' capabilities are augmented by external support. Belligerents are often less likely to engage in diplomatic negotiations, peace talks are less likely to bear fruit, and damage to infrastructure can be many times greater Angola Civil War (Eze, 2017).

The proxy wars explored in this paper reveal a threefold set of consequences for those involved, including benefactors, proxies, surrogates and the population of the country where the intervention is taking place. The consequences are not necessarily immediate and are often protracted in their impact. In short, proxy wars can detrimentally induce: dependence in the long run between the benefactor and the proxy (politically and financially); an elongation and/or intensification of the original war in which intervention was sought; and the creation of either conflict overspill beyond the initial boundaries of the war or unintended 'blowback' for the participants once the war has ended. The National Liberation movements that were on the receiving end of so much Soviet assistance in their fight against pro- Western or colonial governments during the Cold War were acting, according to Nye (1990), to achieve four overriding objectives: political independence; freedom from external economic control; social revolution; and cultural regeneration.

Hugh Thomas was in agreement, citing proxy interventions as 'one reason why the war lasted so long'. Such examples highlight how a flood of weapons or surrogate forces into an existing war zone gives one or other of the parties involved further motivation and support to fight on, rather than collapse or seek negotiation (Gilpin, 1981). Overspill and 'blowback' To a large degree, the arming or training of proxies by benefactor states is based on the geostrategic assumption that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. Yet, as the history of proxy war tells us, this policy runs the

severe risk of creating unintended, counterproductive consequences once the war is over – what the CIA terms ‘blowback’ (Stone, 2010). Such blowback can be high profile or subtle, immediate or delayed in its manifestation. The future consequences of foreign policy decisions are arguably exacerbated in proxy war situations given the often-fleeting nature of the relationship between the benefactor and the proxy, and the typically short- term nature of the benefactor’s strategic objective. The proliferation of proxy wars during the Cold War era intensified the frequency and effect of blowback.

Chalmers Johnson concluded in *Blowback*, his provocative study of the implications of recent US foreign policy: ‘world politics in the twenty- first century will in all likelihood be driven primarily by blowback from the second half of the twentieth century that is, from the unintended consequences of the Cold War and the crucial American decision to maintain a Cold War posture in a post- Cold War world’ (Dobrynin, 1995). Johnson’s cautionary assessment should encourage us to not only reflect more deeply on the contemporary consequences of proxy wars waged in the past, but also make policymakers and scholars alike more vigilant as to the potential long- term implications of initiating short- term proxy wars today. Perhaps the exemplary manifestation of blowback is how the Stinger missiles provided by the US to the Afghan mujahedeen during the late 1980s were used in conflicts much further effect after the Soviets withdrew in 1989. The use of Stinger missiles by non- state actors with whom no direct Stinger sales have been made, but who had interaction with Afghan groups who were supplied with American Stingers, has been reported in Bosnia, Iran, Kashmir, Tunisia and the Palestinian territories in the years since the Soviet withdrawal. Indeed, so concerned did Washington become at the proliferation of Stinger usage that President George H. W. Bush authorized a \$65 million ‘buy back’ programme to help the CIA retrieve as many of the missiles as possible. The results of this initiative were negligible, with only a small fraction of the Stingers recovered, leaving somewhere between 300 and 600 unaccounted for (Freedman, 1989).

The effects of this particular proxy war decision long outlasted both the original conflict it was designed to influence and unwittingly spilled over the borders of the country they were intended



for. The Soviet–Afghan War killed 1.3 million people, with a million more turned into refugees – a third of the nation’s pre- war population. The end of this conflict coincided with the sudden and unexpected end to the entire Cold War, causing, in the words of the 9/11 Commission Report, a ‘trauma in the foreign policy and national security community both in and out of government’ (Eze,2017). This policy malaise was perfectly encapsulated by the way in which the US attempted to extract itself from this particular proxy war. The jihadist diaspora that was created at the end of the Afghan war ignited a new wave of pan- Arab fundamentalism. By walking away from the mujahedeen groups after the Cold War, the US was complicit in creating a transnational force of Islamist militants who went on to establish terrorist movements around the world, and indeed for permitting Afghanistan to slide into civil war and doing little to alleviate Afghanistan’s poverty levels, which were amongst the highest in the world.

In addition to the civil war and continuing poverty, one of the most significant consequences of US inattention to Afghanistan after 1989 was the sanctuary now on offer to an international array of jihadist militants. By the mid- 1990s the Taliban had won control of large swathes of the country, including the capital Kabul. As a result, Afghanistan was established as a safe haven for Islamic fundamentalism, compounded by the fact that the US had no clear policy formulated to deal with the issue. The Americans had given little thought to the repercussions of their proxy war strategy. Although the Americans may have helped end one war, they unwittingly sowed the seeds for the start of another one, which was made startlingly clear on 11 September 2001. As easy as it may be to apportion this blame, it must be acknowledged that America ‘was doing what great powers have done throughout history, in order to survive as great powers: pursue its strategic interests’ (Loverman 2002, Dobbins 2005). Such strategic interests are pursued indirectly, frequently in secret, inevitably for reasons of power and by using the personnel of other states or non- state actors to vicariously fulfill those interests for them.

The Rise of China through Proxy War and Economic Development

The rise of China as a global power has provoked profuse amounts of consternation and intrigue in the West as to how this communist state will reconcile its inherent inwardness with newfound

inclinations towards international economic and political influence. China's rise to superpower status has been one of stealth. New superpowers historically have emerged from the ashes of a large military conflict (such as the US after the Second World War) or aggressive periods of colonization (notably Britain in the nineteenth century). But China has avoided military confrontation with rival powers, thus breaking the mold of superpower establishment. Becoming a superpower is one thing, but remaining one is a different thing altogether. As China seeks to consolidate its new power status, the world's other superpowers look on with trepidation.

In the early 1980s, Michael Doyle cautioned us against 'the single, greatest, traditional danger of international change, the transition between hegemonic leaders. When one great power begins to lose its pre-eminence and slip into mere equality, a warlike resolution of the international pecking order becomes exceptionally likely (Stone,2010).' There are currently huge economic and political pressures being placed on the liberal basis of American power by a global financial crisis and the legacies of two sapping and controversial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When combined with the rise of an illiberal China, those 'warlike resolutions' Doyle alludes to do not automatically have to be conventional, nuclear or large scale in their nature. Indeed, as this book has sought to demonstrate, they are more likely to be indirect resolutions and increasingly likely to involve some form of proxy, largely because of the high levels of economic interdependence the two countries have, which can be seen as a bulwark to the undertaking of other forms of direct confrontation.

There is no doubt that the rise of China as a global superpower is giving Washington reasons for concern, on both an economic and military front. Indeed, one of the most significant aspects of the important January 2012 US defence review was the overt strategic pivot towards the Asia-Pacific region, as priorities shifted to accommodate the rise of China: 'Over the long term, China's emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the US economy and security in a variety of ways. However, the growth of China's military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region (Busby, 2020). The Washington's wariness over Chinese strategic intentions was

compounded in March 2012 when Beijing announced an 11 per cent increase in its defense budget, topping \$100 billion for the first time ever. Yet it remains crucial to consider that China and the US are playing different games, with different rules. China is not seeking to establish a global military presence, or to impress its politico- economic creed on other states, as has been the foundation of American foreign policy since the Truman Doctrine (Eze, 2017).

China's reliance on economic expansionism may avoid a Cold War- style superpower standoff, but instead it raises a whole different prospect of a global power shift, as a result of China maximizing indirect uses of its power to secure long- term interests (both economic and political) while reducing the risk of war with the US. China's rise has in large part been down to its profuse wielding of 'soft- power' mechanisms that have showcased their economic prowess above all else. Many of these efforts have focused upon underpinning the long- term future of their economic potency by securing resource access, trade agreements and, crucially, political influence in the developing world, especially Africa. Examples of Beijing's 'soft- power' projection include the funding of a 500-mile railway line from the iron ore mining region of Gabon to its main coastal port; the construction of a major highway between Entebbe and Kampala in Uganda; and the establishment of a Chinese university campus and hospital in Ghana. This is in addition to the deployment of Chinese peacekeeping troops to Burundi, the Ivory Coast and Liberia, not to mention the billions of dollars- worth of loans to numerous African nations (secured against their natural resources). By 2008, China was conducting \$108 billion- worth of trade with countries in Africa, up from only \$10 billion eight years earlier (Huang, 2008). A presence in the developing world is thus evidently integral to China's growth strategy.

The concern however, remains how the rise of China will interact over the coming decades with the other trend in relation to their effect on the proliferation of proxy wars. China's long-standing foreign policy 'golden rule' of non- interference in the internal affairs of other countries (arguably stemming from Mao Zedong's introspective view of communism, as opposed to Lenin's pursuit of global revolution) will be severely tested as the Chinese Communist Party



(CCP) seeks ways to maintain high levels of economic growth with limited amounts of domestic natural resources and an expanding population. China's current access to African oil, cobalt, gold, copper and iron ore may well be constrained in the future by competitor states or internal disruption to supply through civil war. Furthermore, the issue of risk management is all the more acute in China's case due to the huge economic stakes involved in its new power status. For instance, an assertive naval presence in the South China Sea, ongoing tensions over Taiwan, and President Obama's Asia 'pivot' strategy have all increased the bellicose rhetoric emanating from, and aimed at, China (Jiang, 2008).

However, the interdependence of the Chinese and American economies, combined with the overarching shadow that nuclear weapons continue to cast over international relations, arguably diminishes the chances of conventional war with China. Talk of China's peaceful rise to the status of global superpower needs to be heavily couched in terms that closely scrutinize China's *indirect* forms of power projection and interest maximization. Indeed, it could be argued that a form of proxy warfare has been simmering between China and the US for some time now, with the Americans using Taiwan as a regional surrogate to block expansions of Chinese military power. This allows us to see President Obama's authorization of a \$6 billion arms deal with Taiwan in 2010 as an act of preventive proxy war, designed as a bulwark against Chinese regional enlargement. This, however, would not be the first time that perceptions of Chinese power have increased the appeal of proxy wars to their potential adversaries (Johari, 2013).

Neil MacFarlane has argued that Nikita Khrushchev's adoption of an overt proxy war strategy in the Third World in the early 1960s was in part motivated 'by the emergence of China as a serious rival for influence among "progressive" forces in Africa and Asia' (Stone,2010). The Sino-Soviet split in the 1970s further enlarged the scope, and indeed the perceived need, for Soviet advancement in strategically sensitive areas. Twenty- first- century Chinese influence in the developing world has in part rested upon its non- Western credentials. When assessed alongside Western- led initiatives, particularly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to introduce development initiatives, the Chinese model seemingly holds an appeal to certain African leaders

given the absence of accountability and privatization stipulations attached to loans or investments. This has helped build economic and diplomatic ties between China and some African nations.

Symptomatic of these bonds was the creation of initiatives such as the Forum on China- Africa Co- operation. But these bonds have yet to be truly tested, either through demands for support during a conflict or through pressures on vital resource access. The scope for Chinese engagement in proxy wars in Africa, although seemingly antithetical to their longstanding foreign policy doctrine, may soon increase as they seek ways of preserving their newfound wealth and status. Additional considerations, such as China's desire to enhance its own energy security via African oil exports, the seeking of new investment opportunities on the continent, and the creation of new strategic alliances, will all play a role in how China responds to the security situation in Africa over the coming decades. The foundations of proxy fourteen defence attachés in embassies throughout Africa, but it also deployed 4,500 military personnel to Nigeria in 2007 to protect the important oil infrastructure and Chinese oil workers in the Niger Delta area.

Logic in a Great Power Proxy Rivalry

In a bipolar international system, proxy war strategies are methods to advance national interests. China and the United States are likely to seek to advance or defend their national interests while minimizing the risks of a direct confrontation. The nuclear arsenals and conventional military capabilities of the United States and China will make direct conflict between the two great powers over disputes within Africa less plausible allowing proxy strategies to be a logical replacement for the United States and China to advance their global and regional strategic and political interests. The threat of total war between nuclear great powers will increase the odds that the rivalries between the United States and China will be contested in local, intra-state conflicts within Africa. The fear of escalation in a direct conflict between the United States and



China strongly inhibits the use of conventional military forces against one another. During the Cold War the probability of direct war between the United States and the Soviet Union was “practically nil precisely because the military planning and deployments of each, together with the fear of escalation to general nuclear war” (Jiang, 2008). The relationship between the United States and China will take on similar characteristics as the Cold War where two great powers are unwilling to risk direct war between conventional forces because of the unpredictability and fear of miscalculating the other rival resulting in the possibility of the use of nuclear arsenals leading to total war. The fear of escalation towards total war promotes the use of proxy strategies as a convincing method of shifting or maintaining the balance of power and accomplishing one’s foreign policy goals.

Currently, the ideological conflicts of the Cold War have been replaced by economic competition and new ideological differences, as China takes part in the global economy and strives for expanded trade terms and economic markets rather than an alternative communist vision. Currently China is not thinking ideologically but the United States is. China is thinking economically and they’ll build relations with any type of government as long as they gain access to their energy resources or markets to sell their products. In the near future however, the possibilities of not only an increase in competition for strategic energy resources between the United States and China may occur, but also an ideological struggle, similar to the Cold War, where the United States and China become involved in a competition for the restructuring of a new world order. The relentless pace of Chinese and American acquisitions of African energy resources, the competing forms of acquiring these resources and alternative visions of the continent have possibly put American and Chinese interests on a collision course. The United States is promoting Western values of democracy and good governance; the Chinese do not promote. China’s foreign policy in Africa, in part, has in fact promoted values directly opposed to the efforts and values of the United States. Chinese leaders emphasize sustaining a peaceful order domestically and internationally that is advantageous to the perpetuation of communist party rule³²³ and the promotion of democracy is not compatible with the way the CCP rules.



The United States may not see China as a communist threat like the Soviet Union during the Cold War, but they do see China as hindering the goals and values the United States is promoting throughout Africa (Hang, 2008).

Conclusion

Proxy wars exist in local settings when there is significant external influence and motivation in order to achieve the interests of a great power. Proxy wars are always utilized in local conflicts where instability is prominent. Nuclear weapons have resulted in the necessity of great powers becoming indirectly involved in limited wars in order to pursue national interests. The goal is to deliberately discourage and control another great power's aggression while avoiding total war. Proxy wars are a way to shift the balance of power or maintain the status quo by reducing the fear of escalation to total war by supplying material aid to a weaker group or organization. Proxy wars are also an effective strategy to minimize the risks of defeat in a direct intervention, the significant loss of resources, and ostracism from the international community. The unabated conflicts and wars in Africa and Asian countries after Second World War especially from 1960 is a show of proxy warfare between the super power nations. It was originally between the Western allies led by the United States and the Soviet Union. After 1990s of disintegration of Soviet Union, other nations especially in the recent times China and Russia have also engaged in the indirect war foreign policy to propagate their national interest and power influence globally.

Inadvertently, this engagement has seriously affected global security. Many nations in Africa and Asia have been indulged in all sorts of conflict and wars both within themselves. It has led to proliferations of weapons, sophisticated terrorism, destruction of national asserts, aggravated poverty, loss of lives and perennial dependency and chronic underdevelopment. It may be hard if not impossible to achieve global peace except great power sought for other diplomatic ways of resolving their misunderstanding and promoting their national interest without orchestrating wars in distance countries. It also found out that inability of the United Nations and its affiliates to curtail Proxy warfare and punish countries that promoting it has put doubt in their capacity to promote global peace and security.

It therefore recommended that the United Nations should be firm in sanctioning countries that promote wars whether by direct engagement or by proxy. Regional Organizations like Arab league, African Union, and etc. should effectively pursue their aims and objectives without fear or favour by curtail countries within their regions in engaging in any kind of war especially being used by superpowers to destabilize their regions. Also, states should desist from the actions and inactions that are threat to global peace and security rather sought for amicable ways of pursuing their national interests and resolving their conflicts of interest.

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