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## EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF EUROPEAN UNION (EU) UNDER LIBERALIST INTERGOVERNMENTALISM

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The paper examines the nature of European integration using the European Union as a case study. The paper adopts liberal intergovernmentalism to explain European integration. Secondary methodology is being adopted to examine the trend of such cooperation and interdependence. Findings show that, liberal intergovernmentalism allows the European states the freedom to interact politically, economically and socially. The paper concludes that, the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism best explain the European integration especially in dealing with freedom to interact among member-states. The paper recommends aiding some European bankrupt states such as Greece, limiting military campaigns by NATO among others.

Keywords: regional; integration; European; union; liberal; intergovernmentalism

#### INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic partnership that represents a unique form of cooperation among sovereign countries. The Union is the latest stage in a process of integration begun after World War II initially by six Western European Countries, to foster independence and make another war unthinkable. Today, the European Union (EU) is composed of 28 member states, including most of the Countries of central and Eastern Europe, and has helped to promote peace, stability and economic prosperity throughout the European continent.

Theories of integration have mainly been developed to explain European Integration. Europe was the region of the World, where regional integration started in 1950s with European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. Ernest Haas theorized this in "*The Uniting of Europe*" (1958). The main theoretical contribution was the concept of spill-over. Later Lindberg used this concept to study the early years of the European Economic Community (EEC) which started its existence in 1958 (Lindberg, 1963). These early theories are usually referred to as neo-functionalist theories.

The integration process in Europe experienced a crisis in the mid-1960, when general de Gaulle instructed his ministers not to take part in meetings of the EEC Council. In the Luxembourg compromise in January 1966 the then six members of the European Communities (EC) agreed to disagree. The French insisted that decisions by a Qualifies Majority Vote (QMV) could not take place, when a member state opposed a decision because of important national interests. Some neo-functionalist tried to modify the theory to take account of the events in Europe in the mid-60s. This included Lindberg and Scheingold in Europe's Would-be-policy (1970). But many students of European integration now stressed the 'Logic of diversity' and the more intergovernmental aspects of EC (e.g Hoffmann, 1965, P. Taylor, 1983).

Later in the 1990s Andrew Moravcsik developed 'liberal inter-governmentalism' to explain the process of integration in Europe, suggesting the combination of a liberal theory to explain national preference formation and an inter-governmental theory of inter-state bargaining to explain substantive outcomes (Moravcsik, 1991, 1993). In his book 'The Choice for Europe' he added a third stage institutional choice, where pooling and delegation of sovereignty was seen as a way to create 'credible commitment' (Moravcsik, 1998). During the 1990s, in parallel with the international relations (IR) debate concerning rationalist approaches vs. social constructivist approaches, it was also claimed that we need a social constructivist approach to understand European Integration (e.g. Checked, 1999; Marcussen et al; 1999 and Sheriff, 2013).

When early theories of integration were developed there was much discussion in the literature on how to define the concept. It was for instance discussed whether integration refers to a process or to an end product. Of course the two can be combined. Integration could then be defined as a process that leads to a certain state of affairs. Karl Deutsch, for instance, defined integration as "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population". When a group of people or states have been integrated this way they constitute a "security community" 'Amalgamation', on the other hand, was used by Deutsch and his collaborators to refers to "The formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government" (Karl W. Deutsch et al; 1957: 5-6).

Early efforts to study regional integration, as mentioned, mainly concentrated on the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC). In Ernest Haas classical study of the ECSC, 'The Uniting of Europe', integration was defined as:

The process whereby political actors in several district national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectation and political activities to a new center whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national state (Haas, 1958: 16)

In Leon Lindberg's study of the early EEC, 'the political Dynamics of European Economic Integration was defined without reference to an end point:

Political integration is the process whereby nation forgo the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decision or to delegate the decision- making process to new central organs; and the process whereby political actors in several district settings are persuade to shift their expectation and political activities to a new centre (Lindberg, 1963:6)

Lindberg considered his own concept of integration more cautious than that of Haas. Central to it was "the development of devices and processes for arriving at collective decisions by means other than autonomous action by national government". Some concepts of integration applied in studies of the European Communities (EC) may be too specific if we want to conduct comparative studies. Clearly, the process of European Integration within the EC has gone further than integration in other regional setting. A relatively loose definition may be better for comparative studies. However, it seems fair to say that collective decision-making is an important aspect of all regional integration efforts. This collective decision-making can cover a varying number of functional areas (scope). The decision-making process can be more or less efficient and the common institution established can be more or less adequate (institutional capacity).

What then explains changes in functional scope and institutional capacity of regional integration efforts? This is the central question in integration theory of the (EU). Ernest Haas developed the concept of spill-over, which was also applied by Lindberg. According to Lindberg,

Spill-over refers to a situation in which a given action, related to a specific goal creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further action, which in turn create a further condition and a need for more action, and so forth (Lindberg, 1963: 10)





Haas saw the EEC as spill-over from the ECSC. He talked about "the expensive logic of sector integration." He predicted that the process would continue in the EEC. Liberalization of trade within the customs union would lead to harmonization of general policies and eventually spill-over into political areas and lead to the creation of some kind of political community (Haas, 1958: 311)

#### LIBERAL INTER-GOVERNMENTALISM

Andrew Moravcsik's liberal inter-governmentalism (Moravcsik, 1993 and 1998) has become an important reference point for most recent studies of integration and more importantly the integration of Europe (EU), especially the big decisions he refers to as 'grand bargain. The framework includes three phases: national preference formation, inter-state bargaining and institutional choice

Table 1. **International Cooperation: A Rationalist Frame Work** 

Stages	National preference	Inter-state	Institutional choice
	stage	Bargaining	
Alternative independent	What is the source of	Given national	Given substantive
variables underlying each	underlying national	preferences what	agreement, what explains
stage	preference?	explains the efficiency	the transfer of sovereignty
		outcomes of inter-state	to international studies?
		bargaining?	
	Economic interest or	Asymmetrical	Federalist ideology or
	geopolitical interest?	independence or	centralized technocratic
		supranational	management or more
		entrepreneurship?	credible commitment?
Observed outcomes at each	Underlying national	Agreements on	Choice to delegate
stage	preferences	substance	decision-making in inter-
			national institutions.

Source: Moravcsik (1998: 24)

The first stage concerns national preference formation. The central question asked by Moravcsik here is whether it is economic or geopolitical interests that dominate when national preference of member states are formed. The answer based on major decisions in the European Integration process was that economic interests are the most important.

The second stage interstate bargaining, seeks to explain the efficiency and distributional outcomes of EU negotiations. Here two possible explanations of agreements on substance are contrasted: asymmetrical



interdependence has most explanatory power. Some member states have more at stake than others. They will work harder to influence outcomes and may have to give more concessions. On the other hand, the role of the community actors, first of all the European commission is not considered very important. According to Moravcsik three factors are likely to determine the outcomes of interstate bargaining:

- 1. The value unilateral policy alternative, alternatives, relative to the status, quo, which underlies 'credible threats to veto'
- 2. The value of alternative coalitions, which underlies 'credible threats to exclude'
- 3. The opportunities for issue linkage or side-payment which underlie "package deals" (Moravcsik, 1998: 63)

Summarizing the discussion of the first point Moravcsik says: "those who move intensely desire the benefits of cooperation will concede more to get them". Summarizing the discussion of the second point he says: "the credible threat of exclusion is likely to generate an even more powerful pressure on recalcitrant states than does the threat of non-agreement." In respect to linkage strategies Moravcsik observes that the major constraint lies in their domestic distributional implication. Concessions often create domestic losers. This will limit the use of package deal. The third stage, institutional choice, explores the reasons why states choose to delegate or pool decision-making in international institutions. Delegation in the EC/EU case refers to the powers given to the commission and the European Court of Justice. Pooling of sovereignty refers to the application of majority decisions in the council, in practice mostly Qualified Majority Voting's (QMV). To explain institution-national choice Moravcsik contrasts three possible explanations: federalist ideology, centralized technocratic management or more credible commitments. Pooling and delegation is a rational strategy adopted by the member states to precommit government to future decisions, to encourage future cooperation and to improve future implementation of agreements.

Using theories of decision-making, negotiation and international political economy in general in an elegant combination has allowed Moravcsik to construct a parsimonious framework for the study of international cooperation including "grand bargains" like European Union (EU) treaty reforms. Critiques of liberal intergovernmentalism rational choice institutions assume that actors have fixed preferences and that they behave instrumentally to maximize the attainment of preferences. "They tend to see politics as a series of collective action dilemmas" emphasize the role of strategic interaction in the determination of political outcomes." And, they explain the existence of institutions by reference to the functions those institutions perform (Hall and Taylor,

1996,: 944-945). Another well-known student of European integration that would fit into this group is Mark Pollack (2003).

However, Moravcsik does not assign much importance to community institutions in the grand bargain... at first sight it can look surprising that an approach called liberal inter-governmentalism which includes choice as an important part should end up assigning a relatively unimportant role to institutions in major EU reforms. After all, credible commitments are said to require pooling and delegation of sovereignty. But, in the process of making the grand bargain in the history of European integration the EC institutions were not assigned an important role. Those Bargains were made by the member states. However, when it comes to implementation of the bargains the community institutions are considered important. If we refer to Peterson's three levels of analysis (Peterson, 1995), we could say that Moravcsik is an inter-governmentalist when he studies history-making decisions at the supra systemic level, but admits of an important role for EC institutions at the systemic level of policy-setting as well as assuring implementation.

Institution certainly assigns great importance to EC institutions in day-to-day EC/EU politics (HIX, 1999). The European Commission possess legislation. The EC institutions, including the commission and the European court of justice (ECJ), get involved with surveillance and enforcement of decisions. The commission issue reports on implementation of directives. Member states that do not implement will be shamed at first and face the prospects of an ECJ infringement case later. There is also institutionalist who argues that EC institutions can play an important role in the treaty reforms, which has taken place through IGCs. Derek Beach studied the role of EC institutions in successive reforms from the Single European Act (SEA) in the mid-1980s until the constitutional treaty (Beach, 2005). Based on negotiation literature Beach finds two reasons why leadership may be required in international negotiations including IGCs.

- 1. The first bargaining impediment in complex multi-party negotiations in those parties can have difficulties in finding a mutually acceptable, Pareto-efficient outcome owing to high bargaining costs.
- 2. The second bargaining impediment relates to coordination problems that can prevent the parties from agreeing upon efficient agreement even if there are low bargaining costs.

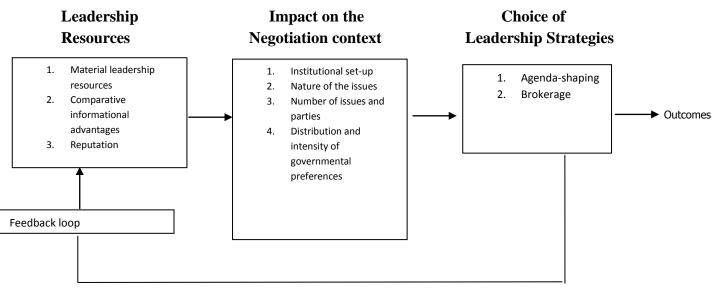
These bargaining problems can be solved if an actor with privileged information steps in and helps the parties get to the Pareto frontier. Leadership can also create a focal point around which agreement can converge. Bargaining cost are often so high that most governments are forced to rely upon the expertise of the council secretariat and commission for legal and substantive knowledge, and assistance in brokering key deals.



When the original European Communities were created there were no preexisting community institution that could play the role of EC Institutions (although the High Authority of the ECSC played a role in the corridors when the latter two communities were created). An inter-governmentalist analysis should therefore be expected to be the way to analyze the creation of the communities as distinguished from their later reforms. But doesn't the initial creation of the ECSC without looking at the role of leadership by Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman and others. Can we explain the creation of the EEC without the leadership roles played by some Benelux leaders, including especially Paul Henri Spaak from Belgium?

Liberal inter-governmentalism, i.eMoravcsik, finds agreement in the grand bargains among states in Europe relatively easy. The states have enough information to find relatively efficient solutions without a political entrepreneur, he argues. "Transaction cost of generating information and ideals are low relative to the benefits of interstate cooperation". National governments have resources to generate information. They can "regardless of sizeser...ve as initiator, mediators and mobilizers". So EC negotiations are likely to be efficient" (Moravcsik, 1998:61). The Moravcsik proposition has been questioned by other institutionalist than Beach. A similar critique has been formulated by Jonas Tallberg in the book' Leadership and Negotiation in the European Union (2006).

FIGURE 1. How leadership by institution matters- a leadership model of European Integration.



**Source:** (Beach, 2005:26)

The model singles out a number of variables that help explain influence, like resources, negotiation context and leadership strategies. Many other institutionalists have developed explicit criticisms of liberal inter-



governmentalism. Institutions are usually divided into three groups: rational choice, historical and sociological. (Hall and Taylor, 1996, and Aspinwall and Schneider, 2001).

Historical institutionalist "tends to have a view of institutional development that emphasizes path dependency and unintended consequences". Institutions structure a nation's response to new challenges (Hall and Taylor, 941-942). An important article suggesting how historical institutionalism can be used to study European Integration was written by Pierson (1996). Pierson puts emphasis on the gaps that emerge in the member states control of the process.

Sociological institutionalist gives a very broad definition of institutions including "not just formal rules, procedures or norms, but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide the frames of meaning guiding human action. Institutions provide cognitive templates that affect identities and preferences. Culture is important. Sociological institutionalists are interested in "what confers 'legitimacy' or 'social appropriateness' on some institutionalist see EU member states are initially rational actors that are in control of the process of integration. In the big decisions the EU institutions do not play a very important role. Historical institutionalists see gaps emerging in the member states' control and attribute more importance to EU institutes. Sociological institutionalist pays attention to values, ideas and identities. An important research question seen from a sociological perspective than this, is that a common European Identity is emerging (Risse, 2004).

A special issue of the 'Journal of European public policy in 2002 raised a number of theoretical issues inspired by historical and sociological institutionalism. Gerda Falkner argued in the introduction that treaty-reform studies should move "beyond formal treaty reform, and ...transcends economic interest and bargaining power (Falknerm2002:1).

This was of course directed toward Moravcsik's approach. Reforms also take place through ECJ decision as well as day-to-day interpretations by the commission and the government. Students of European Union Integration studies should be interested in "agency by EU-level actors" and dynamics such as learning, socialization and incremental institutionalization of policy paradigms at the EU level" she suggested that EU could be studied as three level games, with EU institution forming a third level. "This approach contextualizes member states power and bargaining to see how both are embedded in a dense web of structuring factors, many of which originate from EU-level institutions and procedures. Sociological institutionalists believe that institutions shape preferences. A rationalist approach is sufficient when it comes to understanding preferences.

Criticism from historical and sociological institutionalists goes in different direction. They clearly do not form a coherent theory or model. The closest we get to a clear sociological institutionalist model is the one developed by Berthold Rittberger in his book, bulking of Europe's parliament: democratic representation beyond the nation-state (2005). He formulates the following sociological institutionalist hypothesis concerning the empowerment of European parliament:

"States will create or empower the European parliament (EP) as a response to a perceived lack of resonance between domestically internalized norms of democratic governance and progressive European integration which generates a mis-match between collectively held norms of democratic governance and governance at the EU level (Rittberger, 2005:19).

FIGURE 2: Overview of Rittberger's theoretical argument Pooling and delegation of national Constitutional founding moments 1 sovereignty Trigger s t S t а Pooling and delegation of national Higher level Lower level g sovereignty issues issues Legitimate 2 **Beliefs** n d S Domestic political elite's responses to Outcome t alleviate the legitimacy deficit а g e 3 Normative constraints r d S t g Interaction among EU governments during IGC and institution affect firm

The second and concluding part of this paper presentation would be looking at the workings of the European Union (EU).

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The European Union EU is an international Organization with the following core objectives.

- 1. To attain economic union and enhance a central financial system.
- 2. To consolidate democracy and strengthen its institution based on elected government by universal free and adult suffrage and unrestricted respect for human right.
- 3. To enhance wide range of freedom to ensure full harmonious developments of the human person and society as a whole.
- 4. To strengthen the EU system as economic bloc in order to assert itself successfully into the world economy.
- 5. Establish collective action towards the protection and preservation of the environment in the exploration and exploration of natural resources.
- 6. To setup a new integrated model of regional security based on the reasonable balance of forces, strengthening of civil authority, the overcoming of poverty, protection of lives, sustaining development, fight corruption, drugs and other related crimes.
- 7. To promote a new regional system based on welfarism and economic and social justice for the people of the (EU)
- 8. To achieve economic union and strength
- 9. To promote joint action on issues that affects their collective wellbeing as a unit.

The above objectives can best be explained using Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism which explains the need for governments to freely relate with one another giving rise to a give and take situation.

#### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU**

The member states of the European Union includes: - Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.



#### ORGANS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Hancher and Santer (2012:124) identified the main organs of the European Union (EU) to include among dozens of EU institutions

- 1. European Council
- 2. Council of Ministers
- 3. Commission
- 4. Parliament
- 5. EU Court.

#### **EUROPEAN COUNCIL**

European Council consists of the leader (Prime Minister or President) of each EU member plus the president of the European Commission. By far the most influential institution; its members are the leaders of their respective nationals. Provides broad guidelines for EU policy. They thrash out compromises on sensitive issues: -

- a. Reforms of the major EU policies
- b. The EU's multiyear budget
- **C.** Treaty changes
- d. Final terms of enlargement e.t.c

#### **COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

Usually called by old name council of ministers (now known as "Council of the EU"). It consists of representatives at ministerial level from each member state empowered to commit his/her government. The council is the main decision-making body (almost every EU legislation must be approved by it and responsible for the rectification of treaties and taking very important decisions.

#### THE COMMISSION

European Commission is at the heart of the EU's Institution structure, it is the driving force behind deeper and wider European Integration. It has three main roles: -

- 1. Propose legislation to the council and parliament
- 2. To administer and implement EU's policies



3. To provide surveillance and enforcement of the EU law (guardian of the treaties). Finally it also represents the EU at some international negotiations.

The commission's composition before 2014 enlargement includes one commissioner from each member: extra commission from Big-five (Germany, UK, France, Italy and Spain)

#### **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

The European parliament has two main tasks: -

- 1. Oversees EU institutions especially commission
- 2. It shares legislative power, including budgeting power, with the council and the commission.

#### **EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE**

EU laws and decisions open to interpretation that leads to disputes that cannot be settled by negotiation. Court settles these disputes, especially disputes between member states, between the EU and member states, between EU institutions and between individuals and the EU. EU Court's supranational power highly usually in international organizations it very influential and as a result of its powers, the court has had a major impact on European integration.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EU**

The European has made many successes in different area since its inception till date. This success includes the following: -

- Coordination among member states to address the issues of security and establish a regional security blue print, complementing at the same time national level policies as suggested by Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism.
- 2. Eliminating barriers to trade by consolidating inter-nation commerceof goods and services among member states and none member states.
- 3. Capacity to bargain as a bloc of political, cultural, economics unit. By the virtue of integration.
- 4. Industrial initiative: the completion of the market and the persistent problem of unemployment also stimulated the common industrial policy in a considerable way.



- 5. It also achieved common external tariff and almost complete customs union with free movement of persons capital and services (Beach, Derek and Colette Mazzucelli, 2007:25).
- 6. The use of single currency the "Euro" has helped to stabilize her economy over the years.
- 7. Single market
- 8. A common commercial policy
- 9. A certain minimum federal budget (fiscal federalism)
- 10. A common foreign and security policy and
- 11. A common defense policy etc.

The above gains are explainable with the use of the liberal intergovernmentalism theory that explains the integration of states should link to barriers to enhance effective government or intergovernmental relations at the level community of states.

#### **PROBLEMS OF EU**

Even with all the advancement and achievement as enumerated above, the European Union Community has continued to face serious challenges. These challenges present themselves in the economy, social and political disequilibrium among member state and most recently the Euro zone crisis and refugee/migration crisis and the problem of terrorism which has become a worldwide phenomenon. (Checkel, Jeffey 2015: 64). In recent times the European Union has been faced with serious problems of immigration with the influx of citizens from former soviet states and their former colonies and have long tried to curb this influx. The member states of European Union have tried to halt this problem by agreeing on joint policies that they are trying to implement. They have tried to put pressure on the other member and non-member states of Europe that have been the source of the problem.

The European crisis has been a debate in the front burner since 1999. Nineteen of the EU's 28 member states use a common single currency, the Euro, and are often collectively referred to as "The Eurozone". The gradual introduction of the Euro began in January, 1999 when 11 Euro member states became the first to adopt it and banks and many businesses started using the Euro as a unit of account (Stem, Eric 1981:65).

The "Euro zone crisis" began a sovereign over the previous decade, the Greek government borrowed heavily from international capital markets to pay for its budget and trade deficits. This left Greece vulnerable to shifts in investor confidence. As investors became increasingly nervous in 2009 the government debt was too high amid

the global financial crisis. EU leaders and institutions responded to the crisis and sought to stem its contagion with a variety of policy mechanisms. EU has taken steps over the last five years to strengthen the Euro zone's architecture by an improved fiscal discipline and found a way to muddle through the crisis, thereby given credence to Moravcsik theory of liberal intergovernmentalism of integration which stipulated a loose intergovernmental relation.

Other related problem facing the EU is the issue of security. Kicinger (2004) writes that external threats to security presents far greater problem than most posed internally. To put it simple this is because these threat is terrorism.

Wallstrom (2007) argues that through Europe's policy of passport-free travel is beneficial for business and tourism it allows cross-border terrorists and criminal's freedom of access within the member states. Terrorism is a major issue because innocent people's lives are at stake. Schinder and Houschuld (2004) note that EU as a states are also used as a base to plan and devise terrorist attack. These criminals deploy state of the art resources, have well maintained networks and are capable of resorting to horrific levels of violence. Kincinger (2004) writes that Al Qaeda – an Islamist fundamentalist group formed in the late 1980's and renowned for its terrorist activities – housed logistical cells in the EU member states of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Spain. Therefore, the concentrated effort of the EU to tackle such problems is crucial.

Other problem of the EU includes:

- 1. Unemployment
- 2. Climate change
- 3. Illegal immigrants and prostitution (Schuder and Hauschild, 2004)
- 4. Cross-board crimes etc

Many of the problems facing Europe today can best be explained with the help of liberal inter-governmentalist theory of Movavcsik as the liberalization of inter-governmental relations which cuts across economic, trade, culture etc, has helped to widen the space for much liberalization leading to porosity in inter-governmental relation which has helped to increase the problems of Europe as people or person who ought not to be there in the first place have found themselves there.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion the theory of liberal inter-govevernmalism has best described the integration of Europe. It has to a large extent explained the integration of Europe or the formation of European Union from the stand point of liberty or freedom of association not only at the level of economic but at political and cultural levels. The theory has been used to explain holistically the integration of Europe as a fused entity. It is beyond this paper to try to explain all the treaties

#### RECOMMENDATION

In order to maintain fruitful integration in Europe, the paper recommends the following:One, the European states must consolidate efforts towards aiding some bankrupt economies such as Greece. Two, the United Kingdom should be encouraged to stay within the EU for a stronger cooperation with other European nations. Three, the European states must work to achieve maximum level of security, but must also limit the level of military campaigns, especially against Russia, for peaceful co-existence with others regional groupings.

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