

**Book Review:**

***“The United States and the Security Council: Collective Security Since the Cold War”***. By: **Brian Frederking**. Published by: **Routledge**, Published in the year **2007**

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**Abstract**

*There is a Security-Hierarchy Paradox existing in the Global Security Order. Though security-hierarchy is only a paradox, however, it is taken ‘as if to be’ essential for ensuring security in a “world of anarchy and insecurity”. The United Nations’ Security Council (UNSC) has a major role to play in ensuring the international security order. However, the United States of America maintains the dominant position in the global security-hierarchy structure thus in the Security Council of the United Nations. Though the author understands the need of a ‘global effort’ and a ‘collective responsibility’ to ensure global security, he however, ultimately tries to legitimise the dominancy of the United States though in his scholarly fashion by taking the ‘arguments of the idea of security-hierarchy paradox’ into pluses.*

**1. Introduction:**

**“The United States and the Security Council: Collective Security since the Cold War”** is a scholarly work by **Brian Frederking**, who has been an Associate Professor of Political Science at McKendree College at Illinois, USA. The author starts with analysis of the global security with the constructivist approach particularly the rule oriented constructivist theory on the rules of global security with special reference to the major Security Council disputes since the cold war. He draws two important arguments of the rule oriented constructivism. First, the structures governing world politics are primarily social rather than material and secondly, communicatively rational agents use speech acts to construct the social rules governing the world politics.

**2. Kinds of security arrangements:**

There are three kinds of security arrangements at the international level to ensure collective security what he calls the “*security-hierarchy-paradox*” and draws the advantages and disadvantages associated with them. These are the *pure*, *procedural*, and

*hegemonic* types of collective security. While, the *pure collective security* emphasises on wide spread participation in formulating the rules, the *procedural collective security* emphasises on the Security Council's authorisation which tends to particularly prevent the proliferation rules. He argues the best one is to be pure collective security; where there is lower level hierarchy than other collective security arrangements and everyone is subject to punishment for violating the rules. Procedural collective security which is seen to be centred at the "political obligations of the great powers, only protects the interests of the great powers without holding them accountable to community rules", which often lead to tension between the great powers and the other states.

The other one which is most hierarchical in the collective security arrangement is the *hegemonic collective security* arrangement. What he finds that the Most of the post-cold war politics is captured by disputes between advocates of these various forms of collective security. These disputes are really about the relative levels of hierarchy in these three forms of collective security.

### **3. Critiques: different schools of thought:**

In furtherance of his work, the author analyses the critiques to different schools of thought esp. the critique by the *realists* and the *radicalists*. He underlines that, the *realists'* critiques of collective security argue for the *pure collective security*, *radicals'* critique collective security argues in favour of procedural or hegemonic collective security. While the *realists* critique is that "the collective security is not in the interest of the great powers", *radical* critique is that "the collective security is a tool of the great powers to impose their interests on the rest of the world".

Further, while the *realists* see the Security Council as an *often insignificant institution*, the *radicals* see it as a powerful tool to western imperialism- which protects the narrow interests of the permanent members of the Security Council and their allies. More to this, *radical criticism* is that the UN perpetuates the western projects to export liberal international agenda into the developing world; as it is playing a role to validate the liberal ideas like free trade, international laws and collective security, which *in fact* serves the western interest sans the idea of *collective security* in real sense.

#### **4. Multipolar Security Order vs. the Veto Power in the UN Security Council:**

At the second stride of his work, the author argues today's world to be characterised by *multipolarity and interdependence*, while concerning the 'ought to be' role of *Security Council* in ensuring the emerging international security order. However, he finds that the dominating countries and permanent veto powers in the SC like France, China, Russia to be practicing *procedural collective security* for their own interest so as get the dominating share in the international system, while the countries like United Kingdom and United States of America are still to be playing to the *hegemonic security practices*. The Author brains the complex power game where, the Chinese and Russian *State Policy* of international security are found to be suspicious of the USA and, though France remains complementary to United States interests, the role of France like those of China and Russia remain on trying to minimise the importance of the United States global military dominance.

So, the disagreement among the above dominant patterns of advocating international security limits the expectation from the Security Council though it remains the primary institution dealing with the global security. Though Security Council matters in terms of achieving the collective international security in the world, and though there is a high-importance of the SC in administering the things like *peace keeping, economic sanctions*, and the *use of force* etc. for the sole aim of ensuring global security; the *veto powers* have often disagreed on its nature and function.

#### **5. Collective Security and Role of UNSC:**

Subsequently, the author progress to the role of "the Security Council in peace keeping" and extensively deals from the perspective of its evolution to the different phases and complexities associated with *peace-keeping operations*. Here, the author tries to rate its success by ranking them with cases by taking examples of the countries like Iran, Iraq Afghanistan, Namibia, Angola, and etc. and special case studies of the countries like Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. What he wants to maintain that, "peace keeping is less hierarchical than the collective security measures", because "it is rooted in the traditional norms of state sovereignty and not-intervention"; so, *for the reason that* Peace operate on the principle of consent, neutrality, self-defence.

However, it is the SC which generally authorises peace keeping mission, *only when* the relevant parties agree that a third party will help in resolving their conflict.

#### **6. Apartisan Security Council or USA Dominance?:**

Further, the author moves to the contextual analysis on the role Security Council in peace keeping and dominant role played by the USA in these vital world affairs. Another important aspect he deals with is: the *use of force* authorised by the Security Council for “building international peace, and guarantee international security”. Here, the examples of examples of cases like, Iraq (1990), Yugoslavia (1993) and Haiti (1994) etc. have been drawn. But, he indicates the dominance of USA in the UNSC by arguing that “what you talk of security is nothing-but it is simply United States’ centric affairs necessarily influencing the people of the other world”. He traces the *Economic Sanctions* as a tool of *collective security* enforcement, where the dominance played by USA is well-illustrated.

So there have been several instances, where USA has imposed many *Economic Sanctions* showing more hierarchy in the *world power politics* preferred by it of its own; though at other hand, the dispute over the “pattern of imposition of sanctions” by the *veto powers* shows the *security hierarchy paradox*. Contextually, he gives good examples of countries like Iraq, Libya, in which sanctions were coercive and based on hierarchical collective security mechanism and examines whether the United States of America abused its authority to achieve its illegitimate ends.

#### **7. Unilateralism or a Broadened UNSC?:**

Again, he moves to the further side by bringing strong arguments while posing serious questions on the *American unilateralism*, *what in* other sense leads to international insecurity. Perhaps, it is felt to be appropriate to be examined with the tools of constructivists’ arguments, that whether ‘legitimacy leads to order or vice versa’; and further concluded that: if the former is to be right, then the USA has to go by international norms and refrain from asserting to *too much* hierarchy. Here, the author is found to be sceptical about whether the hierarchal structure and interest led by five veto powers will allow the expansion of the Security Council so that the world get a “broadened, legitimate and effective global security rules and framework”.

**8. Arguing in the context of Security-Hierarchy Paradox:**

The nations of the world have established the collective security measures under the United Nations and esp. the Security Council under the United Nations for complete prevention and removal of threats and for establishing peace. As an approach towards concluding his arguments, the author discusses the structure and function of Security Council in relation to maintaining international peace and security. What he pragmatically argues that hierarchy exists in the international security order, because: first, the political decisions made by the veto powers legally bind others; and second, the other countries cannot stand in front of the US military might and force it to go by the global security norms. Therefore, he suggests that, it is the USA, which is required to follow the norms voluntarily, so that it can make others to follow the same path.

He deals with the major issues of contemporary world politics and international security, connecting those to the security-hierarchy paradox illustrations. Various chapters of his work which deal with the issues of *Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destructions*, the Issues of *Human Rights and Terrorism* have been narrated from the perspective of the role of Security Council and the role of the United States in dealing with them. Here, he takes the case of constructing the rules against the proliferation of the WMD to be one of the examples of the Security-hierarchy paradox.

What, *in fact*, he tries to argue that: the American monopoly, the discriminatory policy of USA determined by its own interests may actually be counter-productive to the legitimacy of the American hegemony in the hierarchical international arrangement of the international security order. He draws the example of India, Israel, Iran, North Korea and Iraq and their orientation towards nuclearisation in different contextual analysis, relates them to different international norms like NPT and CTBT and examines the critical and complex role of the part of the United states dealing differently with these individual cases, which he feels, might encourage the further escalation of nuclearisation in the world.

**9. Methodology:**

The methodology followed in this work is found to be based on the combination of the theoretical debate and the comparative methods of analysis where the author draws the

constructivists' arguments and the critiques of the Realists' & Radicalsists' understanding of *global security order*. The author is found to be seeing the entire security debate entangled with the *security–hierarchy paradox*, where he finds four types of security hierarchy paradox models and traces their implications and relationship with the security discourses and practices in different parts of the world esp. by the dominant countries with veto power status in the Security Council of the United Nations.

#### **10. Major Criticism:**

Though, the entire analysis seems to be very scholarly with good theoretical comparisons & analyses; but it does not seem to be prescriptive. The author does not prescribe the alternative options, which may ensure better *collective security* practices, and also do not clearly find any way-out to break the *security-hierarchy-paradox* order. He does not talk of the other challenges to security issues as Human Security, the democratisation of Security Council, and 'in what way' the agenda of the Security Council including that of the United States would be inclusive to *take on* these new challenges to the *global security*.

What he tries to say that in order to achieve the international security there is need of hierarchical structure and very scholarly trying to legitimise the United States interest at the tough of the structure. Though he finds multilateralism is a must to achieve global security in a world of security-interdependence, he limits the boundary of multilateralism by only including the countries like China and Russia in his security-hierarchy debate which in fact to ensure the top position of the US in the hierarchical order. So, he prescribes that USA should work within the sphere of security hierarchical structure and maintain its dominancy with in it. U.S.A. should not maintain its dominancy by coming out of the security hierarchical structure like the Security Council and want that the USA to re-examine its excessive realistic orientation and understand the importance of mutuality and international cooperation in dealing with the global security threats.

The thing is that *collective security* cannot be ensured by merely believing and legitimising the agenda of some powerful dominating and hegemonic countries and countries with expansionist records and colonial pasts. Neither has he talked of the role

of the second world and the third world or an alternative world order. His entire analyses show that as if the USA and some of the superpower have got all the legitimate rights to impose their whims defined by their own interests, whom they term as the international norms, and the countries of the Third World are only subjects to those norms and regulations.