

## **THE REALISM OF VETO AND BALANCE OF POWER IN US-RUSSIAN GLOBAL RELATIONS: THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS (WMD) CRISIS (2013)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper seeks to explain the sustenance of great power relations in a world espousing the principles of the collective security system under the United Nations. It shows how the system of veto rights enables the UN sustain an important role for itself, even in the calculations of the great power realism, by providing an interface between their need for balance of power and the desire of the rest of the international community for collective security system. Using the Syrian WMD crisis as a case study, and drawing from the experience of Berlin (1961) and Cuban missile (1962) crises for parallelism, it identifies patterns in the behaviours of US and Russia, the client states and the UN system, to suggest that the latter has acquired the role of seamless interface for great power bilateralism and the multilateralism of the present international system.*

**Key words:** Realism, Balance of power, US – Russian relations, Great power rivalry, Veto politics, Middle East politics, Syrian crisis, UN reforms.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Syrian civil war continued to appear civil but all the same a war to the rest of the international system until allegations of use of chemical weapons: then the rest of the world thought it was no longer civil and began to say so; and, with large numbers of refugees trooping over the borders and threatening the peace and economies of Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, etc. The US president warned the Syrian government of Dr. Barsha al Assad “not to cross the red line”. This was taken as an intention to deter the regime from resorting to the desperate step of using chemical weapons against the rebels seeking to overthrow it. When eventually the “red line” was crossed, the now internationalized civil war became a subject of anxiety and speculation on big power politics. The speed at which the issue came to a head and the speed at which it was settled or resolved left a huge puzzle hanging in-between. In the midst of talk of superpower decline, is the world witnessing a return to the old principle of big power multilateralism of BOP in a world expectant of a more democratic multilateralism; and, where

does that leave the UN system in the resolution of issues of potential threat to world peace? We have been the

To the foregoing questions we propose that, perhaps, the answers could be found in the new realism to balance of power as balance of terror; and, in this realism the United Nations (Security Council) provides a seamless interface of balance of power and collective security, in a world where great power means boundless capability for human annihilation.

The Syrian WMD crisis is a fit case to examine the foregoing proposition. It has in it the ingredients of contemporary great power rivalry between USA and Russia (reminiscent of the USA – USSR rivalry): competing interests, the interaction of multilateralism and bilateralism, and the collective security system, represented by the UN. This argument is to be adduced in: examining the Syrian WMD crisis and the likely interests of the big powers in the immediate surroundings of the problem, as a background; understanding the transformed nature of balance of power into balance of terror; the explanation of veto as the link between the classical balance of power (multilateralism) and the new balance of terror (great power bilateralism); and then, to show that the international system has developed adaptation in this realism, we present a parallelism of the Syrian WMD (2013), the Berlin Wall (1961), and the Cuban Missile (1962) crises, we shall identify the contemporary realism in the (UN) international system in the identifiable patterns of great power competition in US-Russian interaction to balance their interests, and in the patterns of UN's interaction with the great powers.

### **Realism for a Framework**

These deliberations here are predicated on the science or theory of politics called political realism. The essence of realist perception of politics is captured in Alberto R. Coll's (1993: 3-4) assumption, in the essay *Prudence and Foreign Policy*, that

*politics is a realm of moral approximations, tentative compromises, and, occasionally, choices among lesser evils. It is not a setting in which justice and righteousness triumph in their pure forms. It is the City of Man, not the City of God, and those who refuse to acknowledge this distinction and succumb to the utopian temptation often do more harm than good.*

To realism, the international system is not like the state system as the former lacks a central capability for authority and order, and so is described as anarchic. This is because it is in human nature that in the absence of order, from a higher authority, anarchy prevails. For every 'citizen' of this system, therefore, security, though possible at the systemic level, is better guaranteed in own capability for power (David S. Papp, 1988: 10). Realism is not opposed to the ideal of a general peace through internationalism, but is a conviction that until a time when such general peace becomes possible – when Morgenthau's (1997: 4) 'human nature' has been sufficiently transformed – a systemic stability is the best that can be attained. Systemic stability is achievable through a balance of power. Balance of power is to be measured in terms of military capability; and, its maintenance is through vigilance and use of physical force (Harald Kleinschmidt, 200: 197-78).

The meaning of balance of power is itself here taken to operate as equilibrium or status quo on global correlation of forces and other resources of power. This is a dynamic equilibrium within which is contained general exchanges of imbalance/ disequilibrium, either regional or global. This is leveraged on a global plane; and, it is operational among resources or commodities. One advantage or otherwise could be leveraged, or offset, across regions and between resources. Reminiscent of the Cold War era Soviet perception, our interpretation is that in every phenomenon, each party perceives challenges, or opportunities, and tries to deal with

the challenges or seize opportunities to turn the tide of events to its own favour in the global competition.

### **Objective and Contention**

At the heart of this work are contained jabs at the moralist /idealist misconceptions about the present international system:

1. charges of the irrelevance of the UN in the contemporary international system perceived in its apparent impotence in the face of bad behaviour of great powers and their clients that ignore or undermine the principles of collective security and internationalism; and,
2. the demand for reform of the UN system to do away with the veto rights and gain for the system greater attention of all the states, as sought by functionalists, idealists and the Third World states.

In sum, our contention is that the UN's role in the present international system is incontrovertible, and that it does not necessarily need that type of democratic restructuring to sustain its relevance – that, in fact, it is that misperceived defective mechanism of veto that is the heart of its relevance and the sustenance of the international system.

### **Focus of Study**

This study is focused on the Syrian chemical attacks of 2013, not the rest of the Syrian civil war and other incivilities in it, including the allegations of biological weapons and the likelihood of their use, even though the result of it will enable a more realistic appreciation of the behaviour of both the great powers and the UN (and, the client states, too) towards the parent crisis. Further, the introduction of the Cuban and Berlin crises is not to suggest equal local gravity but to demonstrate apparent patterns in the behaviour of the subjects.

### **SYRIAN WMD DISARMAMENT**

Though the attempt or activities to disarm Syria of its chemical weapons is on-going, the level of cooperation so far makes it not too premature for our present analysis. In fact, the currency of its case makes it a fit one for our discussion as that will enable an assessment based on current knowledge/facts, instead of benefit of hindsight. We shall try to understand the moves of the Veto powers in this case, far beyond the (ideological) reductionism of local US politicians and the euphoria of the anti-American elements /activists abroad.

**The Facts of the Case:** After a series of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war, with a casualty toll of 1300 - probably the deadliest attack on civilians and others, since 1988 when Saddam Hussien used chemical weapons to kill 5000 in the Khurdish town of Halabja (The Telegraph (n. d.), Martin Indyk, 1992:93), the USA decided that the Bashar Assad's government was responsible and that it had crossed the 'red line' the US had earlier warned. USA, France and Britain pushed for 'action' under the UN security system, but China and Russia waved the veto in the Security Council. China cautioned for alternative way, while Russia was 'not convinced' it was the government that was responsible. On September 14,2013, US and Russia announced to the world that the matter was resolved in an agreement on the Framework for the Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons, with Syria signing up to join the non-proliferation regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention and surrender its stockpile of chemical weapons for destruction, under a clearly Russian persuasion and guarantee. The United Nations Security Council also passed Resolution 2118 to document and domesticate the deal.

## **GREAT POWER INTERESTS**

For us, the identification of certain factors or variables as probable interests of the big powers is informed by the subjection of phenomena to “the dual test of reason and experience”: an operation of the first principle of Morgenthau’s realism (1997:4-5). Interest is here defined as those things that, in the subjection of reason and experience, have the probability to increase benefits directly to the given state, or, indirectly by inhibiting any benefits to a rival; and this is more so for the great powers, with their regional and global rivalries and the leveraging and linkages of benefits inherent in their capabilities.

With Russia, the US shares the core interest of preventing a direct war with the other side, as that is a sure bet for World War III by any other name (Hosmer, 1987). And, the formation of the present international system, along with the veto system, is designed to avert that catastrophe. Veto was designed to indicate the brink of world War III and to enable the interests to step out of the multilateral system and work out a bilateral accommodation by returning to classical BOP, outside the interference of the noise of supranationalism. The fear of nuclear war has become the great teacher of the nations as experienced in the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961 and more so in the eight day nuclear stand-off in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 (Blight, 1992:7-8).

A specific fear for the great powers, in this region, is that Syria’s WMD capabilities could fall into the wrong hands of terrorists and jihadists to carry out their threats far and beyond the region (Choksy and Choksy, 2011).

**USA:** The Syrian crisis presents America with a catch -22 situation. It has two problems woven into a Gordian knot: terrorism and Iran. Since the Iranian revolution and the US embassy hostage crisis, containing and constraining Iran has become a central element of the US strategic interests; and, Iran seems to have always contrived to put itself on the wrong side of the US global calculations probably in pursuit of its own worldview of clash of civilizations, and especially as part of its claims as a major player in the Middle East.

Since 9/11, the US has made the war on terror (now almost a euphuism for al-Qaeda) a global affair and defeating al-Qaeda a major objective of its global strategy. Al-Qaeda has not only replaced Communism but has taken a higher billing: while communism was sought to be contained and deterred, the war with al-Qaeda is a zero-sum game.

On the one hand, the Americans would like to eliminate the Bashar al Assad regime because of its complicity with Iran and its ally the Hezbollah in Lebanon. They constitute a hostile alliance. On the flip side, the opposition seeking to defeat this regime in the civil war is a motley crowd of moderates, secularists, tribals, Islamists, extremists and terror groups, especially al-Qaeda and affiliates. And, if any group in the opposition is gaining strength, it is al-Qaeda and its affiliates. The dilemma for the US is: how to choose between Iranian domination and al-Qaeda control, in Syria.

Both Iran and al-Qaeda contest US power in the Middle East and clearly threaten the existence of Israel, an important ally and strategic partner.

The overall core interest of all the great powers is to avoid World War III and to preserve the present international system because it is favourable to their interests. In this regard, and just like Russia, the USA would consider all client states peripheral interests and, thus, expendable, if the alternative is big power collision and leading to World war III. Though, Israel will have to be protected but certainly not at the risk of World war III.

The possession and use of chemical weapon by Syria posed great danger to US interests. Being a power with a propensity to send troops into foreign combats and which often involves smaller powers and terror groups, the total outlawing and destruction of such poor man's WMD would give it less apprehensions. If Assad gets away with it against his own people who knows whom his next victim would be?

The US has the interest not to be drawn into core commitment for a peripheral interest by way of having to put its servicemen on the ground; so, whatever it does has to be from some distance, like strategic and surgical strikes. The ongoing experience in Iraq and Afghanistan forecloses any such option in Syria, for tactical and strategic considerations: stretched military resources abroad and stretched/strained public support at home.

Further to that, the US has to ensure a condition that does not degenerate to draw Israel into the conflict. An unstable Syria or one in the hands of pro-Iranian or extremist groups would be a source of anxiety to Israel, and a temptation to intervene. Israel's direct interference in Syria would increase the volatility of the region, with a mathematical probability of more than mere peripheral interest for the USA.

The US interest in Syria is part of its larger Middle East interest: "the maintenance of order through the promotion of a favourable balance of power" which ensures "its strategic objectives": the free flow of oil at reasonable prices from the Persian Gulf; the security of US allies and friends in the region; be the dominant power in the region, through the removal of radical regimes and their ambition for regional preponderance by destroying their offence capabilities and the loss, denial or neutralization of Russian patronage to them (Martin Indyk, 1992:83-84).

A yet important interest for the US is the fear of the cost of inaction. For credibility in the perception of friends and foes, a great power has to be feared. For any power, the perception of friends and foes is the definition of live: friends must perceive dependability, and enemies must perceive dread.

**RUSSIA:** Having inherited the alliances/ties and interests of the Soviet Union in this region, Russia has over the years nursed these to more strategic identification than the mere ephemera of ideology. Russia is the major supplier of arms to Syria, and that comes to high dollar value (Outzen, 2014:3). Just before the charges of chemical attacks, Russia had delivered huge stocks of SAM's and other materiel to the Syrian government, to the chagrin of the US and the West. Yet, Syria, precisely the Assad regime, does not rise to the level of core interest where Russia would be willing to risk a head-on with the Americans, though both are unwilling to put boots on the ground for fear of having to stay for long. What Russia stands is the risk of core commitment to the level of putting the best Russia military technology against a determined Americans and the West. A defeat would cause Russia loss of clientele for its military exports, a certain defeat for the Assad regime, and a consequent minus influence with an incoming regime (opposition). In fact, a minus influence in any capital in the world is a real fear for any global power, as a couple of that will add up to some degree of diminished circumstance. A third risk and which the Russians share with the West is the growing prospects of an al-Qaeda linked groups either taking over or setting up base in a post-Assad Syria. Though the American have been the more target of the terrorists, the Russians have their own worries about them, too. An Assad regime is the Russians' insurance against that, and should not be weakened by a Security Council action or an American attack. Against terrorism, both Russia and the West, have converging interests.

## **CHARACTER OF CONTEMPORARY BALANCE OF POWER: BALANCE OF TERROR (MAD)**

Quincy Wright's fourth assumption on BOP: The relative power position of the states can be measured to a great degree of accuracy and this measurement could be used to balance the world forces in ones favour (Kumar, 1995:242). This accepts that power in BOP is ultimately military power, and that can be calculated in terms of men and materiel, and the latter's exact capabilities are to a great degree amenable to mathematical evaluation. Today, the kill capacity of every army is a function of mathematical/scientific definiteness. All the veto powers have demonstrable kill capabilities, conventional, non-conventional and unconventional.

The introduction of nuclear weapon into BOP eliminates an essential element of its operation and nature: war and the attendant prospects of losses. Now, players refuse to lose war or accept losses in war (Spanier, 1990:339-40).

Therefore, any attempt to exercise or operate a balance of power will have to discount the element of war against a nuclear power with core interest. And, in the event that those seeking to operate BOP are also nuclear powers, then the mechanism is transformed into one of Balance of Terror (BOT). This is a new system of power politics in which the great powers rely on (nuclear) power not for defence in case of attack or winning a war but to prevent an attack. A system of BOT is one of nuclear deterrence, Mutual Assured Destruction, for both initiator and victim of attack (Spanier, 1990:340). In simple language, the nature of balance between great powers is that each power is known to have enough nuclear capacity to destroy even the biggest power mustered against it, even though it will be destroyed, too.

The foregoing scenario is a transformation of both war and strategy occasioned by this introduction of thermonuclear technology as a philosophy of realpolitik. In the event of a nuclear confrontation the character of war as distinguishable into means and ends disappears; and, the alternative strategies of defence and offence would become useless academic hairsplitting. The central objective of classical BOP was to avert a large scale war by forming a coalition and or possibly fighting a limited war; but, in the scenario under contemplation a large scale war of dreadful aftermath is the logical inevitability. And, considering the yield capability of such weapons, assured retaliation, and their overall collateral effect, the Clausewitzian distinction will culminate in suicide. According to Marek Thee (1986:4) "A discontinuity has occurred in means and methods of both strategic offence and defence."

### **BOP: Old vs New**

The attempt to revive the old balance of power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the League system failed on two accounts: failure to find conceptual compatibility; and failure to grasp the new age or change in the character of power.

- 1. Conceptual Incompatibility:** Morton A. Kaplan identified the fifth principle of BOP: "Act to constrain actors who subscribe to supranational organizing principles." (A. Rapoport, 1969:183). Those who sought to revive the BOP dynamics within the institution of the League of Nations, through the democratized veto in the League Council (Ekwonna, 1990:84) missed the foregoing fifth principle. There was need to find this compatibility, and which was expressed in the general disposition not to revive the League and to create a new system. This was sought to be realized in the return to the big power aristocracy of veto in the UN Security Council. According to H.G. Nicholas (cited in Ekwonna, 1990:85) this as a return, in an institutionalized form, to the Quadruple Alliance system of the earliest Concert period.

2. **Change in the Character of Great Power:** What constituted great power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the ability to interfere in the affairs of ‘neighbouring’ European powers, but today it includes the ability to project ones power on a global scale. Therefore great power and their ‘balance’ was a European affair, while today it is a global power. This is accounted for by the changing nature of military power.
3. **Change in the Nature of Military Power:** This is accounted for by overcoming of diminution of power; and the non nuclear technology. The modern great power has redefined the premise of power by nearly zeroing out the problem of diminution of power. Defined in terms of Loss of Strength Gradient (LSG) for the range of the projectiles, the modern great powers are global power through technological advancement (de Mesquita, 1981:41-44, Boulding, 1963:266-67). This is accounted for by the jet, rocket and missile technologies, and blue sea navies.

Further, the capabilities of the projectiles have also changed. From gunpowder and cordite to thermonuclear warheads, is a great leap for the great power.

#### **VETO SITUATIONS IN THE UN SYSTEM AND PROSPECTS OF MAD**

Mutual Assured Destruction is a capability that technically frightens those who possess it with the prospects of having to put to use their own potentials. These are the great powers. And, being, invariably, veto powers in the UN Security Council, they utilize the exercise of that right to stop the operation of the UN collective security system in the direction that so gravely threatens their interests to make inevitable the resort to that capability.

Though not all vetoes awaken the spectre of MAD, they have been cast to address the apprehensions inherent in the following situations: threat to core interests; prospects of core commitment in less than core, or peripheral, interests; loss or invasion of sphere of influence; prospects of own irrelevance; and, protection of the current favourable international system (against overthrow, over-extension and self-flagellation) (Ekwonna, 1990:102-7).

#### **PATTERNS OF GREAT POWER BEHAVIOR IN INTEREST RESOLUTION: SYRIAN WMD CRISIS (2013), BERLIN (1961) AND CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS (1962)**

The Berlin (Wall) crisis was really a culmination of a long face-off between the Soviet Union and the West over the city and their client powers of West Germany (FRG) and East Germany (GDR). Much of the roots of the Cold War were laid in it, as well as some of its most tenuous times, dating back to the end of WW II. The Soviets wanted the whole of the city under their control in East Germany while the West favoured continued joint supervision of Berlin as an international city. Without notice, in 1961 the Soviets built the wall, completing the separation of the two Germanys. There was the dreaded prospect of the West getting locked out of Berlin, including the areas under their mandate. Tension ran high as both sides tried to face each other down. Again, in 1962, the US discovered that the Russians had surreptitiously set up a missile base in Cuba targeted at the former. America blockaded Cuba and threatened to attack those installations, and the Soviets warned of dire consequences. The world was on the brink of a confrontation between the two superpowers. However, no such dreadful scenario materialized, and just like in the Syrian WMD the matter was resolved by the superpowers out of the full glare of the lesser powers and the rest of the world. A careful study of the two crises would reveal a pattern of behavior in great power resolution of (potentially) colliding interests:

1. **Nuclear war must be avoided:** The behavior of the great powers suggests a cardinal principle: nuclear war must be avoided. In that regard, several inherent and enabling logics exist:
  - (1) Great power war will, inexorably, end in a nuclear war;

- (2) A (nuclear) war between the great powers in the nuclear age would be the World War III, the Apocalypse, the end of human civilization as we know it; and,
- (3) To avoid that, it is the responsibility of the great powers themselves to ensure that great power head-on collision should be avoided.

The overall impact of nuclear technology (and the politics of it) on great power relations in general has been revolutionary on deterrence and balance of power as policy is that war is no longer a policy option nor can it be an instrument of such (Spanier, 1990:339-40). The objective of deterrence is national security through proration of war; and the objective of balance of power is to ensure national security, through victory if war become necessary or inevitable to that; but any war between the great powers would mean a failure of the objective of both BOP and deterrence, as there would be no national security, worth the name left.

In a nuclear exchange, none can protect its citizens from nuclear catastrophe (Blight, 1991:73). No interest is worth too much risk or sacrifice.

In 1959, the visiting Soviet Deputy Prime minister Anastas Mikoyan said to President Eisenhower: “We do not want to fight over Berlin, and we hope you don’t want to, either.” (cited in Zubok, 1993: 13) And, in a similar vein, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk had told a joint conference of US, UK and France, convened in Paris to decide on response to the same crisis, that Berlin was not a core interest of the US and, thus, the latter would not go to war on that account.

**2. Brinkmanship as measure of commitment to specific/intrinsic interest.** By commitment we mean the level of need identified in the attainment of an interest. Richard Ned Lebow defines brinkmanship as “confrontation in which states challenge important commitments of adversaries in the expectation that the adversaries will back down” (Jervis et al, 1991: 180). Keeping in view the dreadful prognosis of a great power war, one wonders why they would risk threatening or dangerous situation of near head-on collision of interests. This is deterrence understood as effective capability backed by credible intent (Holsti, 1967:313-16). The empirical evidence of Berlin 1961, Cuba 1962 and Syria 2013, lend credence to a perception that, each wanting to both avoid a war and pursue their interest would evaluate the others commitment to the specific interest by how much it is willing to risk provoking the dreaded mutual assured destruction on that account. In 1961, the US ran the gauntlet of Soviet blockade of Berlin with massive air supply, ordered mobilization, among other alert measures; in 1962, it was later revealed, the US put its SAC and DEF. CON 2, putting its strategic bombers “in the clear” to go alert mode, and the ICBM’s Silos (targeted at the Soviet Union) were opened etc. to give the latter the impression of an imminent nuclear attack (Blight, 1991:20); and in 2013, the US non nuclear Strategic strike facilities were moved to ready to strike mode both off the shores of Syria and neighbouring locations. In all the cases attack was averted at the last minute, and the result of a peaceful solution (negotiated, away from the glare of the press and world attention) was announced. Further, the dramatics of seeking a congressional approval and the provision of that approval (in 2013) are reminiscent of SAC alert of 1962.

**3. Secret Diplomacy: Understanding and No Deals:** Cliff hanger situations are resolved in secret negotiations conducted through unusual channels or methods. In 1962, President Kennedy’s point man was his younger brother Robert Kennedy who was used to make the unofficial compromise offer to President Khrushchev, through Dobrynin (the Soviet Ambassador) but with the rider that if its contents became open the US would disown them; this

offer was not written, neither was its acceptance and agreement written – a gentleman's agreement. (Blight, 1991:124) The Syrian crisis of 2013 has all the tell-tale sign of similar understanding, and perhaps we will have to wait another quarter of a century to know its details and what. However, we can make an intelligent guess of probabilities that the Russians could have guaranteed the disarmament of the Syrian chemical capabilities and could have arm-twisted the Barshar al Assad regime to come along, as evident in the latter's willing accession to the chemical weapons control regime. Further, the Americans must have given their word not to enhance the capabilities of the opposition in the civil war (about whom both the US and Russia share misgivings, anyway). Now there is clear talk of a Geneva conference on Syria. The Syrian opposition feels abandoned; and, nobody is talking about crimes against humanity and war crimes.

**4. Peripheral Interests of Great Powers Outweigh the Core Interests of Client States:**

A core interest of the great powers is trying not to have to go to war against the other side; and in relation to their interest in the survival of their client state, the latter is peripheral. In 1961, Khrushchev refused to grant the wish of the East German leader Walter Ulbricht to enable him annex the whole city, even permission to build the wall was hard to come; while the West had isolated the West German leader Konrad Adenauer on his demand for the return of German territories forfeited to Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia at the end of WW II. In 1962, the Soviet Union considered its missile project in Cuba as peripheral; and the Americans were willing to deal away their own installations in Turkey; and in 2013, the Russians did not think much of the Assad regime's affections to its chemical stockpile. However, to these regimes, these weapons were vital components of regime and national defence and security. In 2013, the Assad regime would rather have Russia get drawn into the Syrian civil war on its side, even if that would mean direct US involvement, just as the Castro, Adenauer and Ulbricht regimes would each have liked a Soviet-US war on its account.

In the end, in all the cases, the apparent core interest of the client states are expendable, if the alternative is a great power war. Castro found out and illustrated it as two big crocodiles deciding who will eat the small fish (Blight, 1991:22).

**5. Client Power Monkey Wrench:** Just as the great powers are ready to deal away the core interests of the client powers, the latter are perceived to be using the former for their own interests, unmindful of their anxieties. In 1950's the West German Chancellor Adenauer was openly embarrassing to the Americans and provocative to the Soviets with his demands for: the return of territories lost to Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union; re-unification of Germany; and intention to embark on a nuclear arms programme. The Soviets did not fare any better at the hands of the East German Walter Ulbricht, as he sought to manipulate the situation by interpreting the West's action in ways to frighten the Soviets. (Zubok, 1993: 7-11). In 1962, the Cubans tried to scuttle any Soviet –US deals at their expense by physically trying to prevent the removal of the missiles that the US considered offensive: they deployed regular Cuban troops to protect them. And, the Soviet understood them as ploy to provoke a war (Blight, 1991:20-21). In 2013, the Assad regime was no less provocative when it carried out yet another chemical attack on the opposition while the United Nations investigators were in Syria to investigate an earlier attack and the US was poised for attack on Syria for "crossing the red line". Just like in 1962, Moscow was not totally in control of its clients' activities, irrespective of their public defence.

**6. Domestication of Deals into UN Resolutions:** Deals are amenable to domicile in the UN system. Though great power agreements to settle threatening situations have been struck outside the UN system, they are sought to be brought back into the UN system for legitimatization in implementation. In 1962, J. F. Kennedy ordered his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, to open up a secret channel to the Acting UN Secretary General U Thant, to prepare to step in to make a probable (but abandoned) missile trade appear like a UN initiative (Blight, 1991:19-20). In a similar fashion, in 2013, after the deal had been struck in Moscow, the UN vide UNSC Resolution 2118 was brought in to take over the mechanism of implementing the destruction of Syria's chemical arsenal.

### **THE UN IN THE CONTEMPORARY BOP SYSTEM: A PATTERN OF SEAMLESS INTERFACE.**

As we have seen in the patterns in the behaviour of the great powers in resolving their clash of interests and sustaining the balance of power system, the UN's behaviour shows some pattern of its own in seeking to keep order and a Collective Security system. In such great power tendencies, what role can the UN play? It provides the seamless interface of balance of power/terror and collective security, through the following mechanisms:

In cases where there is no great power clash of interests; or, no serious great power interest; or, where there are great power complementary interests in establishing order, the UN gets a role that includes the following roles:

The UN has the role to mobilize an international coalition force – military, non-military – opinion, actions, etc., in potentially dangerous situations, and help shape the balance of 'moral power' against the disturber of the peace. The UN goes into enforcement, like in Korea, the Congo, etc., or peacekeeping role, like in Cyprus, Cambodia, Lebanon, etc.

In cases where great power core interests clash, the UN monitors the exercise of its functions related to the implementation of great power solutions or deals (often reached outside the UN processes, but) domesticated/domiciled in a Security Council or General Assembly resolution. Such monitoring roles include: observer monitoring groups on broader conflicts/disputes; weapons inspection and WMD elimination regimes, like in Iraq and Syria; monitoring of operations of sanctions and embargoes; (especially on arms exports and imports); humanitarian assistance and setting up and operation of safe havens, like in Palestine, Somalia and Kosovo, etc. (Gardner, 1942:31-32).

Even in ostensibly internal conflict situations, involving intergroup politics, that have been internationalized, the UN monitors elections, supervises truces and runs public administration, removes landmines, and keeps local law and order (Manish Kumar Yadav, 2014:2, Gardner, 1992:37).

### **CONCLUSION**

The realism of veto provides patterns of seamless interaction between the great powers' continued provision for and action to secure their interests through necessary means of power (especially, including military), and the use of the UN as one of the instruments of international cooperation for collective action. It is "a wise blending of balance of power politics and world order politics" (Gardner, 1992: 32). This in the interface that has enabled the UN collective security system thrive and sustain a reasonable order and balance in a world in which great power is defined in capability for total annihilation of life. Issues that would otherwise threaten the system are temporarily removed from it, and resolved by the great powers to the sustenance of their balance of power, and the solution is returned into the UN system through a Security

Council resolution to effect the implementation and the sustenance of the order sought by the collective security system.

Peacekeeping, which has become the UN's most demonstrative role, symbolized by the 'blue helmets' and their white APC's, is itself a product and symbol of this seamlessness of accommodation of great power sensitivity and the principles of collective security. This role is read into the UN Charter, some kind of "Chapter Six and a Half" (Dag Hammarskjold, cited in Yadav, 2014:1).

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