International security and disarmament

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International security is a key issue in the study of international relations. It is largely a political concept that revolves around the measures taken by actors in the international system to ensure mutual survival and safety. Such actors include nations and international organizations like the United Nations.

The measures undertaken include military action, treaties disarmament and peacekeeping missions. Disarmament is a concept in international relations that describe the process of reducing the number of weapons and troops controlled by any given state. It is one of the outstanding efforts put in place to preserve international peace and security, especially in the modern era. Armed conflicts had previously dominated the international scene causing a huge threat on global peace. This is the use of mass weapons in war, which was a predominant factor in international relations. It is among the methods that were used commonly in solving international conflict (Graham 232). However, its devastating consequences included the disruption of global peace especially because war between two nations tended to spill over to other states.

Alliances were often made as a show of support for one group or the other. An example is the world wars whose effects were felt worldwide and countries took a while to recover fully. This explains the need to reduce the number of arms under state control as a measure of enhancing global peace and security.

This paper answers the question of how the international system has used disarmament to contain armed conflict and promote peace and security. International security has quite a rich background, more so the history of armed conflicts, disarmament policies and the current peace in the world. The study of armed conflict involves a look at wars, revolutions, rebellions, genocides, ethnic and political violence and worldwide terrorism. The most significant of these have been the two world wars and the cold war. The first and second world war witnessed a high number of civilian deaths, no to mention the economic implications of the wars.

They also resulted in mass violation of fundamental human rights. The cold war is the last major war though it lasted for the better half of the twentieth century. The war was a struggle for global influence and was characterized by a display and competition for ownership of nuclear weapons (Kelsen 76). The arms race took place during the cold war. Although the two competing blocs never engaged in physical contact, the threat of a world war was always looming and international security was an all time low. The effects of the arms race threatened international security through various ways, economical social and political. It involved acquisition of more weapons to gain control of the world and its consequences on international relations were disastrous. A study of that time by the United Nations revealed that by 1980, world military expenditure had escalated to over 500 billion US dollars (Garcia 122).

This continued clamor for military power has hampered any efforts to assure and maintain international security. This is because it frustrates international

political relations, creating obstacles to the implementation of peaceful coexistence among states as stipulated in the U. N Charter.

Although disarmament started way before the period of the world wars and the arms race, it became increasingly popular at that time. The increased acquisition of military weapons made it necessary to advocate for disarmament as a measure of ensuring international security. Numerous world leaders had previously called for disarmament among military superior countries, which were influential in international affairs. Such countries include the United States whose former president Woodrow Wilson was a supporter of disarmament in order to contain future wars after the First World War. At the time of the arms race, the major superpowers were America and USSR, which controlled a number of states through their groupings, the western and eastern bloc respectively. Any instructions from them were instantly followed and animosity was evident across members of different blocs. From the historical background above it is easy to see why disarmament is heavily advocated for in order to promote international peace and security.

It is evident that international security is essential if there is to be global prosperity socially, economically and politically. Armed conflict as witnessed in previous decades threatened international security both then and now. The future of world peace lies in implementation of disarmament policies, which done collectively would eradicate the threat of possession of mass weapons. State ownership of mass weapons creates tension in the international system as any slight aggression can trigger a world war. Armed conflict has been on the decline over the past few decades, with the current

ones limited to civil wars and political violence (Falk, Kim, and Mendlovitz 114). This is not to mean that they are not violent, however their threat to international peace is minimal. Therefore, the important question at hand is how the international system has implemented disarmament and helped contain armed conflict and promote international security. There is a significant relationship between disarmament and international security.

Understanding this relationship is the means to comprehending how disarmament has been successful in promoting global security. This is mainly brought out through the United Nations Charter whose members, particularly in the Security Council are supposed to fully discharge their responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. These efforts are meant to be parallel to achieving disarmament. The U. N Charter incorporates disarmament as part of the methods of realization of peace in the international realm (United Nations Centre for Disarmament 232). International security and disarmament are intertwined meaning the success of one ultimately leads to that of the other. Steps towards disarmament have always been slow, making international security quite elusive.

Actual disarmament has been going on at a slow pace worldwide, a fact attributed to lack of security. This is especially so because of arguments in favor of arms race which is still going on albeit at reduced levels. Various countries argue in favor of armament as it enhances their security. However, the tension brought about by ownership of mass weapons especially by economically empowered states continues to be a threat to international security.

Therefore, steps towards making the world secure are what lead to advancement of disarmament. Here we see the effect of international relations through collectivism on international security. Actors in the international system have colluded to end armed conflict and enhance peace (Garcia 234). This was the first step towards achieving success in this mission, acknowledgement of a crisis, which if left unmanaged, could result in years of mayhem. This is among the ways through which the international system has managed to foster security. Condemnation of armed conflict and resorting to means of curbing them has resulted in disarmament. This is after the realization that having too much military control could be detrimental to peace efforts by any given country.

The above collectivism is in part aided by the United Nations, which has members from world over who are ready to promote peace. Being within a common organization such as this has helped actors in the international system to promote peace and security. Still on collective action, the regulations of the United Nations Charter obligate its members to embrace disarmament. As part of its mandate to ensure international peace, its members have to abide by the same rules. Together they have worked towards ensuring that no country attains military superiority over the others thus creating tense situations. Any country is free to foster disarmament through the U. N Security Council if it feels threatened by another state's military advantage (United Nations Centre for Disarmament 332).

This implies that each country is looking out for their interests by observing those of other countries and ensuring that they do not affect them negatively. There is mutual agreement to foster international peace for their

own good since lack of it affects them drastically. There are international laws that govern trial of perpetrators of armed conflict and countries that do not abide by measures put in place for disarmament. For instance, America enacted the Arms Control and Disarmament Act in 1961, which has undergone numerous amendments since its inception until finally being incorporated into a state department (United Nations Centre for Disarmament 75). There have been various conferences and treaties set up to discuss the issue of disarmament including the Hague conferences, world disarmament conference, conference of the committee on disarmament and the conference on disarmament which is still convened to date. The abolition of nuclear weapons is stipulated under the international humanitarian law. The United Nations through its charter has strived to ensure that its members comply with the regulations of international law regarding disarmament.

Approaches to disarmament based on humanitarian grounds have been embraced by actors in the international system. This is after several deadlocks in getting countries to agree on how to implement disarmament. Although there is mutual agreement among countries that international security is of primary importance, there has been reluctance in letting go of the arms race. This is because of the various arguments in favor of the same, with countries saying that surrendering all their arms would result in insecurity. Therefore, paying attention to the effects of armed conflicts in the international system helped in realizing the benefits of disarmament. Violations of human rights are part of the drastic consequences of armed

conflict. By engaging in disarmament, countries are seeking to promote human rights and then serve the common interest of humanity.

Humanitarian approach to disarmament offers the potential to appeal to a wider audience, especially those in the political realm. Politics in the international system is based on self-interests whereby each state advances its own. However, no country wants to be pinpointed for not supporting human rights, which have since been globalized. Therefore, disarmament as a way of promoting international security to show consideration for human rights is a welcome move. Most countries are eager to ensure that their citizens are safe and living peaceful lives. This actually helps promote national prosperity and is an act of advancement of state interests. In so doing, they are in essence advancing the wellbeing of everyone in the world. It is a collective responsibility which though done for national self-interest has helped to ensure peace in the international system through disarmament.

The future of international security depends entirely on maintenance of disarmament acts and containing armed conflict. Statistics show that there has been a significant decrease in the number of armed conflicts in the world. This is a positive achievement which should be given due recognition. Since the 1990's, the cases of armed conflicts have reduced to intrastate conflicts as opposed to the commonly witnessed interstate wars in previous decades. This has been attributed to the policy of disarmament, which has helped to contain conflict (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 194). The international system has taken major steps towards ensuring world peace whose future is currently looking bright. International security has

definitely been enhanced as compared to previous years and for this to continue, several steps have to be taken. International relations have to be maintained within the scope of collective action to ensure this is the case.

Every measure towards the same should be done collectively. However, further laws on criminalization should be put in place for armed conflict to be completely stopped. There would be no need for panic if there were no wars in the international system. All those found guilty of the same would have to be indicted as an example to others, which is why the laws put in place should be tightened. More power should be accorded to the international court of justice, which is responsible for dealing with criminal cases that cut across the international realm (Buzan and W? ver 323). The increased mandate of the United Nations Security Council since the end of the cold war is also essential in the future of international security.

For as long as the council has more powers and political ground, the scope of their work is felt in the international system. As aforementioned, the United Nations has played a big role in the implementation of disarmament as contained in the U. N Charter. Its role in ensuring world peace and security goes beyond supporting disarmament and into promoting peacekeeping missions among member states. These have helped secure the future of international security, given the wide scope of the activity because of the large membership in the organization.

Conclusively, this paper shows the importance of international security, how it can be threatened through armed conflict and the role of disarmament in its sustenance. Disarmament though not completely supported by all

countries has helped to achieve the much needed peace and security in the international system. The arms race continues to be a thorny issue but it has obviously been on the decrease since the period of the cold war. With many leaders supporting disarmament, the possibility of achieving complete peace in the international system can be realized. Much of the problems hindering this measure lie in lack of a precise framework to implement it, but if this is achieved then peace will not be an issue in the world.

International relations contribute to security issues because they determine whether there is peace or conflict. This means that they are an essential contributor to international security. Armed conflict is a result of strained relations between countries, meaning that if contained the number of such cases would decline. Additionally, through international relations the issue of collectivism in disarmament is enhanced. The current decline in armed conflict and the onset of peace in the international system has been achieved through many factors, one of them being disarmament.

Through the above-mentioned means, actors in the international system have managed to ensure peace and security. Works Cited Buzan, Barry, and Ole W? ver. Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. London, Cambridge University Press, 2003. Falk, Richard Anderson, Samuel S.

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