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RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR: CAN AFRICA RECONSTRUCT DIPLOMATIC VARIABLES WITH AFRICAN LEADERS' PEACE INITIATIVE?

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Abstract

This paper examined selected African leaders' peace initiative in the Russian-Ukrainian war. The issues in the war which formed the background were investigated. The matters that arose from the African leaders' peace initiative were also discussed. Thus, capacity constraint was at the fore of the challenges and limitations. Other investigated issues were: What prompted the African leaders' peace initiative and what was the content? What were the challenges and limitations? What were the implications of the war on Africa's politics, economy and security? The conflict theory, realism theory and theory of good office were selected as the theoretical frameworks applied in the analysis of this paper, while data were gathered from secondary sources. The paper argues that although African leaders' intervention was novel in global politics, the limitations arose due to capacity constraints and the character of the leaders which imposed difficulties that rendered the attempt to engender peace between the belligerents impossible. It is recommended that for Africa to be an effective player in global politics, it must purge itself of the numerous challenges that act as inhibitions such as corruption, insecurity, lack of industrialization, unstable economy, and inability to install acceptable and legitimate government through free, fair and credible elections.

Key words

Capacity, Diplomacy, National interest, Peace, Russia-Ukraine, War.

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1. Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked a dramatic escalation of the eight years' old conflict that began with Russia's annexation of Crimea. It also signified a historic turning point for European security. No doubt the war has hastened Ukraine's zeal to join western political blocks including the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Masters, 2023). However, the war has done irreparable harm and separated

friends, families, people who once lived together. Scholars such as Madievsky (2022), Consiglio (2023), Masters (2023), and Ojewale (2023) often alluded to the cordiality in the relations between these nations that led to many Russians (about 8 million as of 2001) living peacefully and working in Ukraine. In the same vein, Russia had utilized Ukraine's pipelines to pump its gas to customers in Central and Eastern Europe for decades and earned revenue from sales, while Kyiv earned billions of dollars per year in transit fees. Unfortunately, the war ensued with its

uncertainties and turned hitherto friends into foes. Therefore, the following questions arise: What were the philosophical and socio-political underpinning issues in the war that turned friends into foes? What was the content of African leaders' peace initiative in the resolution of the crisis, and what were the issues that arose? What led to the futility of African leaders' diplomatic initiative? What were the implications of the war for African politics, economy and security?

Specifically, the objectives of the paper were to identify/examine the philosophical and socio-political underpinnings/issues in the war; to investigate the content of African leaders' peace initiative in the resolution of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine and matters arising from that; to investigate diplomatic variables and challenges that limited African leaders' initiative; and to determine the implications of the war for African politics, economy and security.

2. Conceptual clarification

The concept of national interest, despite a lack of global consensus about its content and meaning, is also truly relevant in discussing a country's foreign policy. Thus, it has become amenable to different interpretations and misrepresentation, which makes the concept pregnant with intriguing dimensions (Akpotor and Nwolise, 1999). However, it has been defined by Robert Osgood (cited in Akpotor and Nwolise, 1999) as a situation valued solely for its benefits to the nation. It represents patterns of interests, values, aims and objectives accepted by the people as likely to foster their well-being. K.J. Holsti cited in his analysis of aims and objectives used national interest as "core" interest, being self-preservation (cited in Akpotor and Nwolise, 1999). Briefly, national interest or the aims and objectives of foreign policy ran thus: the preservation of territory, protection of the economic well-being of the people, independence and fundamental government institution, self-sufficiency, national prestige and national aggrandizement, promotion and protection of ideology. In all, it is pertinent to note that self-preservation is the highest, paramount and most basic purpose of foreign policy (Akpotor and Nwolise, 1999). It is also the reason why a state can go to war.

Foreign policy is also a concept that lacks definitional consensus and has been defined from various perspectives. Joseph Frankel defined foreign policy as consisting of decisions and actions which involve, to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others. Decision is a sub-category of actions which take place in the decision-makers' mind while actions take place in the environment. Wolfram Handreider also defined foreign policy as

a coordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision-makers seek to manipulate the international environment to achieve certain objectives. Furthermore, it has been described as a country's way of going about dealing with its external environment. The nature of foreign policy may be very complex; however, in its formulation the key factor that is considered is national interest, the objectives which states seem to obtain in their interaction with other states (Akpotor and Nwolise, 1999).

Finally, **diplomatic variables** within the context of this paper refer to the means with which states interact with the external environment with the hope of playing an active role in the international system and achieving set objectives and their national goals. They are the core elements that accord recognition to a state and make it a significant player in the international system – one that it is never undermined. In other words, these variables condition or determine the role conception.

3. Theoretical framework

Three theories were adopted as the theoretical framework in this paper. These are conflict theory, the realism theory and the theory of good office. The conflict theory was identified with Karl Marx, though propagated by several scholars, including Ralf Dahrendorf, George Simmel, Max Gluckman, John Rex, Lewis Coser, and Vilfredo Pareto. In all, the German scholar, Karl Marx is credited as the father of the conflict theory, and this theory argues that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. It further argues that society order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus and conformity. According to the theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible. This includes the use of force and violence basically to suppress the poor and vulnerable, the powerless, as well as the opposition. Thus, the conflict theory is helpful in explaining a wide range of social phenomena, such as wars and revolutions, wealth and poverty, discrimination and domestic violence (Akpotor, nd Nwolise, 1999).

In relation to this paper, the struggle and competition for power and resources remains part of what orchestrated the Russian-Ukraine war. Thus, the actors in the war, in their effort to maintain a hold on state resources, apparatus and territories, which are chiefly the core and their main source of economic resources, attempt to outwit each other. The global political sphere is the arena for competition for scarce economic resources which countries strive to control. It remains one of the characteristics of the struggle for power.

The realism theory (also known as power politics) of international relations argues that “states, like men, are by nature self-interested and aggressive and will pursue their interest to the detriment of others and without regards to the constraints of law or morality” (Steans, Pettiford, Diez, 2005). Associated with this theory are Thomas Hobbes, Niccolo Machiavelli, Carlvon Clausewitz, Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, etc. In his elaboration, Morgenthau (cited in Lily-Inia, 2022) argues that “state actors must think and act in terms of power and must do whatever it takes to defend the national interest of their states”. Embedded in this argument is the concept of national interest. Morgenthau (2007) argued that power is defined in terms of national interest with nation states as the major actors in the international arena; thus, moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states, but must be seen purely in the eye of justice being done in line with state interest and at the expense of international law. To realists, power and national interest were the major forces that states must pursue to enhance their position in the international community. The assumptions of realism (in no particular order) are:

1. states, like men, behave in a self-interested manner;
2. states are central actors;
3. power is key to understanding international behavior and state motivation
4. international relations are inherently conflictual;
5. self-help is necessary for security and survival;
6. human nature is basically evil and susceptible to conflict;
7. moral principles cannot be applied to political actions;
8. harmony of interest is deficient amongst sovereign states;
9. immutable factors of geography and natural resources are crucial and promote peace, stability, and cordial international relations;
10. capabilities that states have are crucial and promote peace, stability and cordial international relations;
11. balance of power and systems of alliances are crucial and promote peace, security and cordial international relations (Lily-Inia, 2022).

Within the context of the Russian-Ukraine war, the above hold sway as preservation of territories, independence, preservation of sovereignty, national prestige, protection of ideology and security are the core issues. National interest within this context concerns the issue of competing values. Core or vital interests are objectives for which states and their people are willing to go to war with others. They are

non-negotiable as they bother on national security and survival (Akpotor. Nwolise, 1999). In addition, this borders on the territorial integrity and self-preservation of the politics, industry, and sovereignty of a state. Furthermore, it involves the protection of all its citizens against external aggression as well as the protection of its political, economic, religious, and social institutions (Ojo, Sesay, 1988).

The theory of peace as common good also helps in this analysis. The common good is what is shared by and what benefits all or most members of a given community (Wikipedia (a)). In an ordinary discourse, it refers to those facilities – whether material, cultural or institutional – that the members of a community provide to other members in order to fulfill a relational obligation. They all must care for certain interests that they have in common (Encyclopedia of philosophy). It is a state of relations among people and nations that everyone aspires or wishes to maintain. Early conceptions of the common good were set out by ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato. However, the theory of common good was further developed through the work of political theorists, moral philosophers and public economists, including Thomas Aquinas, Nicollo Machiavelli, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rosseau, James Madison, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, John Keynes, John Rawls and many other thinkers. Respect for a person, the well-being and development of a group or social community of which a person is a member and peace constitutes three elements of the common good. An example of common goods or parts of the common good is peace among the nations of the world. Within the context of this paper, peace is, therefore, a global public good sought after by many nations (Mendez, 1999). In the application of this theory, selected African leaders whose economies were affected by the war realized the responsibility to help promote common good and global peace and so were motivated to intervene.

4. Methodology

This paper adopted the method of descriptive research, and the gathered data were generated from secondary sources. These sources included textbooks, journals, newspapers, and internet materials. The sourced materials were mostly on the Russian-Ukrainian war, Africa development challenges and global politics. Because of their wide coverage and availability, some of the sampled newspapers included Premium Times, Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and other online research sites.

5. Friends Turned Foes: Philosophical and Socio-Political Underpinnings/Issues in the War

There were so many issues which the Russian-Ukrainian war revolved around. In 2003, Russia attempted to integrate Ukraine into a new Russia-led Single Economic Space with Russia. However, with former President Viktor Yushchenko in power, several problems resurfaced including the Russian-Ukrainian gas disputes due to Ukraine's growing cooperation with the EU and bid to join the NATO (Wikipedia (b)). Thus, the effort was scuttled.

Secondly, Ukraine had been a former Soviet Republic. Therefore, it had deep cultural, economic and political bonds with Russia. This bond was difficult to sever particularly because of implications for Russia. However, the war has done irreparable harm to their relations. Analysts argue that the Russian-Ukrainian war is a manifestation of renewed geopolitical rivalry between major world powers.

Thirdly, in 2014, Ukraine became a battleground when Russia annexed Crimea and began arming, aiding and abetting separatists in the Donbas region in the country's South-East. Russia's ground for seizing Crimea was under the claim that the territory had been part of Russia. However, Russia's seizure of part of Ukraine was the first time since World War II that a European state annexed the territory of another state in defiance of a UN resolution (Masters, 2023).

Moreover, the strategic nature of Ukraine to Russia also remained an issue. Ukraine had been home to the union's agricultural production, defense industry and military. Hence its decision to pull out in 1991 dealt a deep blow to the Russians who felt they needed to retain their possession. This also extended to family ties, Russian diasporas, Russia superpower image, the Crimea issue, trade relations, reliance on Ukraine's pipelines to pump gas to customers in Central and Eastern Europe, etc. (Masters, 2023). For example, Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, was sometimes referred to as "mother of Russian cities," and approximately eight million ethnic Russians were said to be living in Ukraine as of 2001.

Furthermore, in 1997, Ukraine and the Russian Federation signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership (also known as the "Big Treaty"). Part of the principles embedded in the agreement were the formation of strategic partnership, the recognition of the inviolability of existing borders, respect for territorial integrity and mutual commitment not to use its territory to harm the security of each other. The treaty further prevented Ukraine and Russia

from invading one another's country respectively and declaring war. This agreement was broken with the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014. This made Ukraine announce its intention not to renew the treaty in September 2018. Meanwhile, until 2019, the treaty was automatically renewed. However, the deterioration in the relations between Russia and Ukraine since 2014, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and Russian support for separatist forces in the war in the Donbas region further escalated crippling of the agreement and its renewal. Consequently, the treaty expired on March 31, 2019 (Wikipedia (c)).

Though there were deep internal divisions with the western part of Ukraine supporting integration with Europe and the mostly Russian-speaking communities in the east favoring closer ties with Russia, Ukrainians believed in the right to dissent, freedom of association and the protection of its sovereignty. Thus, Ukraine was committed to safeguarding its territorial integrity and sovereignty, a reason for which a state can go to war. Therefore, it found it difficult to accept and recognize the unlawful annexation by Russia.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, center arrogance and recklessness, vis-à-vis the periphery has tremendously increased with the United States' (US) hegemonistic foreign policy threatening world peace (Asamoah, 2004, Lily-Inia, 2022). The US foreign policy is expansionist in nature. Issues of promoting democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, trade and investment have topped the agenda of the US foreign policy. Therefore, Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the manifestation of Kremlin's growing resentment towards NATO's post-cold-war expansion into the former Soviet sphere of influence, an expansion that raised security concerns for Russia. Meanwhile, Russia had repeatedly warned the United States of America (USA) and NATO against violating pledges and expanding the alliance and membership into the former Soviet bloc. This was considered a humiliating imposition for Russia (Masters, 2023).

6. Africa Leaders Initiative in the Restoration of Peace in the Russia-Ukraine War: Matters Arising

The mission was to seek a roadmap to peace in the over 16 months' long conflict between Ukraine and Russia which devastated economies and resulted in loss of lives and global instability/disruptions (Are, 2023). In terms of human right issues, attacks have resulted in thousands of civilian casualties amidst mounting evidence of other crimes, such as torture, sexual violence and unlawful killings. Violation of

rights to housing, health and education amidst the war are further attributable to the attacks on the civilian infrastructure.

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa led the team which also included Comoros' Azali Assoumani, Senegal's Macky Sall, Zambia's Hakainde Hichilema. Others were the Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and top envoys from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. There had been other peace initiatives such as the Vatican Peace Mission and the China Peace Proposals that were earlier put together as interventions in the crisis. Some vital elements of the African leaders' peace process according to President Ramaphosa were:

1. de-escalation of the conflict,
2. release of the prisoners of war and children,
3. adherence to the principle of the UN charter on sovereignty,
4. ensuring that there is humanitarian support for those in need, and
5. post war reconstruction (Are, 2023).

In the advancement of peace in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, African leaders choose to embark on mediation diplomacy. This occurs when a country(ies) that is/are not directly involved in the war tri(es) to help two or more sides in the conflict to bridge their differences (Rouke and Boyer, 2002). What is remarkable at this juncture to the Africa peace initiative is the comment of former President Bill Clinton when he intervened in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in July 2000 that "while clearly there was no guarantee of success, but not to try would guarantee failure" (cited in Rouke and Boyer, 2000).

The strategic position of Africa in global politics requires that Africa should not stay aloof and watch the escalation of hostilities. Africa parades attributes in the international fora that the developed countries would not afford to ignore. Africa is a key geopolitical player, one of the largest regional voting groups in the UN, whose dynamic economies, population, partnerships and leadership provide the foundation for a bright future for the continent, the US and the eras' defining challenges (Banks, 2022, cited in Olawale, 2022).

Six out of the world's ten fastest growing economies, with an average growth rate of five percent per year, are found in Africa (Yeboah, 2014). Africa is increasingly the most compelling market ever which any developed nation should not ignore. With a bulging and soaring consumer class that equals India in size, it also adds ten million yearly to its expanding middle class (Enwegbara, 2014). The large population provides a market for exports of commodities, fast

returns on investment and cheap labor required in the production process.

Again, the fact that Africa is blessed with abundant major natural, mineral, human resources and a most diverse ecosystem, makes it a region with tremendous investment opportunities. Ninety percent of cobalt, and the bulk of the world's diamond is found in Africa. Sixty-four percent of the world's manganese, fifty percent of the world's phosphate and gold, forty percent of its platinum, thirty-five percent of the world's uranium and more than twenty percent of oil reserves are found in Africa (Enwegbara, 2014).

If competition is key in international politics, then international economies have every reason to be interested in Africa, particularly when China's trade with Africa rose to over \$200bn in 2013 from \$6bn, while imports and exports between China and Africa in 2022 hit a record \$254bn (Kedem cited in Smialowski, 2022). It was largely made up of Beijing's imports of oil and minerals and export of electronics and textiles which more than doubled the US and far ahead of the EU trade relations with the continent (McGreal, 2014).

Okafor (2022) argued that China and Russia see the African continent as an arena to challenge the rules-based international order and drive their personal interests. Whereas China advances its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests, undermines transparency and openness and weakens US relations with African peoples and governments, Russia views the region as a permissive environment for parasitic and private military competition, while fomenting instability for strategic and financial benefits. On the other hand, the US and Russia perceive each other as competitors in their approach to Africa. The war in Ukraine has given the floor to the US leaving China as the only country to contend with.

If African leaders' peace initiative had succeeded, the benefits would have been enormous and wide-ranging for the continent and global politics. Though the initiative has not put a stop to the war, some of the possible derivatives from the peace mission included:

1. prestige for Africa in global politics,
2. improved trade flow to African economies (goods and services),
3. unhindered supply of raw materials to Africa,
4. possible reduction in hostilities,
5. a signal to the warring parties not to drag Africa into the crisis and extricate it from mutual slaughter,
6. restoration of funds for support since they were non-aligned.
7. help in discerning the body language of the duo as part of their resolve to end the crisis.

7. The Weak Helping the Strong: Diplomatic Variables and Futility of African Initiative

However, there are four major elements of a country's power, also referred to as diplomatic variables, which can assist any country in achieving goals through diplomacy and be a major player in global politics, as argued by Rouke and Boyer (2002). They can be categorized as those that constitute:

1. its national core (geography, its people and its government),
2. its national infrastructure (technological sophistication, its transportation system and information and communication capabilities),
3. its national economy,
4. its military.

Akpotor and Nwolise (1999) provided a broader and more detailed analysis of the diplomatic variables that will enable a country to have an edge over others in international politics. They are a geographic-strategic factor, economic potentials, history, military capability, population index, structure of government and security.

It is obvious that using the indices mentioned above Africa lacked the wherewithal to make an impact in the resolution of the crisis. In terms of the national core, it has the population. But the question remains of what quality and how skilled the population is? The governments in many African countries are corrupt and unable to deliver on their promises to the citizenry. They lack transparency and accountability, and the process of political leadership recruitment has been compromised, hence many of the regimes suffer a legitimacy crisis. The continent is littered with decayed infrastructure, just like the information and technology sector. Its economy is wobbling with serious evidence of poverty, inflation, unemployment, import dependency, huge debt overhang and low productivity. Its military cannot compare with their counterparts elsewhere in advanced countries and besides, it currently contends with security challenges in the continent, where they often request for the assistance of actors in the war. This, no doubt, limits Africa leaders' capacity to mitigate in the war situation.

Other noticeable challenges that impacted the peace moves by African leaders included the fact that Egypt, Zambia and Comoros had earlier voted against Russian invasion in the UN General Assembly resolution. This was an indication that they had already taken a position. This negates the argument that the moves of a third party interested in peace must be neutral. Also, many Africa nations have very long and close ties with the warring parties in different ways. The relationship with Moscow in certain situation

dates back to the cold war era when the Soviet Union supported their anti-colonial struggle. In addition, many Africa countries have individual economic ties with Russia and Ukraine. For example, Ukraine is known to be a major supplier of wheat to African countries to produce bread, while South Africa is a member of the BRICS states. This has created room for influence, bias and double standards.

Another hurdle to surmount in the actualization of the peace moves by African leaders was the sharply different stands of the warring parties. While Ukraine demanded that Russia withdrew its troops from all its occupied territories as a condition for peace talks, the Kremlin in turn insisted that Ukraine recognized the Crimean Peninsula which Moscow illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014 as part of Russia and acknowledged other land gains it had made (Jamey, 2023).

Moreover, what made the peace moves for Africa worse was that the leader of the team, South Africa President, Cyril Ramaphosa had abstained from voting on the UN resolution on the war. Apparently, it could be because he lacked courage or did not want to be dragged into a contest between global powers. In addition, even when the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Putin in March 2023 for war crimes related to the alleged abduction of children from Ukraine, South Africa President, Cyril Ramaphosa said he would not arrest President Putin if he attended the BRICS summit in South Africa slated for August 2023, irrespective of the fact that South Africa is obligated to arrest President Putin as a signatory to the Rome statute.

Furthermore, the perception of the world powers to the African initiative was circumspect. Besides the fact that the perception was that solutions to an international crisis cannot come from Africa as was demonstrated by the West and others during Covid-19, the US had rallied international support for a military action and sanctions against Russia. The implication was to view the action of African leaders as an affront to the position of the West.

There was also the issue of external interest in the Russian-Ukrainian crises that made it difficult for Africa to attain its goal of ensuring peace between the warring parties. These included allies, military industries and private military units. Countries such as Belarus, the United States, and other European countries were known to be directly or overtly involved in the crisis. Military hardware companies and producers of weapons were also indirectly interested parties. Their interest was essentially in enabling them to market their wares. Private and para-military units, such as the Wagner Group in Russia, owned and financed by late Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman, a former close ally to President Vladimir Putin was

made up of mercenaries fighting in Ukraine. They had also played great roles in military/armed conflicts in parts of Africa and elsewhere. This made it impossible for the countries where they were currently assisting in internal security management to be critical of the situation.

Russia supported the emergence of Africa as one of the poles of the new world. Therefore, it must be rid of all remnants of the neo-colonialist era of all the colonialist strings that hinder the economic development of the African continent (Jameson, 2023). The growing influence of Russia in West Africa soil is an indication of a major challenge in Africa. Their presence and support for the military junta in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger calls for concern. The rapport between these juntas and the new military leadership in Niger is a further indication that Russia is gaining more grounds and penetrating Africa where the West is losing its traditional allies.

Finally, the capacity of African leaders to foster peace through diplomacy in the war-torn region was queried against the backdrop of the status and crises that currently bedevil the African continent and economies. Many African countries do not fare well in terms of improving socio-economic growth, hence often their diplomatic moves have revolved around attracting foreign aid. The continent is blessed with abundant natural resources. Unfortunately, Africa has not been able to harness the huge deposit of natural resources and potentials for its greatness, greater and active role, and influence in global politics. There is a high incidence of corruption, hunger, conflicts, unemployment, poverty, instability, insecurity, environmental hazard, low industrialization, refugee and humanitarian crisis in the continent which negatively impacted the success of diplomatic initiatives and activities. With robust evidence of the above in Africa, it becomes difficult for the actors and players in the crisis to build confidence in the leaders' ability to achieve the set objective.

8. Aftermath Implications of the War for African Politics, Economy and Security

major implication of the war for African economies is the alteration in the food supply chain and a significant impact on mobility of goods and people to and from Africa to the war-torn zone. Ukraine had been a major supplier of grain to Africa. The war sparked up prices of bread due to shortage in the supply of wheat which is a major raw material to produce bread in many African countries. The importance of uninterrupted food supplies for socio-economic and political stability of African states cannot be overemphasized, hence disruption in the supply of bailey, maize and

other grains to Africa have potential to result in food insecurity on the continent.

The rebellion of the Wagner group in Russia in the midst of the Russian-Ukrainian war constituted a security challenge for Africa. The rebellion of the Wagner group, mostly made up of mercenaries, drew attention to the use of non-state actors in the management of internal conflicts in Africa. Some African countries such as Mali, Sudan, Mozambique and the Central African Republic (CAR) are among countries that have hired the services of these mercenaries to assist in fighting insurgents, terrorists, and Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Tuaregs, ISWAP, Al Shabaab, etc. Similarly, Nigeria is also known to contract the surveillance of its oil pipelines to former ethnic militias. The implication of not subjecting such groups to the control of state/local military is an indication that they can abuse human rights, threaten and rise to seize power anytime and cause instability. According to Ojewale (2023), other non-state armed groups could draw their inspiration from the Wagner group experience and become unaccountable to state structured military, particularly in Africa.

In future, not just that Africa watches its safety, but the entire world as well, in order to prevent the implication of a reverse consequence and reoccurrence of the Libya episode where Saddam Hussein was militarily empowered during the Iraq-Iran war, the US support for Taliban and other reactionary forces which overthrew the socialist government of Afghanistan; the US use of Osama Bin Laden during the Afghanistan civil war as a front man. Secondly, we must watch it so that Africa is not dragged into the crises, and it is not made a battle ground for the settlement of externally driven crises with unclear signals from the Niger coup.

Finally, in future the warring parties may be relating politically and economically with Africa based on friends and foes. The implication is withdrawal of goodwill hitherto enjoyed by Africa. Amidst the crises, in a bid to 'scramble' for and replace Ukraine grain supplies, both commercial and free-of-charge basis, divide and possibly court the support of African countries; Russia promised Africa free grain supply to tackle food insecurity (Oyewo, 2023). Other supplies included food products, fertilizers and other goods.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is evident from the analysis above that there were philosophical and political underpinnings in the Russian-Ukrainian war. While the issues impacted the character of the war, of particular importance was Ukraine's refusal to join the Russia-led Single Economic Space, the Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute and the

intention of Ukraine to join NATO. Joining NATO was viewed by Russia as bringing America too close and considered as a security threat to its territorial integrity. The right to dissent, protect sovereignty and pursue national interests were other issues that the war threw up. While these issues were identified as critical to influencing the stance maintained by the warring parties, the war left massive destruction of lives, property and infrastructure in its trail.

On the other hand, African leaders' initiative was novel in global politics. The concern here was the intervention of leaders of critically dependent African countries in an attempt to broker peace between industrialized and developed countries. Unfortunately, there were serious challenges and inhibitions that impacted the peace process. For example, the core elements and diplomatic variables, such as capable military, advanced technology, stable government, strong economy, etc., that could help a country be regarded as a major player in global politics were lacking in Africa. Insecurity and poverty also remained the daily challenges that confront the continent. The inability to showcase the presence of the above elements on the continent was an indication that the intervention was a mere talk shop.

Africa is not directly involved in the war, but there is no gainsaying that its impact is felt within the continent and globally. The grain, energy and food supply chains have been disrupted, while food security is threatened. Its impact is also felt in the political economy of African states with agitations over high cost of bread for example.

Therefore, it is recommended that African countries must resist the temptation of being

drawn into the war. The option of non-alignment is recommended so that the continent is not thrown into a battle ground for proxy war. Available evidence in West Africa and Africa shows Russia support for military juntas and that there is competition over grain supply by Russia and Ukraine, respectively.

The initiative of African leaders is commendable. It must be emphasized that for African states to be major players in the international system, they must purge themselves of the numerous challenges that act as inhibitions. These include combating corruption and insecurity, pursuing genuine industrialization, improving technology, strengthening the military, stabilizing their economy, and being able to institute acceptable and legitimate government through free, fair and credible elections. The implication of the war is enormous, particularly as it has attracted external forces, allies, organizations, and mercenaries. The experience from the analysis in this paper shows that African governments must make effort to subject non-state security forces to legitimate and formal state security apparatus. This will help to reduce political instability in the continent as a consequence of the war.

This is the time for African leaders to look inward. Depending on importation of food supplies such as grains whereas there is abundance of arable land in the continent is a contradiction. Mass and deliberate cultivation of grains and other crops have potential to reduce imports, conserve foreign exchange, provide employment, contribute to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), ensure steady food supplies, and reduce dependence and disruptions in African economies.

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