International Relations, Conflict, and Crisis Management

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ABSTRACT

The environment of international relations differs considerably from the domestic setting. The world system operates in a state of anarchy, which portrays absence of a world government or super ordinate body to make and enforce laws or regulate how actors behave in order to pursue and defend specific interest. There is the spirit of the survival of the fittest and this partly explains why international conflicts are common and inevitable in the global political system and why actors are evidently divided by conflicting interest. This made conflict part of the characteristics of the world system, but actors still realize that there are certain interests, which can hardly be realized, secured, and guaranteed without cooperation. Evidently are the bilateral and multilateral trade, culture, military, diplomatic, and technology relations in the face of current digital age, technological development, and challenges inherent. This paper, therefore investigated issues of human nature and conflict, contending societal factors that build aggression that results and fuels conflict, the role of international relations, and conflict management methods in contemporary society. Non-experimental descriptive research design, involving historical and document study was adopted. It was established that conflicts despite their horrors, accompanying devastations, neglect, and dehumanization are the direct manifestations of individual, group, and class struggle to dominate the system where proper or normal social procedures are inadequate to deal with new conditions. These factors are direct consequences of psychological and environmental constraints as a result of scarce resources and ecological problems. Thus, the coming together and cooperation amongst states and nation-states in the contemporary global system should adopt proactive measures in containing and eliminating conflicts especially as it concerns terrorism. Collective massive military attacks and information gathering by affected states should be first among other means and measures of conflict management. The use of civilian auxiliaries known as the Volunteers for the Defense of the interior homeland and information gathering should be adopted and adequately funded because failure in this regard will spell more doom as the armed volunteers can join or form their own militia group. Information to the volunteers should be on the move execution per roll method. Above all, the government should be proactive and responsive to the needs and development of its citizens, especially the youth.
Keywords: Environment, international relations, domestic setting, International Relations, Conflict and Crisis Management

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the world system and inherent problems arising from the quest to dominate, pursue and defend national interests has made conflict inevitable among the states. This situation is because nobody is in charge or do the system has formal authority. It makes the world look anarchic, this does not imply the colloquial meaning of chaos because there is plenty of order in the system since most nation-states follow international rule, and work together when it is in their interest. At the individual level, societal constraints, environment, neglect, and poverty have made the individual prone to conflict. This is evident in developing countries were most nations are battling with one crisis or the other. The situation has made states and nation-states to sort for cooperation amongst themselves and one another, pool resources, and share information as a way to face global issues and challenges that go beyond any particular country or region. Contemporarily, global issues such as intra-state conflicts; sustained political violence that takes place between armed groups within the state and one or more non-state groups as seen in Iran, and Syria. Inter-state conflicts; conflicts between two or more states that use their respective armies or national forces in the conflict as seen in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Palestine. Pandemics, the environment, terrorism; unlawful use, or threat of violence especially against the state or the public as a politically motivated means of attack or coercion have triggered the quest for more cooperation and sound international relations. In developing countries, the current wave and threat of terrorism have seen Africa recording such occurrences. Countries like Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, Niger, Burkina Faso etc. have had incidences of killing, looting and destruction of properties including

loss of territories by states and displacement of persons. In Nigeria for example, the Northeast (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe) and the Lake Chad Basin have witnessed many events that affected security, politics, and humanitarian response. Non-state armed groups (NSAG) continued their terror campaign, launching audacious attacks on military formations, targeting humanitarian infrastructure and personnel, killing civilians, and causing widespread damage to property and critical national infrastructures such as the national power grid and telecom installations.

In Borno State, NSAG attacked Rann, Marte, Dikwa, and Bama towns, causing widespread destructions and generalized violence, which led to the displacement of civilians to various towns in the State and neighboring countries. In Adamawa State, the security situation was characterized by NSAG attacks recorded in various communities such as Hong, Michika, and Michika. Kidnapping and other criminal activities were also reported across different parts of the State. In Yobe State, NSAG continued to target the triad LGAs of Geidam, Gujba, and Yusufari, attacking both military formations and civilians, including government facilities such as clinics and schools. The violent attacks were later extended to civilians and private properties, including houses, farms and farmsteads, churches, mosques and palaces of traditional rulers in the states in the northeast, as well as in Abuja and Nasarawa, Kaduna, Kano and Bauchi states, all of which are outside the remit of the northeast geopolitical zone of the country.[1] According to [2], Armed Islamist groups that began attacking Burkina Faso in 2016 have become increasingly abusive, carrying out hundreds of killings, summary executions, rapes of civilians, and widespread pillaging. Also, since 2016, government security forces and militias engaged in counterterrorism operations have allegedly unlawfully killed hundreds of civilians and suspected Islamist fighters, fueling recruitment into armed groups. The fighting has forced 1.8 million people from their homes, most from the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions of the country. "Armed Islamist groups are demonstrating day after day their profound disregard for the lives and livelihoods of civilians," said Corinne Dufka Sahel director at Human Rights Watch.

These attacks have resulted in communal displacement and destruction of the social fabric of countries resulting in hunger, starvation, poverty, and destruction of lives and property. The affected nations seem to have been plunged into a huge theater of operations threatening to smoothen it into shreds, thus a climate of fear and social trauma has left the people in the fear of the unexpected.

According to [2], "There certainly seemed to be important shifts occurring in the landscape of global terrorism and those unstable African nations could become safe havens for Islamist extremist groups". He further said that US military officials in 2011 began warning of signs that the main extremist groups based in Africa were working toward closer cooperation through arms or financing. Similarly, the US subcommittee on counterterrorism and intelligence committee on homeland security House of Representatives (2011) warned that Boko Haram has the intent and maybe developing the capability to coordinate on a rhetorical and operational level with al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al Shabaab. Violent jihadi groups are thriving in Africa and in some cases expanding across borders [3].

He further maintained that Islamist insurgencies in Africa have three main geographical areas of operation. One is Somalia, where a very old insurgency has for years created instability in bordering regions in Kenya and is now inspiring violent groups in Mozambique and the Democratic of Congo. The second is in the Sahel region of West Africa, with the border region between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso particularly affected, but also neighboring countries such as Ivory Coast, Togo, and Benin. Last is the area around Lake Chad and northeast Nigeria, from where the conflict directly affects northern Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. All these insurgencies exert a huge toll on the local population, which is the target of most of the terrorists' attacks.

According to [2], western nations are deeply worried over the spread of terrorism; unlawful use or threat of violence especially against the state or the public as a politically motivated means of attack or coercion that seeks to create fear, not just within the direct victims but also among a wide audience (Britannica). Accordingly, it is a calculated use of violence to generate fear to achieve political goals, when direct military victory is not possible. According to [4], "the terrorist main aim is to create a heinously oppressive atmosphere in the society", this has placed many nations on red alert.

From the foregoing, the management of this situation and any other conflict affecting nations require the cooperation of states or international community to effectively meet with the challenges, which is part of the functions of international relations. According to Karl Deutsch, international relations is "that area of human action where inescapable interdependency meets with inadequate control". -Hence, there is no escape from world affairs and cooperation. This unit of cooperation can be referred as' political community', which according to [5], is a "collection of political actors whose interdependency is sufficient to make a substantial difference to the outcome of some of each other's relevant. decision". If these units or states concerned are aware of their interdependency, and perhaps its limits, they may modify their behaviour accordingly, and adopt the competitive or cooperative roles appropriate to the particular kind of interdependence in which they find themselves involved. If it is mainly a community of conflict, they may act as rivals or adversaries. If their rewards run paralleled and depend on the coordination of their action, they are in a positive community of interest and may try to cooperate.

Theoretically, international relations as a science is concerned with observation and analysis that stimulates theories in order to explain and predict situations in the international system. In this regard, the study will

adopt system theory as the anchorage of study analysis. The essence being that nations cannot exist independently, they need the assistance of other nations to maintain a balance, equilibrium and solve problems they cannot tackle alone. According to [6], system theory is simply a technique for identifying, measuring, and examining interactions within a system and its sub-systems. [7], maintained that a system is a set of actors interacting with one another in established pattern and through designated structure. By this holistic existence, what happens in each unit affects the proper function of the system or the other units. On this premise therefore, states of a distinct region effect their integration and cooperation in order to achieve set goals, hopes and aspiration [8]. This explains why integration is defined as a relationship among units in which they are mutually interdependent and jointly produce system properties which they would have separately lack.

This paper, therefore will investigate issues of human nature and conflict, contending societal factors that build aggression that results and fuels conflict, the role of international relations, and conflict management methods in contemporary society, and non-experimental descriptive research design, involving historical and document study will be adopted in addressing the issues. According to Oenga and Ali (1968) in [9], the descriptive design is mainly concerned with showing, describing, and interpreting what is. It aims to expose conditions or relationships that exist, the practices that prevail, the processes that are ongoing, beliefs, points of view or attitudes that are held by people or institutions, or the trends that are developing in a group of institutions.

Conflict

Conflict in simple terms can be described as a serious disagreement or argument between individuals, groups, or states. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, conflict is a clash or sharp disagreement (as between ideas, interests, or purposes): a mental struggle resulting from needs, drives, wishes, or demands that are in opposition or are not compatible. Thus, Conflict is innate in human nature and a distinguishing feature of human socialization processes, conflict has been identified as a vital ingredient in attaining development and a permanent fixture in human interactions and existence. Classical realists like Morgenthau and Niebuhr believed that states, like human beings, had an innate desire to dominate others, which led them to fight wars. (Guha Ramchandra 2012) According to [10], conflict is an inevitable part of our working lives, although it may not occur on a daily basis, when it happens it can be overwhelming. This is normal, natural, and sometimes necessary for continued growth and development. Anywhere there are more than two people, there is bound to be conflict. This is because people are inherently different in terms of interests, orientation, and background; hence, it occurs when these differences come to light.

According to [11], conflict is an evitable aspect of human interaction, an unavoidable means of choices and decisions brought about by presence of several actors and compounded by several choices. [12], stated that conflict theorist regard social life as a struggle between groups over scarce resources; hence, he defined conflict as "a perceived incompatibility of actions or goals". Conflict therefore, refers to the conditions of struggle or effort attendant upon the mutual incompatibility of different goals. Goals here refer to a wide range of wishes and desires. [13], defined conflict as "when two or more groups of people carry out acts which are incompatible". Rosen and Jones (1974) cited by [14], argued that conflict is a relationship among nation in which actions and inactions are mutually opposed on a particular issue at a point in time.

In the 30s, several behavioural scientists began writing about the causes of war. Their analyses were based on an analogy to international violence, which is often an expression of hostile emotions. They reasoned that international violence must have arisen because of frustration felt by states. They viewed hostility as a mass phenomenon permeating all levels of society forcing national leaders to lunch attack willingly. According to the group, hostility develops whenever a person is frustrated; prevented from attaining his goals. [15], explained that frustration is the blocking of goal directed behaviour. In their frustration - aggression theory, they proposed, "aggression is always a consequence of frustration and frustration always lead to some form of aggression". Frustration therefore, is the malfunctioning that blocks one attaining a goal. It is essentially pronounced when ones motivation to achieve a goal is very strong and the blocking is complete, if this experience is repeated, the aggressive drive builds, until it is released.

Aggression according to [16], is a physical or verbal behaviour that is intended to hurt someone. [17], [18], distinguished between two forms of aggression. Hostile aggression: aggression driven by anger and performed as an end in itself, and instrumental aggression: is that which is a means to some other end.

Many wars for example were undertaken not out of a cruel desire to harm the enemy but because nations saw war as instrumental, and useful in gaining new territory or resources. Freud, the pioneering psychoanalyst according to [16], speculated that human aggression springs from our redirecting towards others the energy of our primitive 'death instinct', which Lorenz an observer of animal behaviour explained as adaptive rather than a self-destructive motivation. He agreed that aggressive energy is instinctual and that if not discharged, it builds up until it explodes or is released by an appropriate stimulus.

[19], further explained that aggression is a form of behaviour directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment. Deducting from the review, frustration builds aggression; an instinctual drive to harm both person and the environment. This School of thought's basic argument; rests on the premise that human nature is the major cause of conflict in society. Another school of thought argued that conflict is inherent in the environment. They explained that the environment; an essential and perhaps inescapable feature of complex societies is the emergencies of rather severe threats to either the

efficiency or the survival of complex societies [20].

According to Keith Myers, an associate fellow in the Africa Programme with Chatham House. A British based think tank maintained, "Environmental degradation is one of many factors contributing to tension in the Delta he said "You have very poor people sitting in an area where there is a lot of oil and all the see are negatives: unemployment, oil spills, and environmental degradation but no dividends"

Similarly, [21] stated that the violence in Darfur has its roots in the competition for land, water and other resources between predominantly Arab herders and pastoralists, from whom the Janjaweed militias are recruited, and the mainly African farmers who are settled in villages and towns. Both groups are Muslim. That competition has intensified in recent years due to a series of droughts. In 2002, the Janjaweed stepped up raids on the African population, spurring the creation of two African rebel groups with the reported backing of neighboring Eritrea. In early 2003, one of them attacked a government garrison, killing more than 70 soldiers. According to [22], argued that many conflicts in war-torn Africa are rooted in increasingly parched and degraded land exacerbated by global warning. This was written ten years after Robert Kaplan wrote a seminar article arguing that the environment would emerge as the security threat of the 21st century, the 'coming anarchy'. According to Crispian Oliver, Director General of South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the environmental causes of conflict in Africa create conditions promoting ecosystem degradation or environmental resource depletion. The problems include water shortage, grain crop scarcity, livestock overgrazing, wood fuel shortages, and deforestation. Dr. Bob Scholes, according to the article explained: We do see climate change exacerbating these ecological problems we have linked to social conflict. Societies in which there is ecological stress are more susceptible to conflict, and the Northern· part of Kwazulu Natal province do have some of the densest populations in the country, said Tom Lodge, the head of political studies at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. "Faction fighting which is often related to disputes over land or access to land". He went further to say that, such stresses are also seen in heavily populated central Nigeria, where nomadic cattle rearers and peasant farmers have been locked in conflict over scare land for decades as the Sahara Desert encroaches further south.

Again, analysts say there are often vicious cycles. Population growth strains the earth's capacity to provide, as forests are hacked away and land is overgrazed by livestock, leading to turf wars over scarce resources. Thus, throwing existing ethnic tension into the mix and armies of bared young men who resort to war. Further, [23] and [24] identified system failure as contributing to incessant and continues cause of conflict and insurgence especially in developing nations. The governments of such nations undermine the rule of law, constitution and the principles of federal character, which in all sense is the binding factor that gives the units a sense of belonging and inclusiveness in government. Accordingly, such states show signs of economic marginalization, governance failures, extremist operations, security failures, pervasive poverty, rampant government corruption, and lack of education, as maintained by [24] that barely one in five adults in the Muslim north are literate, compared to 80% in southern Nigeria. – But even educated northern youth struggle to find work in the collapsing northern economy. While in the informal economy, there is growing competition for jobs. [23], maintained that these factors attributed to fueling Boko Haram's violence and fanaticism. [1], pointed out that the conflict in Mali was first fueled by chronic poverty and food shortage, caused by the government's poor management of the economy and increasing desertification in the country. The second was government neglect and marginalization, unemployment, and desertification in the north, as a result of age-long agitations for internal self-determination, dating back to 1962 by Tuareg which has transformed from the 1960s–1980s into violent rebellion for the independence of Azawad in the 1990s. In Burkina Faso, [22] in a report titled 'Burkina Faso's coup and political situation: All you need to know' pointed out that Since 2015, Burkina Faso has been caught up in an escalating wave of violence attributed to rebel fighters allied to both al-Qaeda and the ISIL (ISIS) group, killing thousands of people and further displacing two million. Analysts have said this has made it the new epicenter of conflict in the Sahel. As negative, as these might be Doby et al (1973) cited by [25] highlighted some importance of conflict, its contribution to social change, and to the adoption of society to changing conditions. They argue that conflicts cannot extend beyond certain points without destroying society. Its services encourage new accommodations hence the adoption to social change. It increases social solidarity through threats from the other group of competitors, drawing the conflicting groups closer. In this regard, opposing groups are forced to deal with their common interest in order to define and resolve their differences. The realization of a truly interdependent society comes when an institutional mechanism is established for international conflict management.

The Role of International Relations

International relations attempts to explain the interactions of states in the global interstate system. According to realists, states exist within an anarchic international system in which they are ultimately dependent on their own capabilities. The most important is the survival of the state, including its people, political system, and territorial integrity, which occurs through collaboration when parties find that their interests coincide with (rivalry) that of other group or groups or in conflict with state collective goals and stability. In such a situation, states form alliances or coalitions designed to maximize their collective power, usually against an adversary. Accommodation between states is possible through skillful political leadership, which includes the prioritizing of national goals in order to limit conflicts with other states and non-state actors. [26], points out that conflict

management involves the shifting of structures and relations that produce strains to the part where restructuring is required. Evans and Newnham (1936) cited by [3] observed that in order to achieve resolution, the parties must either perceive their goals without conflict or redefine their relationship so that their goals no longer conflict. Similarly. [27], argued that resolution can be reached only by modifying or redefining the way in which a conflict is viewed in order to satisfy the underlying universal needs of parties in the conflict. [21], observed that it is only when a conflict has become over that the process of its resolution could commence. He enumerated intervals for identifying or defining a conflict situation that could be resolved or managed. They include: the participants must perceive that they are in conflict, the conflict must have a focus, there must be a clash over interests, values, relationships, or goals, the conflict be between nations or must involve significant elements of the population within a nation, that is there must be international or major civil conflict [3]. Conventionally, the tools for conflict· management include diplomacy, negotiation, economic sanction, embargoes, peace-keeping and military options or action. [23], explained that the level of substantive channel in which conflict is solved using conventional diplomacy operates with five substantive functions. These include conflict. Management increasing and facilitating cross-cultural communication on a wide range of issues involving countries, treaties, agreements, and general programme management of foreign policy decisions of one country toward another. [13], suggests six theoretical modes of behaviour and outcome embraced by these categories and available to parties seeking to achieve or defend incompatible goals, values, interests or positions; avoidance or voluntary withdrawal, and violent conquest. Forced submission or withdrawal, compromise, award arbitration or adjudication, and stalemate. John Burton in his contribution to the international quarterly journal (1972) titled 'The Resolution of Conflict' identified three elements important for the process of arriving at a resolution of conflict; The degree of third party's coercive intervention, the degree of participation by the conflicting parties and the degree of communication between the parties. [26-27], concludes, "The life cycle of a conflict, including its intensification, escalation, turning points, and crisis is important in determining the chances of settlement based on the various outcomes". Therefore, a redefinition of positions involving give and take is needed to foster settlement, a situation in which an outcome to a bargaining process involves a winner or loser or some compromise in which neither party achieved its full goals (Burton, 1986:94). These facts and measures can only be achieved through cooperation amongst the states and actors in the international political system comprising of states as the main actors, international organizations such as United Nations, regional organizations such as EU, AU, Arab League, OAS, ECOWAS, etc.

CONCLUSION

International relations are concerned with the relationship among various states of the world. How they interact and cooperate to meet with their inescapable problems and inadequacies. This interdependency explains why nations join international organizations as a means to alleviate their problems, coordinate as well as share information on matters of great concern to the nations. This explains why at the United Nations, European Union, African Union, Arab League, OAS, and ECOWA, heads of state and government meet to discourse issues or review the state of the nations and collectively come up with ideas that will help in solving inherent problems facing the various member states. Contemporarily, conflict in one nation can have a spillover effect in another, to this end; nations try their best to resolve conflicts before it gets out of hand through international cooperation. The need for resolving conflict especially as it affects developing nations of the world is because of its effects of hunger, starvation, poverty on citizens, and destruction of lives and property. And the fact that affect nations is plunged into a huge theater of operations threatening to smother them into shreds, and leaving the people in a climate of fear of the unexpected and social trauma. Resolving conflict is not always easy; it is concerned with the processes of removing tensions between states or maintaining them at levels consistent with continued peaceful negotiations pursued by states. Conventionally, the tools for conflict negotiation and management include diplomacy, negotiation, economic sanction, embargoes, peacekeeping, and military options or action. However, when it comes to terrorism, collective massive military attacks and information gathering by affected states should be first among other means and measures of conflict management. The use of civilian auxiliaries known as the Volunteers for the Defense of the interior homeland and information gathering should be adopted and adequately funded because failure in this regard will spell more doom as the armed volunteers can join or form their own militia group. Information to the volunteers should be on the move execution per roll method. The essence of this is to keep tactical information away from them for security reasons. Above all, government should be proactive and responsive to the needs and development of its citizens in the areas of providing employment especially to the youth.

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