

Analyzing the Democratic Peace Theory on US-French Foreign Policy in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria in 21st Century.

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ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this paper is to critically analyze the relevance and potential of Democratic Peace Theory in promoting peace, security, and stability in international relations. The United States of America and France, as the cradles of contemporary democracy, will be used as models of Democratic Peace Theory in this paper. This analysis and evaluation are merely based on designated secondary material or a paper review. France and America have analogous foreign policies that, for bilateral or multilateral relations, demand democracy, rule of law, accountability, transparency, decentralization, devolution of power, and respect for human rights in recipient regimes. The study wants to comprehend how French and American foreign policies in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria complied with the tenants of the Democratic Peace Theory. Contemporary academic contributions are lacking consensus on whether French and American foreign policies are idealist (pro-democratic) or realist (pro-authoritarian) in international relations. The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), where the two are the most influential members, is widely debatable between realists and idealists. The organization has been very dreadful since the Cold War and particularly promotes the self-interests of the Allies and the capitalist world. In light of fighting dictatorship and restoring democracy, America and France are highly criticized for promoting internal political instability, gross human abuse, environmental insecurity, endless fighting and infrastructural destruction.

Key Words: Democratic Peace Theory, Democratic Regime, Foreign Policy, International Relations

INTRODUCTION

Ancient and contemporary academic contributions were coined to explore how peace, security, and stability could be clutched at the national and international levels. The demand for peace and stability championed the need for change in the governance system, where the ego-monarchical regimes were to be replaced by liberal monarchs, constitutional monarchs, and later democratic regimes[1]. The American War of independence (1776) and the establishment of constitutional democracy in America stimulated the French Revolution (1789) as a spasm to the myopic monarchical regime of Louis XVII, which was blamed for being irresponsible and ineffective in promoting peace, stability and development[2]. The procedures that guided the revolution were ordained from the works of Immanuel Kant, Rousseau, John Locke, and Thomas Malthus: for peace, stability, and development to prevail, leadership must be established by the people and standby the voice of the people.[3]

The rising conflicts and extremism ranged from the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1814), the 1st (1914-1918) and 2nd (1939-1945) World Wars exploded to be the upshots of selfish kings and dictators in Western Europe. To contain the situation of extremism that survived in Western Europe, Woodrow Wilson applied idealism

theory into practice; he facilitated the formation of the League of Nations, the end of secret diplomacy, disarmament, and the introduction of pro-democratic leadership in Western Europe[4]. The Berlin Conference (1884),Hague Convention (1899-1907), Versailles Treaty (1919), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),and Vienna Convention (1969) were the earliest mechanisms for promoting international peace, stability, and development in the international arena. States were then to exercise power towards each other in line with international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined universal suffrage, which allowed the secret voting system for all despite wealth, race, or ethnicity to end oppression and sustain the needs of the people[5]. Democracy or antiroyalist governments are therefore solidly revealed as all-time answer to the troublesome national and international bloodshed conflicts of the 20th century.

However, the attribution of democracy is recognized to be a deadlock to bloodshed conflicts, terrorism, and civil wars in the 20th century; the existence of bloodshed conflicts, civil wars, and terrorism in the 21st century proved the need for are vision of context. The United States of America and France, as the cradles of democracy, are deeply blamed for being major aggressors in international relations, perpetrating violence, supporting rebel groups, conducting dollar diplomacy, creating debts, and influencing the expulsion of governments in developing states[6]. The US and French contribution to promoting peace, stability, and development in developing states is highly debatable between the Afrocentric scholars and the Eurocentric scholars. In regard to that, the paper examined how the US and the French accredited them for raising the flag of democracy in developing states using, the Democratic Peace Theory as the guiding principle behind the architecture of democratic governments.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Democratic Peace Theory was propounded by Immanuel Kant and Thomas Paine in 1795, which academics particularly refer to as the Democratic Peace Theory. The theory was developed as an observation of the importance of democratic leadership in the United States, which was contrary to conflicts in Western Europe[1]. It was called a solution that predicted peace in Western Europe. Kant and Paine viewed kingships as egocentric, such that kings would venture into war as a result of pride at the expense of the public.[2] Public consultations were observed as an awkward block to the pride of kings, where the democratic leader consulted the public and assessed the social and economic costs of the war, which they denied. In support of the theory, Alexis de Tocqueville argued that democratic nations were not war-like societies. He cited America as an example.[3] This was in comparison with the reign of Louis XVI, the French revolution and the liberal Louis Philippe. America is presented as a model of democratic theory in the sense that it was never involved in the 1stand 2ndWorld Wars out of pride but out of pre-emptive self-defense. The Kant theory has the following tenants:

1. Democratic leaders are forced to accept the blame for war fatalities from an elective public.
2. Democracies are not persuaded to view nations with adjacent policies and governing policies as aggressive.
3. Democracies seek to keep more public treasure than other states and therefore avoid war to preserve infrastructure and properties.
4. Democratic regimes are hesitant to engage in armed conflict with other democracies.

This approach views leaders as viciously responsible and effective in protecting human lives against external threats (other states). For the leader to enter a war, he or she consults the public to air their opinions concerning the action to be taken. In this regard, a president remains an employee of the public; meanwhile, he/she reacts in line with the demands of the public. In theory, the term ‘responsible statesmen’ refers to leadership that stands by the will of the public. Diplomats were cited as the most influential representatives in foreign policy decision-making. The theory emphasizes negotiations and agreements through peaceful

means, especially win-win negotiations. Neighboring nations with democratic leadership are presented as non-aggressive. To maintain their public wealth and preserve infrastructure, democratic regimes avoid wars.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative paradigm is informative and centered on social constructionism[1]. The paradigm chiefly employs document analysis and light content analysis. Document analysis revolves around reading textbooks, journals, and academic publications in order to interpret and evaluate the materials. Content analysis is important for examining patterns and trends in documents and for administering shifts in public opinion[2]. The ultimate goal is to attest to the applicability of Democratic Peace Theory in international relations. Democracy is a social construct; therefore, it can be assessed how it shapes the behavior of state leaders in world politics. Papers were selected on the basis of their availability in Libraries and on the internet during the time of study.

ANALYSIS OF THE USA AND NATO IN AFGHANISTAN

There is no consensus among scholarly views on whether democratic regimes are championing ideal (peaceful conflict management) or real (pursue their national interests) in global politics. Immanuel Kant believes that publicly responsible statesmen are liable to establish ambassadorial institutions for resolving global tensions. The term 'liable' chiefly means "being responsibly answerable" to act in line with the job description. The theory views democratic regimes as peace-loving and able enough to diplomatically settle conflicts in international politics. In light of America's plummeting of contemporary democracy, the 'war on terrorism' launched by the Bush regime in Afghanistan in 2001 violated the autonomy of the Afghan government[3]. The Bush government never attempted any quest for dialogue, as enshrined in the Democratic Peace Theory, with the Taliban government to resolve the terrorist crisis that rocked America on September 11, 2001. Instead, it engaged in the Afghanistan invention, which claimed the lives of many innocent souls between 2001 and 2003. Even today, the political sovereignty of Afghanistan is still questionable. The Obama regime at one point clashed with Afghanistan President Karzai on the issue of who was to be in charge of the Afghanistan defense forces in 2013[4]. The Americans wanted to be in charge, knowing all the pros and cons of the Afghan defense forces. In regard to what guides international relations, the role of America in Afghanistan mirrors a poor observation of international law. Under international law, the Karzai government reserved the sovereignty to have confidential military capacity that enhanced the protection of Afghanistan as a state.

Although the Bush regime used the term "just war" (*Jus Ad Bellum*) referring to the American invasion in Afghanistan, Just war means "armed invasion is the last resort," which complies with the Democratic Peace Theory that peaceful negotiations are the most viable mechanism of engaging settlement in the international arena[5]. As said earlier, America never attempted to have peaceful negotiations with the Taliban government regarding its suspicion of terrorists; the Democratic Peace Theory was not applied.

However, Hilary Clinton used the terminology "pre-emptive self-defense," which is in line with international law. Peslage Chigora commented on the American invasion in Afghanistan as a violation of *Jus in Bello* (the laws and customs that guide the conduct of war) signed at the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907.[6] The presidium memorandum of February 7 by the US-Bush-led regime denied the basic protection of Afghanistan war prisoners enshrined in the Geneva Convention. Professor Paust argued that "Based on the presidium memorandum, the US personnel conducted extraordinary renditions and used torture as an interrogating technique which automatically violated the Geneva Convention." [7] Based on what Kant believes, it is debatable that democratic regimes are desirous for peace, human rights and stability in international relations rather than to say they are disrespectful and perpetrators of violence in international arena.

Kant alleged that democratic regimes use peaceful means of resolving international conflicts. He observed the absence of pride in democratic regimes, which was seconded by William Doyle in 1997. Doyle argued that 'this is the end of the world', referring to democracy in Western Europe and the United States as a panacea to end a hostile world[8]. Contrary to the perception of Kant and Doyle, the American operations in Afghanistan were blamed for lacking professionalism, crimes against humanity, raping and opening fire on the public, which lacked observance of promoting public protection. It should be remembered that earlier in this context the paper mentioned that democratic government represents the will of the people, therefore opening fire on civilians in Afghanistan violated the principles of Democratic Peace Theory. The Afghan president blasted the US forces for increasing "insecurity and instability" in the troubled provinces near Kabul.[9] Jason Ditz observed the danger of military misconduct in Afghanistan.

"The prolonged effects are the superior deal in that civilians who had relatives killed in those incidents are more likely to support the Taliban. Fighting men who were maybe on the sideline are also more likely to join the Taliban after an incident like this. Even air strikes that kill militants tend to create more militants... and certainly, if you kill children, it's going to have a dramatically worse impact."

Considering that earlier on Afghanistan was accused of gross human rights abuse and sheltering the al-Qaeda terrorist group headed by Osama Bin Laden, continuous killing of civilians inclined the resistance of the mission in promoting human rights and the restoration of civilian government, thereby joining the Taliban terrorists was the only option. The US involvement in Afghanistan did not complement the Democratic Peace Theory because it is impossible to promote civilian government by killing civilians in an unselected firing.

The use of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military organization that was formed by both the French and Americans during the course of the Cold War to promote and safeguard the interests of capitalism against socialism in contemporary foreign policy decisions, reflects a realist foreign policy. France, America, and Britain are the forebears of capitalism, which believe in the works of classical economist Adam Smith's free trade. Karl Marx used the term bourgeoisie economy to refer to the Marxist ideology. Marx believed in the debility of capitalism as the source of the exploitation of leaseholds by landlords and the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. Until today, NATO is still protecting the interests of North America and Western Europe using forceful means. The invasion of NATO in Afghanistan, planned by the Americans and French, clearly manifested that the Democratic Peace Theory is a complex theory in international relations.

The argument of Alex Magaisa is that "military organizations do not promote sustainable development and peace in developing states; they rather cause environmental degradation, weaken production, destroy infrastructure, create chaos, and grudges, and destabilize the sovereignty of developing states".[10] In line with Magaisa's argument, NATO in Afghanistan reported raiding the homes of Afghan civilians looking for Taliban fighters. The president of Afghanistan, Karzai, denied the involvement of his military in night raids conducted by NATO in 2010.[11] However, one can point out that the rationale behind the formation of NATO and democracy is far-fetched.

NATO was accused of crimes against humanity in Afghanistan. Reuter's journalist noted that 11 Afghan children were killed in NATO airstrikes on April 7, 2013 in Shigal district, t near Pakistan.[12] NATO invaded Afghanistan with the justification of classical humanitarian intervention in troubled, terrorist Afghanistan. Under international law, humanitarian intervention reveals the protection of innocent citizens against tyranny or terrorist governments. In regard to that, the killing of 11 children, resembles NATO's, was not on humanitarian intervention; rather, it was on another business. Revenge killings of surrendered Taliban soldiers, killings in concentration camps, and rapes noted by Mohammad Ashraf Nasery violated

the *jus in Bello*. The organization, as a brainchild of France and America, **protects** the French and American oil interests in the Mediterranean. One would say that it is mistaken for international relations scholars to view NATO campaigns as democratic-oriented. Therefore, the Democratic Peace Theory subscribes to the view that democratic states believe in war as the last resort and prefer negotiations in the face of conflict to armed struggle; that perspective is not true. There is a need for democratic regimes to first respect international law as a binding framework for how power can be executed in international relations.

FRANCE AND NATO IN LIBYA

Libya is a former Italian colony (1911-44) that was ceded to the British and French administrations after Germany and Italy lost the Second World War to the Allies. France controlled the Fezzan province in the south, which was the province adjacent to the then French colonies of Chad and Niger. The province is potentially rich in oil, gas, uranium, diamond, and gold.[\[13\]](#) In Sub-Saharan Africa, Libya is the country with the highest reserves of oil in the region, which has lucrative potential for the West. Libya has been under the dictatorial regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi for 42 years, until the Arab Spring erupted in February 2011. Gadhafi was ousted in October 2011 under a joint operation by the UN, NATO, and the French Forces endorsed by 1973 UN Resolution. The resolution declared no flying zone in Libya with justification for the classical humanitarian intervention of international law. However, Libya was declared a failed state in 2015, despite the presence of mineral wealth and the ouster of Gadhafi. The credibility of democratic regimes in Libya is highly questionable, particularly the Afro-centric scholars among as Jonathan Moyo and Abdullah Hussein, who linked the invasion to game theory of international relations.[\[14\]](#)

The democratic peace tenant that ‘democracies tend to keep greater public treasure than other states and therefore avoid war to preserve infrastructure and properties’ is deeply questionable in the light of Libya, now regarded as a ‘failed state.’ French forces publicly invaded Libya in March under the so-called Operation Eli’ Mo, supporting the rebels to remove the tyrant government of Gaddafi. Granting military aid and ammunition to the rebels against a government in power under international law is a coup. French forces from a democratic advanced nation to submit Gaddafi to the rebels instead of the ICC revealed a separate intention from the Democratic Peace Theory. In 2016, France was blamed for misconduct in Libya; Guma El-Gamaty argued that ‘France has contradictory policies in Libya, backing rival parties and sending soldiers without Tripoli’s consent. The cynical calculus behind this could quickly turn Libyans against France.’[\[15\]](#) The notion of keeping more public treasure than other states and avoiding war to preserve infrastructure and properties needs to be classified based on how they earn the treasures and how they avoid the war. What France and America proved to be sure of is that they do not turn their backyards (countries) into battle grounds to keep their infrastructure and properties safe, but they further their treasures through looting during the invasions. Gamaty argument of how French foreign policy threatened the sovereignty of the Libyan government by sending soldiers backing rivals, destroying the confidence of Libyans believing in democracy. The backing of rebels against a legitimate government is referred to as sponsoring terrorists or leading a coup in international law and is therefore very undemocratic. As said earlier, Libya is rich in oil, gas, and minerals, which France, as the colonial master wanted. The French foreign policy towards Libya did not suit the Democratic Peace Theory but the classical realism theory.

General Khalifa Hafta, the French operation commander, opposed the new government of national accord (GNA), which the French government endorsed in the UN-brokered political agreement signed in December 2015 in Morocco. The international community, including France, endorsed the GNA government to administer Libya in 2015 as the only legitimate government exercising power over the Libyan territory. Most Libyans alleged that the recent French intervention was a violation of Libyan sovereignty and undermining the GNA’s unity government, which France claims to be assisting, by selecting to care for some enemies of the newly molded GNA, which risks further polarization of Libyan politics[\[16\]](#). The tenant that democratic regimes are hesitant to engage in armed conflicts with other democracies, according to the

above elapsed.

USA AND FRANCE IN SYRIA

Oil is a strategic resource that the world needs as a source of energy.[\[17\]](#) Syria is geopolitically located in the Middle East, where America uses the term Persian Gulf interests to denote its oil interests. America has since experienced sour relations with Syria; the support granted to the Palestinians during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by the Syrian government was stated as clear evidence of tension between the two states. The tension dates to the 1967 Six-Day War, when the Egypt-Syria alliance lost the war to Israel. In the 1980s, Syria joined Iran in cultivating Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian territories. Although there had been soft relations after 1998, the relations deteriorated after America's invasion of Iraq in 2003. Syria invited Sunni terrorists from around the world to enter Iraq via Syrian territory. The relationship between Syria and Iran worsened the chances of soft relations between America and the Syrian Bashar Al-Assad regime. Iran is an Asian nuclear giant that was sanctioned by the EU and the United States for manufacturing heavy nuclear weapons (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and chemical weapons. Therefore, the collaboration of these authoritarian regimes endangered Persian American interests as they provided fertile ground for the terrorist groups of the Sunni extremists and the Al-Qaeda terrorist groups.

Niall Ferguson argued that the American military aid to the anti-Assad rebels and the Russian military aid backing the Assad regime revealed the pride of super powers.[\[18\]](#) The argument is in disagreement with the theory of Immanuel Kant, where only kings go to war out of pride. America wanted to exercise its supremacy over Russia in influencing world politics, thereby sponsoring the anti-Assad rebels. Although there is some evidence of the House endorsing the operation sponsorship in Syria, the major factor behind the contribution was to protect the citizens abroad, not to topple the regime, as former president Barack Obama revealed. It is vital to point out that America merely participated in the Syrian conflict due to its anticipation that the Syrian Bashar al-Assad regime was sheltering the terrorist groups that threatened American interests in the Middle East. In respect to that, there is no doubt that the American foreign policy towards Syria was based on realism.

The offensive numerous air strikes conducted by the US military killed an estimated 6423 civilians between September 2015 and June 2016, according to Alessandria Masi. Estimated figures of civilian death tollstallied signified that American involvement was not a classical humanitarian intervention. Abdulrahim Raja noted the following:

The U.S. did not request permission from the Syrian government, nor did it coordinate its actions with the Syrian government, provide direct notification to the Syrian military, or give indication of timing on specific targets, but it did notify the Syrian U.N. representative, which the Syrian government confirmed.[\[19\]](#)

The Syrian regime, under international law, reserves the legitimacy over its territory and citizens. In line with US involvement in the Syrian revolution without the consent of Syrian officials, the action endangered the sovereignty of the Syrian government over its territory. Supporting anti-government rebels is a form of terrorism under international law, as it enables instability and diminishes the authority of the legitimate government over the territory. The tenant that democratic regimes use diplomatic means to resolve conflict and abide by bloodless conflict management mechanisms has partial credibility, as encapsulated in the Raja notes. Arreaza argued that

The United States does not deserve to participate in the U.N. Human Rights Council because it is the principle violator of human rights standards worldwide. The United States has failed to ratify 72 percent of U.N. international agreements on human rights. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, or NAM, also issued a statement rejecting the use of coercive measures against sovereign peoples.[\[20\]](#)

Using the theory of democratic peace, the argument of Arreaza reveals that the United States has a lot of loopholes in protecting and promoting human rights as enshrined in the UN Charter. The citation labeled the US as the major aggressor in international relations and a threat to the sovereignty of states. The US ratification of major UN demands towards Non Aligned Movement severely discredited as being ridiculous. Arreaza, as foreign minister of Venezuela, dismissed the role played by America in oil-rich countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as neo-imperialistic.

CONCLUSION

The results regarding the analysis carried out reflected that there is a prominent nexus between liberal idealism, capitalism, and Democratic Peace Theory. The study established that liberal democratic regimes, in the name of democracy, furthered their self-interests and extended their sphere of influence in international relations. Instead of installing sovereign democracies, the study established that the US and France (known as the Allies) played a critical role in weakening the political sovereignty of Libya, Syria, and Afghanistan and rather preferred puppet democracies that would allow the siphoning of resources. In that manner, the Democratic Peace Theory is practicable when applied in good will; however, the absence of good will in international relations is the driving factor behind its failure. Therefore, the theory has to be bottom-up, where the nationals, without the influence of international actors, decide the leadership, not top-down, where America and France impose the leadership in sovereign states.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that

1. For democracy, peace and development to prevail, democratic regimes must work on balance of trade (BOT) not the use of force to topple authoritarian governments.
2. Balance of power (BOP) through permanent representation of all continents in United Nations Security Council. For example Asia, Africa and South America should retain permanent seats in UNSC.
3. Impartial prosecution of all member states of ICC and ICJ. The US former President Bush and UK former premier Blair have to be convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity they committed during their reign.

FOOTNOTES

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