

The (D)evolution of the Security Council: A Three-Part Case Study on the post-Cold War Use of the Veto

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Abstract

During the Cold War, ideological divisions stymied the UN Security Council mandate to address threats to international peace and security, preventing a program of collective security action. The post-Cold War period held the potential for constructive relationships, especially among the Council's permanent members. However, these relationships have not emerged, despite the expressed post-Cold War need for new humanitarian principles and collaborative frameworks. This failure has reaffirmed a restricted political role for the Security Council at a time when its capacities could be more fully realized than any other point in its history. Why have desired post-Cold War security principles failed to materialize? Using a constructivist paradigm, we argue that the permanent five members (P5) of the Security Council continue to build their identities on Cold War-era national security concepts. Consequently, the P5 persist in using the veto power as a way for the State to enforce its identity. The research demonstrates that, as long as the P5 treat the veto as a traditional sovereignty entitlement, full Security Council capacities cannot be put to use in complex pre-, mid-, or post-conflict situations. This paper examines three separate conditions involving the use of the veto power in the Security Council: Russia's hesitance towards external intervention in the most recent Syrian conflict; the United States' conception of sovereignty entitlements with international legal jurisdiction in the International Criminal Court, and the intransigent influence of the United States in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Further, the present paper is concerned with only the political and military relationship between these states. The paper relies on a content analysis of primary UN sources, including Secretary-General reports, Security Council resolutions, verbatim meeting records, and outcome documents. These resources were supplemented with scholarly articles and interviews with UN officials in New York and advocacy organizations in Washington DC¹. We conclude that, unless the P5 acknowledge the role that Cold War norms hinder Security Council capabilities, any post-Cold War humanitarian frameworks will fail. The danger is that 21st century conflicts will be tolerated, and even encouraged, by P5 sovereignty conceptions. We identify channels for moving P5 behavior in a positive direction so as to liberate the Security Council from outdated norms and engage its powers for human protection purposes.

Keywords: Security Council, Constructivism, International Law

1. Introduction

The United Nations has historically been faulted for its failure to act on and enforce international humanitarian norms. However, in the aftermath of the Cold War, the UN system was poised for global leadership in a world "reborn." Indeed, Secretaries-General Boutros Boutros Ghali and Kofi Annan articulated core principles for a revitalized United Nations; they envisioned an organization whose member states and agencies acted in accordance with humanitarian protection principles in a world in which accountability is vital and human rights are upheld unconditionally. To achieve these goals would require that states set aside a strict focus on sovereignty, hegemonic

visions, and other elements of Cold War realist practice. In the new world as envisioned by the Secretaries-General, the UN mission would be facilitated by enabling forms of multilateral cooperation, collective security, and conditional sovereignty. These post-Cold War principles would unleash the vast UN capacities and apply them to complex 21st century conflict. However, and as might be expected, the P5 members of the Security Council did not fully or consistently support all of them.

This paper uses a constructivist framework to explain why the P5 members remain selective in the application of the principles contained in the UN reform agenda. Constructivism is a socially based theory that explains state behavior as a function of their core interest in the face of a changing international environment. During the Cold War, due to prevailing rivalries and ideological divisions, constructed identities supported a limited interventionist role for the United Nations. Sovereignty prerogatives then can also explain the slow transition from a Cold War rivalry to a collective security arrangement now. According to constructivism, these norms both reflect and must be in accordance with states' identities and interests if they are to be carried out. When external conditions shift, identities are either in whole or in part re-constructed; while new norms might emerge, longstanding ones may also persist.

This paper examines that persistence. We argue that, even in the face of a (potential) new multilateral world order, P5 states cling to rigid interest construction. These "red line" issues continue to comprise the foundation of foreign policy decision-making, despite P5 rhetorical acceptance of the UN reform agenda. In essence, what was once blamed on "Cold War politics" appears to be inherent constructions of P5 identity, regardless of the changing landscape. Sovereign prerogatives are still applied, signaling that P5 members continue to base their identities on narrow and often unarticulated national interests. The results are limited capacities for both the United Nations and the rule of law. Despite the call at the United Nations for coordinated international action to deal effectively with complex conflict, and despite the promise of the post-Cold War order that would have made such action possible, P5 red lines prevent consorted Security Council authorization of otherwise desirable collective security mandates. In sum, the theory of constructivism can explain the positive shift of the United Nations to human security principles, but it also demonstrates the limitations posed by the retention of unyielding state identities.

2. Post-Cold War UN Reform Agenda

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the United Nations – led by the Secretary-General – launched a new set of principles for the organization. The campaign for change began in December 1991 and continues to evolve; taken as a whole, it represents the foundation of a reform agenda for the post-Cold War world. In many ways aspirational, the components of the agenda reflect a desired recommitment to *UN Charter* principles that had been stymied for decades by ideological rivalries and balance of power tensions. The normative and tangible features of the agenda assume a consensus on the part of UN member states regarding two key points:

- (1) To unleash the full potential of the United Nations and engage the entire UN system in leading global conflict prevention and resolution efforts.
- (2) To overcome Cold War norms and entitlements in order to achieve the above goal.

The following presents the key components of the reform agenda and the normative features that presume (and require) a recommitment to core *UN Charter* principles.

While the Secretary-General's 1992 "Agenda for Peace" is widely considered the foundation of the reform agenda, it was preceded by two important documents. General Assembly resolution 46/182 (19 Dec. 1991) spelled out guidelines by which states were to balance humanitarian assistance principles with respect for sovereignty. This was followed by an unprecedented Summit at the Security Council during which heads of state and government elaborated collective economic and political goals that would drive their relationships (S/PV 3046, 31 January 1992). Most notably, P5 states pledged their dedication to human rights norms, albeit while expressing their distinct interpretations of how to apply those norms.

The P5 members articulated their renewed obligations but embedded them in what this paper believes were Cold War entitlements carried over from the previous era. As we will see, the overlay of traditional national prerogatives would guide the P5 members in their identity formation and continue to privilege Cold War behaviors. This tendency created a parallel dynamic at the United Nations. On one level, P5 members pursued a familiar national interest calculus and sovereignty prerogatives. On the other, the organization continued to issue robust reports forecasting new opportunities for a "post-sovereign" world order.

In 1992, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued his seminal “Agenda for Peace.” In it, he requested member states to recommit “at the highest political level” to the principles in the Charter. The report outlines the ways the UN system could carry out its obligations in the fields of peacekeeping and human rights protections. The Secretary-General advises P5 members to be measured in their foreign policies so that the UN’s security arm can emerge “as a central instrument for the prevention and resolution of conflict and for the preservation of peace.” He expresses optimism that the use of the veto will no longer render the organization “powerless” in the fulfillment of its *Charter* obligations. Nonetheless, Boutros-Ghali acknowledges that sovereignty will continue to be a sticking point and recognized the need to find “a balanced design for all.” In his 1995 follow-up report, “Supplement to an Agenda for Peace,” Boutros-Ghali focuses on intrastate conflict and the ways UN missions can be made more effective. He seeks to strengthen the soft powers of the organization, for example, in the areas of negotiated settlements, including the supervision of cease-fires and the verification of respect for human rights.

Five years later, in 2000, the largest gathering of world leaders in history took place to discuss the role of the organization in the 21st century. The UN Millennium Summit echoed many of the normative principles set out by previous reports and resolutions. The seminal Millennium Declaration signaled a wide scale commitment to “rights for all people” by the year 2015. To achieve the goals in areas including child and maternal health, poverty and hunger, and primary education, UN leaders – and especially those countries with resources and influence to guide goal fulfillment – would need to set aside national interest prerogatives in the interest of concerted and collective action.

Continuing the leading role played by UN Secretaries-General in the post-Cold War era, in 2005 Kofi Annan issued his report “In Larger Freedom.” He argued that contemporary threats require “broad, deep, and sustained global cooperation.” Annan directly address the regressive role that sovereignty entitlements can play – and continued to play – in the carrying out of UN humanitarian and human rights obligations. The report highlights the outdated structure of the UN Security Council in particular, stating that “the present makeup reflects the world of 1945, not that of the twenty-first century.” In this regard, Annan urges member states to “make up their minds” when it comes to Security Council reform, which he believes could serve the interests of the organization better through stronger democratic representation in Security Council decision-making.

The next main iteration of the reform agenda directly addressed the question of sovereignty. The emerging “responsibility to protect” (R2P) concept treats sovereignty, not as a prerogative for justifying national (in)actions, but as a form of responsibility. In 2000, under the auspices of the Canadian government, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) formulated a “global political consensus about how and when the international community should respond to emerging crises involving the potential for large-scale loss of life and other widespread crimes against humanity.” In December 2001, the ICISS issued its “The Responsibility to Protect” report. The fundamental argument – which the involved governments presumably believed the world was ready to hear – is that sovereignty entails responsibilities. First and foremost, states are obligated to provide protection and security for their populations. Failing that, the international community is obligated ultimately to intervene, particularly if the state in question is unwilling to stop or is a contributor to the four “mass atrocity crimes”: Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.

The UN’s post-CW reform agenda, led by Boutros Boutros-Ghali and including General Assembly and Security Council contributions as well as participation by all world leaders, reflected substantive post-Cold War aspirations. The subtext to the collective agenda documents indicates a desire to move beyond a world in which strict sovereignty conceptions reigned. Further, the agenda articulated a broad desire to privilege human rights principles, humanitarian protections, and capacity-building. Together, the documents equate to a framework for action designed to guide states’ collective behavior and progressive foreign policy agendas in the 21st century.

3. Theory and Methodology

3.1 The Constructivist Framework

Constructivism seeks to explain the seemingly random interactions among states. It answers why alliances exist, what makes them strong and why they collapse. Constructivism is a theory of international relations that explains how states interact in accordance to their own changing identities. These interactions are malleable and are based on social history among states.

Constructivism posits that all states, like individuals, have their own identities. An identity is a compilation of states’ interests, some of which are shared while others compete. According to Wendt,² “[a]ctors do not have a

“portfolio” of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead they define their interests in the process of defining situations.” At the same time a state is reformulating all or part of its identity, it is promoting - albeit in updated rhetorical terms - particular longstanding interests.

Additionally, each state interacts on a case by case basis with one another. Wendt explains how, under a realist construction, states assume they cannot trust each other and should therefore expect insecurity. In contrast, a constructivist would see what a state does as a function of its identity formation, from which a state’s expectations are drawn. The relationships that are built off expectations are not coincidences nor are they formulated by outside actors. These interactions are entirely controlled by those who define them, and each interaction is distinct.

The rich record of constructivist theorizing can shed light on the thesis of this paper. In *Norms Are What States Make of Them: The Political Psychology of Norm Violation*,³ Shannon studies “why states violate norms they embrace as members of international society.” Shannon critiques the rationalist and constructivist arguments frequently given for norm promotion. Rationalism would say that norms are only adhered to when they are conducive to the goals of the state. Constructivism says that norms are adhered to because of the social benefits and that states have a desire to conform to what others are doing. He argues that neither of these concepts can adequately answer this question and therefore, one needs to turn to political psychology. Shannon explains that when state interests conflict with societal norms, states will try to mold the norm to in order to support their interests.

Sterling-Folker⁴ critiques efforts to compare constructivism and neoliberal institutionalism and argues that the former does not stand as a distinct framework for analysis. Nonetheless, she identifies the core functional features of constructivism that support the thesis of this paper. The author points out that calls for institutional innovation are provoked by situational circumstances. When standing institutional arrangements fail to either establish common interests or satisfy the existing range of interests, there will be demand for new institutional arrangements. Those arrangements, then, do not “condition” environmental change but instead will serve as instruments of “collective problem-solving.” For the purposes of this paper, Sterling-Folker suggests that the UN reform agenda, which asks states to transcend their Cold War identities, was itself a product of growing conditions of interdependence, which itself required institutional innovation. This paper will show that the ability of the United Nations to entice its most powerful members toward such transcendence and innovation is confounded by a persisting insistence on sovereign prerogatives.

In “Constructing Post-Cold War Collective Security,”⁵ Frederking adopts constructivism as a tool for analyzing different language usage by states to show that not much has changed in world politics since the Cold War. He supports this argument by using two similar examples that played out before and after 9/11. His pre-9/11 example regards NATO’s threatened use of collective security measures in Kosovo. After 9/11, the author points to US involvement in Iraq. In both situations, the invading power acted without Security Council authorization. Frederking argues that this event could be explained by examining the apparent contradictions in a state’s actions. The author points to the United States’ veto of the Bosnia and Herzegovina resolution in 2002, versus its affirmative vote to send Kaddafi to the International Criminal Court 2011. His application of the six rules (identity, autonomy, the nature of security, deterrence, enforcement and the use of force) in determining each social arrangement is helpful in explaining why states behave the way that they do in different situations.

Steinberg and Zasloff⁶ survey the relationship between power and international law in articles that that appeared over the scope of a century in the *American Journal of International Law*. In examining the constructivist contribution to the power law relationship, the authors trace the constructivist assumption that the interests and identities of states “may be taken as given.” As such, state interests and identities are both contextualized and relational; they guide foreign policy decisions and affiliations and decisions. While international law “both reflects and reinforces identities and interests,” the authors note the need for reform agendas in the areas of preventive diplomacy and responsibility to protect. Interpreting their point, weak UN leadership is a direct result of a lack of *de facto* authority that is articulated in the *de jure* instruments governing international relations. In essence, state practice has not kept pace with state promises as this paper will demonstrate.

3.2 Hypothesis

During the Cold War, ideological divisions stymied the UN Security Council mandate to address threats to international peace and security, preventing a program of collective security action. As explained above, the post-Cold War period held the potential for constructive relationships, especially among the Council’s permanent members. To put it in Wendt’s terms, the post-Cold War political environment was what states would make of it.

Taking this opportunity into account, we hypothesize that persistent Cold War norms remain central to P5 identity formation and undermine UN capacities to achieve the goals of the post-Cold War UN reform agenda.

3.3 Variables

For the purposes of our discussion, we will assume that the following terms are defined as follows:

- Norms: Shared understandings of appropriate action. Norms guide action and make action possible, enabling agents to criticize assertions and justify actions.
- Red Lines: non-negotiable interests that guide P5 action/inaction on certain issues

Our analysis focuses on the red lines that each state maintains as central to its identity formation. In our study, we identified the red lines of each state by examining the relevant norms and system beliefs in the context of a specific issue, and how the state reacted in relation to their stated beliefs. In isolating these behaviors, the red line condition was then applied to each case study.

We consider P5 red lines to serve the purpose of undermining the UN's capacity relative to the aspirations laid out in the UN reform agenda. We explain this undermined capacity as a direct result of the veto power. The veto is the "front" for red line assertions; sometimes the red lines are explicit - such as Russia's insistence on non-intervention in Syria - and sometimes they are hidden - such as US interests in Israel. We argue that the veto itself is an is a perceived entitlement of sovereignty and is seen as an equalizer of the Cold War-like status quo as mutually understood by the P5 members.

3.4 Case Study Selection

We based our selection of case studies on several factors. We first examined different uses, or threatened uses, of the veto power in the post-Cold War era. Once we narrowed down those situations, we looked at the justification of the state's veto. We then isolated those that challenged popularly held views by the other P5 members. From there, we narrowed down the case studies to ones that are concerned with different regions of the world in order to ensure a wide variety of geographic areas. We also considered national prerogatives, which we determined based on research of the state's domestic policies, of the vetoing member state when evaluating the case studies. We chose Russia, and the United States, as opposed to France or the UK, because of their well-documented policies on the situations in the case studies. Accordingly, three distinct case studies were selected: the United States' conception of sovereignty entitlements with international legal jurisdiction in the International Criminal Court; Russia's hesitance towards external intervention in the most recent Syrian conflict, and the intransigent influence of the United States in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

4. United States and the International Criminal Court

4.1 Background

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has only vetoed one resolution in the Security Council not pertaining to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In June of 2002, the United States vetoed a draft resolution that renewed the mandate for the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to jurisdictional concerns about the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the implementation of the Rome Statute. Their justification for effectively ending the UN mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) was "the need to ensure our [United States'] national jurisdiction over our personnel and officials involved in United Nations peacekeeping..."

In the face of widespread international pressure, the United States agreed to compromise over jurisdictional concerns with American peacekeeping troops in July of 2002 with the passage of Resolution 1422. This resolution clarified that any peacekeepers from States that are not party to the Rome Statute could not be under the jurisdiction of the ICC. In March of 2005, after the expiration of jurisdictional immunity for peacekeepers from states not party to the Rome Statute, the US abstained from Resolution 1593, which referred the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan to the ICC and required all states to co-operate fully. It marked the first time the Council had referred a

situation to the Court, and also compelled a country to cooperate with it. The United States abstained from voting because there were no provisions in place to protect the jurisdictional sovereignty for states not party to the Rome Statute. U.S. policy, however, changed drastically in the six intervening years. The most likely explanation for the change in policy is the change from the Bush administration to the Obama administration in 2008. Since 2008, the United States has been much more open to the ICC – even sending an observer party to the ICC Review Conferences in 2009 and 2010. The biggest change in policy, however, was when the US voted in favor of resolution 1970 in February 2011. It condemned the alleged crimes against humanity that General Al-Gadhafi had perpetrated in the course of the Libyan Civil War, and imposed a series of international sanctions in response. Furthermore, the US openly stated its support for the full implementation of the resolution, without any mention of jurisdictional concerns.

4.2 Lens Used by the United States

In order to determine the lens that the United States operates under in the Security Council, it is imperative to define the US's identity on the world stage. At the time of the veto, the US primarily operated under the lens of absolute national security and sovereignty. The lens was so singularly focused due to the ongoing war in Iraq, and the administration was concerned that any support for the ICC could be used against the United States if any American citizens were accused of crimes punishable by the Rome Statute. Such a move is not the first time a lens along these lines has been employed; often the United States is expecting to violate the rules they implemented in order to guarantee they would be exempted from institutional enforcement.⁷

Despite the use of this lens, the US regularly identifies itself as a leader “in the struggle for international justice and accountability for war crimes”, and “a major guarantor of peace and security around the globe.”⁸ When addressing their concerns of the jurisdiction of the ICC, the United States takes actions that would best protect jurisdictional sovereignty. In other words, because they identify as a state with strong sovereignty interests, they will always act to maintain independence from all international judicial structures.

However, their dedication to international peacekeeping missions allows for more flexibility in compromise in resolutions dealing with the ICC and American peacekeeping troops. If the United States only identified with its jurisdictional sovereignty they would have refused the compromises made in resolutions 1422/2487 and 1497. It is the conflicting interests of the state that create its identity, and therefore, the lens it operates under.

4.3 Analysis

Despite the fact that the other permanent four members of the Security Council did not agree with the US's reasoning for using the veto, they acknowledged the US's right to utilize the veto when it was appropriate given their lens. In order to allow the use of the veto as a norm, as well as an exercise of sovereign entitlement, states must respect the use of the veto even when in disagreement in order for the veto to remain a status equalizer. Such an allowance is made because sovereignty is inexplicably linked to the state's security; it provides a basis for the independence and security of the state. Moreover, because sovereignty only exists if all states agree to recognize it, the mutual understandings and expectations create a community, since these identities are all relational.⁹ This agreement between the P5 members is what allows the United States to push a narrower agenda.

This norm is reaffirmed time and again in resolutions dealing with the ICC and peacekeeping troops. In the meeting records concerning this subject, all four members make a point to articulate their understanding, or respect, of the US's position, regardless of their own position on the matter. The precise verbalization of their respect is necessary in order to maintain the status quo of the veto power. If one of the P5 were to voice their lack of support publicly, we would see a return to Cold War style power politics wherein all the permanent members would veto any resolutions that went against their identity in order to maintain a sense of security in the international community. In order to allow post-Cold War principles to ring true, all permanent members are forced to recognize each other's sovereign identity, and security, in order to uphold the status quo.

5. Russia and Syria

5.1 Background

According to Elvin Aghayev, the relationship between Russia and Syria began just before Syria's declaration of independence. They signed an agreement on 10 February 1946 that established their diplomatic and political relationship. At the height of the Cold War, in 1950, Russia and Syria signed a non-aggression pact. This relationship was further strengthened when Hafez Assad made his first visit as leader of Syria to Moscow. Not only did Assad recognize the importance of Russia to Syria, but he also worked to make their ties stronger. Assad understood that both Syria and Russia had much to gain through the continuation of this relationship. In 1980, the two signed a treaty of amity and cooperation. Later Russia, under the power of Gorbachev, began a relationship with Israel. This harmed their diplomatic relationship, but their economic and military ties continued. Later when Putin was in office he began to rebuild this relationship by putting an emphasis on the importance of Syria to Russia.¹⁰

Today Russia is taking a strong position in favor of the Syrian government as can be seen through their action at the United Nations. Most recently on 4 February 2012, Russia, along with China, vetoed Security Council draft resolution SC/10536 that condemned the attack of the Syrian Government on its own citizens. Russia has also been highly influential in Security Council resolution S/RES/2118 (2013) that calls for the removal of all chemical weapons from Syria. During the drafting of this resolution, the United States threatened military force, which Russia is staunchly opposed to. However, Russia was most concerned that the resolution implemented Article 7 of the Charter (1945) that pertains to "Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression." Eventually, Russia and the United States were able to find common ground on wording, and the resolution was adopted on 27 September 2013.

Finally, it is important to note that Syria and Russia have many of the same interests; this is another reason why this relationship is so important to both countries. Both states are concerned with excessive Western influence in international disputes as well as in the action of the United Nations. They both have experienced a loss of territory in past years, and both fear the threat of radicals. For these reasons they can both understand where the other is coming from and work to support both of their identities at the United Nations.

5.2 Lens Used by Russia

Each country acts in agreement to their identity according to the constructivist theory. It appears that Russia considers Syria as part of its identity because of how strongly it supports Syria in the Security Council, but this assumption would be to not fully understand Russia. While Russia does support Syria, it, like most countries, is most concerned for itself above any other. The lens that Russia is using which has created its alliance to Syria is that they feel vulnerable compared to the other permanent five members of the Security Council. Therefore, they do not allow any P5 states to have control over another. Charap explains how Russia is driven by its understanding that it is losing power in the international community. For this reason, Russia has begun to be concerned of not only its influence in the United Nations, but also its influence in governing how certain countries are run. For example, Russia is strongly against any action of the Security Council that could lead to the removal of a government. It would seem that a situation such as this would not be of concern to Russia and therefore it would not be categorized as part of its lens, but Charap would argue the opposite. Russia is aware that they are not the powerful state they once were, and they have seen what happens to countries that do not have power among the international community. More specifically they have witnessed how the United States has worked to remove governments when acting through the United Nations. It has become a trend in the Security Council to call for humanitarian intervention in a conflict state, and consequently the ruling government is later removed. This trend explains why Russia is hesitant to allow humanitarian intervention into countries and further why Russia is not a strong supporter of the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine.¹¹

Russia's concern over intervention and its desire to be a core country in the international realm has become evident in the Security Council. In the post-Cold War era, Russia is faced with the fact that it is not the powerful country that it once was, and it feels the need to exercise power in any way it can. Russia's usage of the veto on matters of intervention shows to the rest of the P5, specifically the Western hegemony, that it does hold a position of significant power. Utilizing their veto power would seem the ideal way to exert power as they did during the Cold war, although the opposite proves true. They do not have the power to use the veto as they once did without suffering real repercussions from the rest of the international community. When looking at Security Council

Resolution S/RES/2118 (2013) it is evident how Russia is a strong supporter of Syria when the matter of intervention is on the table. When Russia was concerned that the United States would intervene in Syria, they threatened to veto the resolution. After Article 7 of the Charter was removed, Russia agreed to the resolution. Russia will support Syria as long as what it wants (non-intervention) is achieved in the Security Council.

5.3 Analysis

After reviewing Russia and Syria's relationship, it is clear that Russia is using Syria to garner power in the international community and deter the implementation of any language about intervention, which can be defined as their red line. By having a connection to Syria, Russia is maintaining a presence in the Middle East while also fighting for its identity. While the economic and military relationship that these two countries have is important, it is imperative to note what lies underneath it. Russia has built their economic and military connection in order to gain the trust of Syria. Syria in turn becomes a stronger state in the Middle East who can stand against the Western influenced of states in the region. It should be noted that this relationship goes both ways and Syria is acting upon its own vulnerabilities, because they have agreed to an alliance with Russia, but this is a matter for future work.

While this concept of Russian vulnerability is not what they portray as the rationale for their connection to Syria, it is one that can explain their actions and non-actions in the United Nations. In order to suppress their vulnerabilities, they must support other countries around the world that share these same concerns. As a result, Russia supports not only Syria, but also any other country where there has been any threat of external intervention. For this reason the relationship with Syria will continue as long as Russia feels the threat of intervention is a possibility in the United Nations. Russia is still playing by the Pre-Cold War framework, which is one of strategy and distrust. This framework entailed a strong stance in favor of unconditional sovereignty and continued use of the veto on humanitarian draft resolutions. The Secretary Generals of the United Nations believe that it is time for the United Nations to become an organization of peace rather than a field where countries can play their games of power, as was done during the Cold War. This new focus of the United Nations is not desirable to Russia because this is one of the last venues in the world where Russia has the power because of their veto. During the Cold War, Russia used the United Nations as a stage to show off their power to the rest of the world. These sorts of actions were allowed by the other P5, but since the Cold War, these norms have changed, and these behaviors are now unacceptable. If Russia has any interest in agreeing with the Secretary Generals they would then need to avoid using their veto when the matter of humanitarian intervention was brought to the table. To do so would result in Russia releasing more of the power they once had, but it would also allow for new norms of the Post-Cold War era.

6. The US and Israel

6.1 Background

There are many theories in place in order to describe the relationship between Israel and the United States. For example, some have attributed it to the strong Israeli lobby in the US and others believe this has stemmed from a strategic play by the United States. This paper will go on to express a relationship based on strategy, by both Israel and the United States. This alliance has been one of complications, controversy and commitment; all of which are results of a constructivist framework. The relationship between the United States and Israel was not always as strong as it has become today. Over the years Israel has sought a state who could offer them military assistance and the United States wanted a hand in the Middle East. It took many years of disagreement between these countries before their interests aligned and they were able to build a special relationship. Each President of the United States has brought his own beliefs of how the Middle East should be dealt with into the oval office, consequently having a great effect on the US-Israeli relationship.

Beginning in the 1940s, the United States felt that an alliance to a weak Israel could harm their international policies. In the early 1950s, Israel began to reach out to the United States in order to cultivate a military relationship. Israel offered the United States various proposals in exchange for arms to no avail. At this time, the main goal of the United States was to deter any alliances with the Soviet Union. The Kennedy Administration began to remold the relationship with Israel and saw them as a way to counteract the growing Soviet influence in the Middle East. Under the Johnson Administration, Israel was becoming more comfortable with their relationship with the U.S.; they agreed to support U.S. interests, and freeze their nuclear development, in exchange for more weaponry. The United

States had a growing military presence in the Middle East in order to offset the Soviet Union, and Israel had a growing military and economic base, which gave them more legitimacy in the Middle East.

U.S. policy towards Israel started to take a new direction under the Carter Administration. President Carter wanted to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question rather than perpetuate it. Carter knew that other states in the Middle East could be influential to the US. Israeli support continued under President Regan, but began to change under President George H. W. Bush. Bush wanted to focus U.S. attention to other Middle Eastern states, and did not feel that the Israel required as much support.

The Clinton Administration echoed much of the Carter Administration's policy goals. The biggest difference, however, was that under Clinton, the Cold War ended. The Cold War had dictated U.S. action from the 1940s up until that point, and now the U.S. no longer needed to focus on minimizing Soviet power. For these reasons, it was now in the United States' interest to foster peace in the Middle East Clinton was able to work closely with Yitzhak Rabin and this led to the Oslo Accords (1993)¹². In the past year, the Obama Administration has renewed effort to establish a peace plan for Israel and Palestine. The closed-door peace talks of 2013-2014, managed by Secretary of State John Kerry, had great promise for success but were suspended in April of 2014.

6.2 Lens

During the Cold War period (1950-1998), the United States rationalized their actions in the Security Council through the lens of protecting Israel from unwarranted aggression. They used this 'Cold War mindset' as the basis for its red line in deliberations, and ultimately as its justification for using the veto power as a way to maintain the status quo with the USSR. When the USSR began cultivating its own spheres of influence in the Middle East, namely within Afghanistan and Syria, the United States' security interests in the region were threatened. As the US was working under a protectionist lens, the USSR's change in behavior, and consequently the move from previously constructed norms, changed the 'rules' of expected behavior in the Security Council.¹³ In order for the US to maintain the previous status quo after the norms were altered, they were forced to adopt a new red line lens under which to operate.¹⁴ As a result, the US brought Israel in under its own sphere of influence to stabilize the status quo, re-establish the norms in Security Council behavior, and create a more permanent U.S. security outpost in the region. From then on, the U.S. vetoed, or abstained from voting on in rare cases, any resolution that perpetuated the trend of unbalanced aggression towards Israel. This behavior stemmed from newly established norms that required the US to cultivate and protect their spheres of influence in order to maintain the status quo within international institutions such as the Security Council when enforcing American hegemony in the Middle East.

In the post-Cold War era, the U.S. softened its red line and accompanying lens. The first change in behavior was in 1999 with the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords were a turning point in the evolution of the US's lens with the acknowledgement that the Israelis did have to cede some ground in order to gain a favorable outcome. By deviating from the previously accepted behaviors, the U.S. revised norms under which the Security Council operated in order to maintain the status quo. This deviation reached its most comprehensive point when President Obama sent Secretary Kerry to Israel to restart peace talks. The change in normative practice establishes the change in the lens through which the US sees Israel. Instead of utilizing Israel as a way to enhance security interests in the Middle East against the USSR, the U.S. now views Israel as a liability to their status as a global hegemon. Therefore, this push by the U.S. to create a final peace plan would be the last move in aiding Israel under its previous Cold War lens.

6.3 Analysis

As opposed to U.S. motives for its Cold War lens, which were solely based on national security interests, there are several factors at play for a change in behavior in their post-Cold War lens. Changing public opinion, especially among the younger generation of American Jews coming of age now, however minute in factoring into a change in behavior, still plays a role in the administration's decision to allocate resources to the issue. A more prominent factor in the move to a more flexible lens is the change for the U.S.'s need for an absolute ally in the Middle East as a way to maintain a sphere of influence against the USSR/Russia. Moreover, it is becoming detrimental to U.S. interest in the region to remain an unwavering supporter for Israel when Israeli actions are drawing more and more condemnation from the international community. Finally, the 'Cold War mentality' within the bureaucracies of the American government is beginning to be phased out as older staffers who have held their posts since the late 1980s are retiring and being replaced.

The end of the Cold War did not so much signify a shift in the United States' policymaking, but rather signified only another phase in the evolution of U.S. interest and strategic opportunities in the Middle East. The United States

has changing commitments when it comes to this region and the current desire to find peace is based on current interests. When “pro-peace” or “United Nations-friendly” policy shifts emerge, they tend to be unrelated to the spirit and intention of the UN reform agenda. When U.S. interests do line up with that agenda, they do so only by coincidence rather than by sustained commitment.

7. Conclusion:

In order for the United Nations to move forward the Permanent Five Members of the Security Council must be willing to start making compromises on their red lines. There will need to be a change of mentality and the P5 need to see the overall goals of the United Nations and begin putting these ahead of their red lines. Now, their red lines constrict these States, greatly limiting the power and credibility of the Security Council. A vital aspect of this change in mentality will come from a reformed concept of sovereignty. States will need to understand that being a sovereign entity in the 21st century also entails a responsibility to protect lives. In order to establish this new mentality, the United Nations needs to show that the benefits of a transition outweigh the deadlock of abiding by outdated Cold-War principles. States will need to see the importance of leaving behind their red lines.

The United Nations has been a playing ground for the P5 red lines rather than a body that establishes bonding and lasting solutions. There are various ways to motivate the P5 members to move towards the Post-Cold War principles. These transitional concepts for the Security Council could be considered the Opportunities to Legitimize the United Nations. Some examples are as follows:

- An office that identifies the contradictions of Cold War policies and Post-Cold War principles. This office would create a mechanism of accountability in the Security Council. States have voted in favor of the Responsibility to Protect as well as speak openly in agreement of the Secretary General reports and yet they still behave in an outdated means of diplomacy.
- Institutionalize the new norms being called for in R2P and the SG reports through Security Council reform. This could be accomplished by establishing more open meetings or for the P5 to start adopting the new norms on the use of the veto. In order to implement any of these suggestions, the P5 will need to be willing to compromise or give up their red lines.
- States also need to have an avenue where they could discuss their red lines before a vote is taken in the Security Council. States will need to explain fully how they are being directly affected by the draft resolution that is on the table. This will allow those in the room to see what it is that States desire, and this could lead to greater transparency between the States. This transparency will allow States to begin understanding what other States red lines are. Over time this “Red Line Review” will cause these red lines to loosen over time because States cannot be required to hold on to them forever, especially when the others in the room know about them.

In order for either of these suggestions to be brought to life, States need to understand that accepting Post-Cold War principles is in their self-interest. Each one of the case studies presented in this paper has something to gain by accepting these new norms. The next step is for these States to recognize the benefits of leaving their red lines behind and begin to allow the Security Council to operate as it is expected to under its Charter.

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¹ Mr. Dylan Williams at J Street, Dr. Ziad Asali and Mr. Ghaith al-Omari at the American Task Force on Palestine, and an expert on the Middle East within the United Nations who asked to remain anonymous

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