

U.S-RUSSIA RELATIONS: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

AJE Oluwatobi O. & CHIDOZIE Felix

Department of Political Science and International Relations, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The paper examines the cyclical nature of U.S-Russia relations in the 21st century; with special regards to the administration of U.S President Barrack Obama and Russia's President Vladimir Putin. Specifically, the study examines the challenges and implications of confrontation between the two states. It takes the annexation of Crimea as the origin of headlong disagreement in recent time although the work acknowledges that Russia's annexation of Crimea does not constitute the genesis of disagreement in post-cold war relations. In a qualitative manner, the study examines the historical antecedents of U.S-Russia relations and adopts the neo-realist tenets as theoretical guide for approximating the complex realities of U.S Russia relations. Structured interview with expert in the field of international relations particularly those specializing in the study of U.S-Russian relations, alongside documents from official websites of states were engaged. The paper discovers that of all the bonds of bilateral relations, it is the bond of U.S-Russia relations that directly have implications on global security especially because of the threat of nuclear misconception and war. Consequently, the study recommends that, U.S. and Russia must recognise the lasting quality of international politics and create a basis of understanding as such by acknowledging the legitimate interests and concerns of the other.

Keywords: *Russia, Neo-Realism, U.S, structure interview, bilateral relations*

INTRODUCTION

Global security is pivotal for the survival of all and sundry within the international system. Vasconcelos (2009) explains that it is the reality of globalization and multipolarity that allows us speak of global security. It hinges on the preservation and protection of the sanity of the international system; the guarantee that opportunities available at present do not flow away in future; or the absence of fear that moderate conditions available at present do not go extinct. Regrettably, several challenges threaten the continual survival of the international system in recent

Aje & Chidozie

time, ranging from the menace of terrorism, environmental challenges, proliferation of nuclear weapons among others. These challenges which are ubiquitous, call for greater corporation among great powers in order to effectively manage if not holistically resolve (Plekhanov, 2016). Undeniably, the United States and Russia are no exception among the arrays of great powers. Unfortunately, recent incidence shows that U.S.-Russia relations is further away from that constructive relation that many envisaged (ISAB, 2014).

Certainly, areas of confrontations between the two states are more pronounced than areas of cooperation; distrust, suspicion and utmost struggle for power are dominant characteristic of relations between the two states. Although the “reset policy” of Obama’s administration improved the relationship between the two states better than it was before 2008, the 2013 annexation of Crimea, the different views on how to tackle the Syrian Crisis, as well as the 2016 election saga has again soiled and heightened tensions in the relationship between the two states (Hudson & Desvarieux, 2016). The continuous confrontational relation between U.S. and Russia is particularly problematic in view of the current challenges which threatens the continual survival of the international system.

Hence, the confrontational pattern of relation critically demands sound and rigorous academic contemplation, and yet literatures that attempt to examine this strand of subject as linked to global security and clarify the contestation of a new Cold War are less abundant. Thus, against this backdrop the paper seeks to examine the pattern of U.S- RUSSIA relations, with a view of identifying the variegated challenges and its implications for global security in contemporary time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Neo-Realism

Like the name implies, neo-realism finds its intellectual root in the realist orientation, and one scholar who has become synonymous to the neo-realist persuasion is Kenneth Waltz with his work “Theory of International politics” 1979. Although, some scholars argue that the “term neo-realism is somewhat contentious, because many realists regard the ideas it conveys as containing nothing that would merit the prefix ‘neo’; nonetheless most observers disagree, and feel that something did change” (Brown & Ainley, 2005). Indeed, neo-realism agrees with the basic tenets of realism, but there exists fundamental difference on precisely the level of analysis. While the classical realist emphasises the inherent dark side of human nature which translates into global politics, the neo realist seeks to situate global politics in a systemic frame slightly further away from the dark side of human nature maintained by classical realist.

In defending the basis for neorealism, Waltz argues thus, it is impossible “to understand world politics simply by looking inside of states” but rather a systemic and a third higher level of explanation is required if one is to understand the complexities of interaction in world politics

Aje & Chidozie

(Daddow, 2013). Neo realism maintains that contrary to the basic thrust of classical realist persuasion, the structure of the system is the utmost casual factor in world politics often compelling states to react in similar manner. Therefore, if human nature was good and not selfish, the structure of the system will still generate similar patterns of behaviour from distinct units which make up the international system. Thus, the character of the units doesn't necessarily determine the nature of world politics but rather the structure of the system at any given point in time is decisive for understanding world politics, hence the name structural realism (Jakobsen, 2013; Sutch & Elias, 2007). Approaching the study of international politics via the systemic structure is useful in the sense that it does not explain international politics in narrow terms of distinct unit but rather it attempts to gather observable phenomena operating at the system levels, and employs it to offer explanation, and identify "the remarkably stable and predictable interactions between quite differently organized states over long periods of time, particularly their propensity to engage in war" (Daddow, 2013). Daddow provides a vivid picture of how such systemic level of analysis came about, in his words,

We build level 3 theory by: 1. Conceiving international politics as a bounded realm, distinct from what goes on within the states. 2. Discovering law-like regularities in international politics. 3. Explaining these observed regularities. 4. Identifying the units in the system 5. Specifying the comparative weight of systemic and sub-systemic causes of continuity (and change) in the system .6. Showing how forces and effects change from one system to another (Daddow, 2013, pp. 129-130)

This in Daddow's view was the basic parameters for arriving at the new theoretical precept of structural realism. Furthermore, Waltz was more concerned about providing a scientific explanation which will correct the defects of existing international relations theories, because to Waltz, these other theories were in a number of ways; reductionist (Sutch & Elias, 2007). Reductionist in the sense that they all fail to take into cognisance the place of the system in explaining the nature of international politics, and as Brown and Ainley (2005) puts it, "to attempt to understand the system by theories which concentrate on attributes of the units that make up the system is to commit the ultimate sin of *reductionism*". Waltz regard such approach as unhelpful, when he argues that there are certain patterns of the international system which recur even when there is a change in the basic units that make up the system. Fundamentally, Waltz argues "when and how internal forces find external expressions, if they do, cannot be explained in terms of the interacting parties if the situation in which they act and interact constrains them from some actions, disposes them towards other, and affects the outcomes of their interactions" (Waltz 1979, cited in Sutch and Elias, 2013: 51).

An answer to the how of offering explanation for recurring similarities of outcome even when the units' changes thus lies in identifying phenomena's which operate at the systems level. For Waltz

Aje & Chidozie

this phenomena is the “enduring anarchic[al] character of international politics” which accounts for the “striking sameness in the quality of inter-national life through the millennia” (Waltz, 1979, p. 6). Waltz explains the possible types of political structure or system possible by examining three elements which include the principle according to which they are organized or ordered: the differentiation of the units; the specification of their functions and finally the distribution of capabilities across units (Waltz, 1979).

Uncovering the Challenges in U.S Russia Relations

U.S-Russia relations are without doubt confronted with enormous challenges ever since the formation of contemporary Russian state. One could reason that the roller-coaster relationship is a function of misperception in the foreign policy making process both in Kremlin and the White house. Alternatively, one could also argue that the foreign policies are rather deliberate in the search for dominance on the world stage. In order to derive the most appropriate answer to this probelmatique, it becomes important to examine the major challenges that have framed up the U.S-Russia narrative over time.

The first of such challenges can be found in Hans Morgenthau and neorealist description of world politics. Accordingly, the international system by its very nature is anarchical and this is inevitable due to the non-existence of a sovereign body to regulate and control the activities of states in relation to one another (Kegley, 2007). This makes distinct interest crucial in interstate relations and in order to actualize and fulfil these interests; states are compelled to acquire power. The conflict of interest and struggle for power makes competition inevitable in international relations. In other words, the main sign posts that shapes interstate relations (especially of great powers) “is the concept of interest defined in terms of power” (Morgenthau, 1985). This was why Morgenthau concluded that “whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim” (Morgenthau, 1985). The desire and aspiration for power, therefore, is a “distinguishing element of international politics, as of all politics, international politics is of necessity power politics” (Morgenthau, 1985).

In view of this realist and neo-realist description, one can better understand the intricacies of U.S-Russia relation. Simply stated, it is the struggle for power which defines the entirety of U.S-Russia relations. While U.S seeks to protect the status-quo and prevent any potential power capable of challenging its ‘supposed hegemonic’ role in world politics; Russia seeks to assert itself and reposition the balance of power in her favour. The result of such is the increased tensions and suspicion of every move undertaken by the other party.

Furthermore, as clearly stated by Putin during his first tenure in the Kremlin his overall goal is simply to: Restore Russia’s position in world politics as a significant and respected actor. In addition, he also envisaged to portray Russia as an answerable world power capable of contributing solutions to global problems. Unequivocally, this has been displayed in the ongoing Syria crisis,



e-Governance Conference

Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria - CUCEN2017



Aje & Chidozie

where solutions do not look feasible unless Russia and U.S reach a consensus as to the appropriate strategy of ending the crisis. The alleged 2016 election interference if correct, also points to the fact that various means are usually employed by states in order to acquire power in international politics. All these reveal the unending struggle for power, dominance and advantages between Russia and The United States.

The second major challenge is an inevitable consequence of the first, it is: the struggle for the sphere of influence. Although the secretary of State under Obama (John Kerry) mentioned that the days of sphere of influence are over in international relations, as America's would like to believe, U.S perhaps is the only country that considers the whole world as its sphere of influence. This is buttressed by America's unilateral decisions in most part of the globe which have often caused problems rather than solutions for the global community (Radcliffe, 2016). Arguing that U.S unilateral decisions on the world stage as created more problem than benefit, Russian president Vladimir Putin rejects the claim of America right to a global sphere of influence by stressing the geopolitical factor in mapping out the Russia sphere of influence. It is Kremlin believes that; conceding to America's 'global sphere of influence' will justify America's support for regime change in Russia's doorsteps which on the long run is ultimately aimed at containing Russia even in its privileged 'sphere of influence' (Radcliffe, 2016). And indeed, America's position in Georgia and Ukraine, its support for a regime change in Syria alongside support for an eastward expansion of NATO, have put a stamp of conviction in the Kremlin's belief (Radcliffe, 2016). Sergei Karaganov reveals the challenges confronting U.S-Russia relations when he opines that "the real irritant of Russian-U.S. relations is America's unwillingness to acknowledge Russia's right to a zone of its own security interests" whereas, the U.S continually seeks to expand if "not so much security interests as of influence- if not domination-in the military- political field, the most sensitive to Russia" (Karaganov, 2010). Although, the U.S. shy away from invoking the term sphere of influence when refereeing to her policies, stating that contemporary U.S. relationships with other countries and activities in the world explicitly is not based on a sphere of influence concept: "What we see when we look around the world are places where we desire to improve our contacts with countries" (RussiaToday, 2015).

Examining the unilateral decisions and move of the U.S, Hast questioned that why is a sphere of influence policy not associated with the U.S? Indeed, Russia has not possessed the necessary Military, financial, economic interest to seek an aggressive sphere of influence in comparison to the U.S. Perhaps the global level of operation of the United States doesn't translate into pursuing a sphere of influence because it is not region specific. Thus, in order to keep the two countries in different categories, only Russia policy is described as seeking spheres of influence (Hast, 2014). The fact remains that both parties like any other international actors "pursue self-serving interests" and that they all seek power either covertly or overtly. Unarguably, Russia seeks power and control in contemporary world politics and Russia does not shy away from making its claim of having the right to pursue its national interest. This however is aimed against those who try to downplay the

Aje & Chidozie

country's position and unilaterally manage world affairs (Hast, 2014). Whereas, the U.S policies and moves are geared towards the sustenance of the status quo and resisting any potential power capable of challenging this status quo. In essence, "U.S. policy continues to exhibit a tendency of interventionism on behalf of spreading democracy and Russia continues to press a policy of "anti-hegemonism" and assertive nationalism" (Donaldson, 2008).

Observing U.S-Russia relations in the Post-Cold War space, a third major challenge becomes discernible that is: the personality of the leaders who have occupied both the Kremlin and the White House over time. Kolawole (1997) contends that it is the leaders of states who define the content and context of the foreign policy of a state, therefore, a holistic comprehension of the foreign policy of state also requires some appreciable knowledge of the leaders. The psychological state of mind, the idiosyncratic nature of the leader, the perceptions of life and in other words, the personality of the leaders must also be examined if one is to comprehend the rationale and dynamics of the various foreign policy made by leaders.

Firstly, under the administration of Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton, relation between U.S and Russia was some ought friendly and more constructive at the least for most part of their administration (DS, 2000). Bill Clinton viewed relations with other countries from the stand point of the personality of leader; upon which relation with Russia was defined by relations with Boris Yeltsin. Although relationship between the two had some challenges especially over the Russia military intervention in Chechnya and over NATO expansion and military intervention in Bosnia. However, when Boris Yeltsin resigned in December 1999, Clinton praised Boris administration for the "genuine progress" that was achieved in U.S.-Russian relations. Clinton noted that "of course, we have also had our differences... "but the starting point for our relationship has always been how Russia and America can work together to advance our common interests." (DS, 2000) However, with the change in administration in Russia and America respectively, relationship soon took a different direction. Bush desired cooperative relationship with Putin and they both made progress at least to a reasonable extent especially after the 9/11 attack in the U.S. Putin displayed his willingness to cooperate with America in the fight against terrorism (Baker, 2013). Although, both presidents became friends but that didn't not stop Putin hard line decisions towards Washington. Bush made several attempts at wooing Putin to move in a more cooperation boat with the United States and the West, but met with strong resistance each time attempts were made. While recounting his experience about his attempt on Putin, Bush mentioned that "I think Putin is not a democrat anymore," adding that, "He's a tsar. I think we've lost him" (Baker, 2013).

Nevertheless, under Obama and Medvedev administration, relations soon assumed a more constructive outlook as both president reached a more cooperative engagement with the reset policy. Folarin (2017) noted that U.S.-Russia relations under the administration of Obama and Medvedev assumed a constructive outlook partly because of the personal acquaintances that existed between Obama and Medvedev. The administration under the frame work of 'reset' "did

Aje & Chidozie

break the ice and closer relations were achieved...both Russia and the United States were on the same page of the story” (Margaryan, 2013).

However, with the return of Putin to the Kremlin, the relationship went soar again. Russia distrust accentuated by the Libya Crisis and Putin’s scepticisms of the West partly accounted for the decline in relationship. The annexation of Crimea, and Russia activities in Syria which brought relationship to a low point were given shape and flesh via the Personal world view of President Putin. Putin is an ex-KGB colonial, who according to Folarin are trained to achieve specific goals in spite of all odds (Folarin, 2017). Hence, the problem of U.S-Russia relations according to some scholars is anchored to a greater extent in Putin who feels the West is trying to overthrow him (Jervis, 2017).

Therefore, while relations are greatly shaped by enduring structure and activities of the international system; the leaders also matter a lot, in shaping the immediate direction of relationship, because at certain intervals, leadership personality also comes to play (Folarin, 2017). Understanding these basic challenges and factor could help one understand why relations have been on a roller coaster in the Post-Soviet space. One can thus, understand the tangible issues that have become synonymous the U.S-Russia relations narrative: The continuous expansion and rejection of NATO’S Eastward ambition; the enduring Ukrainian and Syria face off and the latest election interference saga.

Collective Security and Global Security Challenges: Accessing the Implications of U.S-Russia Face Off

In contemporary time, so many challenges threaten the sanity of the international system as a whole, ranging from the menace of international terrorism, to the unending waves of refugee crisis, the troublesome issue of energy crisis and the depletion of the ozone layer, the collapse of states in some regions, the dwindling nature of strategic diplomacy and the potential danger of a nuclear war. National antidotes have proved *ignotum-per-ignotus* before these challenges as they appear to be ‘problems without passport’. Hence, collective security mechanism as gained attention in the ranks of practitioners who believe it is a viable means of solving and guaranteeing global security. The need for cooperation among world powers to combat the myriads of threats that confront the international system cannot be understated. U.S and Russia are among the prominent powers in current international relations which implies that cooperation among the two states are equally important in combatting (some if not all) global security threats and challenges (Plekhanov 2016; Donaldson, 2016; Folarin, 2017; Jervis, 2017).

Although, collective security is imperfect in its realization, however, it remains a necessary mechanism but not a sufficient one in ensuring global security (Jervis, 2017; Donaldson, 2016). Collective security can be a viable means of solving major problems when the major powers are willing to get on board towards issues that have high cost to all. Hence, from this point of view,

Aje & Chidozie

U.S-Russia constructive relations do have impact on global security, while continuous confrontation makes everything harder (Jervis, 2017). Indeed, there are certain issues that cannot be solved without U.S-Russia cooperation; the conflict in Syria, in Ukraine, the future of nuclear proliferation and the curtailing of Iran and North Korea (Donaldson, 2016). Nonetheless, it should be noted that when great powers come together to solve major problems, it can help but doesn't necessary mean that those problem will be solved via collective efforts (Jervis, 2017). Hence, "no state that has the capacity to provide for its own security would rely entirely on collective security. However, collective security is a useful compliment to the self-help system and for small states it is the only viable path" (Feaver, 2016).

And there are many of such issues that have high cost to all and sundry in the international system. In fact, there is a long list of global security interests that cannot be advanced without U.S-Russia's active cooperation: "stopping Iran and North Korea from becoming nuclear-weapons states, reducing the size of the U.S. and Russia nuclear arsenals and safeguarding the largest stockpiles of nuclear materials", defeating international terrorism (especially in the Middle East), safeguarding the supply of energy, and combating climate change (Donaldson, 2009). Hence, with regards to U.S and Russia relations, cooperative measures are particularly relevant in certain areas which if ignored could have global ramification (nuclear issues, energy issues, international terrorism among others) (Folarin, 2017). The next section seeks to examine how and why these issues are particularly important in U.S-Russia relations vis-a-global security.

Nuclear Weapon as a Threat to Global Security

The development of nuclear weapons added to the array of threats that confront the stability of the international system in recent times (Goldbalt, 2003). The global level of destruction that can be caused by a nuclear war have been thoroughly dealt with in all kinds of literature, that even the common man has at least a faint idea of what is to be expected in the events of a nuclear war. Writing in 1986, Hamburg laments on the imports of a nuclear war, accordingly, "the consequences of nuclear war constitute the central facts of our age. Everything else in contemporary experiences hinges on them, depends on them, follows from them" (Hamburg, 1986). In our current world, "we deal with a metric that our species has never had to deal with in the millions of years of its history- a metric involving the sudden elimination of tens or hundreds of millions of people and perhaps the death of billions in a matter of months (Hamburg, 1986;1). Yet in spite of this obvious level of destruction that nuclear weapons could cause, the world still brandish them as strategic deterrence tools, "display them like the spears and banners of primitive tribes shouting insults across a river boundary, getting ready to fight, to defend, to burn up the earth for the honor". Maybe holding back, but this is only for a moment at the thought of catching AIDS. And then, few moments later, that thought gone (Thomas, 1986; x).

The calls to prevent a nuclear war and to ensure its effective management have thus been growing over the years. However, Washington and Moscow are among the top nuclear war lords in current

Aje & Chidozie

international relations. As at early 2016, Kristensen and Norris (2016), estimated that Russia possess a stockpile of about 4500 nuclear warheads “assigned for use by long-range strategic launchers and shorter range tactical nuclear forces. In addition, as many as 2800 retired but still largely intact warheads await dismantlement, for a total inventory of about 7300”. The authors also, estimated that, as at early 2017, U.S possess about 4,480 warheads. However, most of the stockpiles are stored for potential upload onto missiles and aircraft. In a case of direct confrontation or even of misinformation, either Moscow or Washington could be tempted to launch its nuclear weapons thereby putting the global space in irreversible jeopardy.

Plekhanov (2016) argues that the most massive impact of U.S-Russia relations on global security has to do with the threat of a nuclear war. The president of the U.S and Russia have the power to launch hundred and thousands of nuclear weapons, should this power be misused, then the order in the international system could be destroyed (Plekhanov, 2016). It is enough for either president to give a command and within few minutes of the command been giving the military will be carrying out the irreversible order. This puts a lot of responsibility on the occupants of the White House and the Kremlin; should they make a mistake; the whole world could pay with their life. Pakhomov noted that in the 21st century, U.S-Russia relations are “unique and crucial to the destiny of humankind”. Both countries possess enormous nuclear weapons and an increase in the chances of direct military conflict can lead to a nuclear war that can end the life on earth several times (Pakhomov, 2016). Plekhanov, (2016) argues that such closeness to a brink of war, could mean the end of history because it will affect not only the two countries but the whole world (Plekhanov, 2016)

Aside from the possibility of misuse by either state, there is also the growing concern over the proliferation of nuclear weapons by aggressive states and even terrorist groups. The spread of nuclear weapons into the ranks of irresponsible and aggressive states, also constitute a major challenge in terms of nuclear threats to global security. In this regard, U.S and Russia are critical players in ensuring the realization of the non-proliferation campaign. Russia is an exporter of nuclear technology and it also constitutes part of Russia means of generating income to benefit her national economy (Miller, 2010). Furthermore, Russia is also a significant player in

The inter- national diplomacy associated with the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is inconceivable, for example, that desired reforms and strengthening’s of the NPT regime can be achieved without Russian support”. Russia is a core member of the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear program; ... Russia plays an influential role in one of the ongoing preoccupying nuclear crises of great concern to the United States (Miller, 2010, p. 19).

Thus, the centrality of Russia to the management of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is a reality that cannot be ignored by the U.S. Both States share the goal of preventing nuclear proliferation, because neither U.S nor Russia can expressly achieve its interest an era of continuous proliferation

Aje & Chidozie

of nuclear weapons. This makes convergence of interests inevitable and establishes the basis for cooperation in managing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to weak states and even terrorist groups (Miller, 2010). Without cooperation, the failure of the campaign of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is unavoidable. Hence, the future of nuclear proliferation especially with the case of Iran and North Korea are certain issues that requires given Russia a status not only as an intervening power in the Middle East but also as a strategic nuclear power (Donaldson, 2016). Plekhanov (2016) opines that if Cold War 2 is allowed to escalate, it would be more difficult to stop North Korea from becoming a nuclear war lord. It should also be stated that, China remains Russia's trusted ally, while North Korea relies more on China for protection, thus, in the event of escalated confrontation, Russia is likely to draw support from China and North Korea, while South Korea will learn support to the U.S. Consequently, existing conflict between South and North Korea might become a Nuclear Conflict which makes Korean nuclear issues makes a nuclear war more dangerous than one could imagine (Plekhanov, 2016).

Additionally, in view of the growing threats from international terrorist groups, the possibilities exist that nuclear weapons can easily be accessed by these terrorist groups if the proliferation of nuclear weapons is not sufficiently managed. Many of these materials can be vulnerable and exploited by proliferators or foreign terrorist groups who seeks to employ these materials to further their goals (Jenkins, 2010). This potentially dangerous position requires swift response and logistics from nuclear powers without compromising international safety and global security (Jenkins, 2010). Russia and the U.S. are central to ensuring that nuclear weapons materials (Uranium and plutonium) are safeguarded out of illicit markets (Miller, 2010).

The point thus remains that, disagreement between the two states, could create a nuclear lacuna with increased threat to global security for all parties. Robert Shines (2016) laments that a topic involving U.S, Russia and "nuclear" commands worldwide attention and should generate a more responsible means of solving conflict between U.S and Russia. Unfortunately, however, this has not always been the case and this could have magnified consequences for the future of global security and humanity as a whole.

Despite the end of the Cold War, "Moscow and Washington have not succeeded in escaping the deterrence framework in their nuclear relationship" (Miller, 2010) weary of each other the two powers are still very much committed to the logic of deterrence. Russia's suspension of the 2010 Implementing Agreement on cooperation on the feasibility studies of converting "reactors to use low-enriched uranium", the suspension of the 2013 Russia-US Agreement on cooperation on Nuclear-and Energy related research, as well as Russia cancellation of the Plutonium deal all have implications on the future course of nuclear proliferation with respect to (Rogue) states and non-state actors (Terrorists groups). Not only will it affect the global efforts of non-proliferation, it will equally increase U.S-Russia security dilemma and by extension holds the danger of a nuclear confrontation (Shines, 2016)

Aje & Chidozie

This complex situation thus requires serious thinking and greater caution from all and sundry (especially from Russia and US), as against the current state of affairs which could be described as unthinking moment in global affairs. If the world goes on this way, unthinking and putting it out of minds, without necessary caution, “one side or the other, is going to do something wrong, say something wrong, drop something, misread some printout, and there will go... all civilization, gone without a trace. Not even a thin layer of fossils left of us, no trace, no memory” (Thomas, 1986: xi). Thus, as the world two nuclear powers, both U.S and Russia have a lot to put forward in ensuring ad safeguarding the world from a nuclear warfare (Graham, 2008).

Energy as a Threat

Energy has become a major source sustaining the variegated activities of the global system in contemporary time. In fact, human civilization is heavily dependent and closely linked to energy and it has been the primary factor of human survival within the last few years (Sthel, Tostes, & Tavares, 2013). Specifically, Oil and gas has become indispensable in the daily activities of several nations around the globe. Surprisingly, Russia is among the world’s largest producer and exporter of oil, and also possesses one of the world’s largest gas reserves. Approximately, Russia has about 32% of world proven natural gas reserves, 10% of explored coal reserves, 8% of proven uranium reserve and 12 % of oil reserves (Sonmez & Cobanoglu, 2016). Russia’s Gazprom which is a state-controlled company supplies gas, oil and coal to quite a number of European countries (WorldEnergyCouncil, 2015; Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016). It supplies to Europe, account for over 40% of European Union imports (Rutland & Dubinsky, 2008). However, in 2013, as stated by the European Commission, 65% of European Union’s gas, 30% of the European Union gas consumption and 39% of Europe total gas imports came from Russia (Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016) By, 2014, over 70% of Russia’s crude oil and over 90% of her natural gas exports were directed to Europe (Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016). Not forgetting the fact that the Asian market is also beginning to grow as a destination for Russia’s oil and gas “following the completion of the East-Siberian Pacific Ocean Oil pipeline” although, the export of natural gas to Asia are presently limited to the “shipments of liquefied natural gas(LNG) from the huge multibillion-dollar Sakhalin-2 project in Russia’s Far East but gas exports are planned to increase by the end of the decade when the power of Siberia pipeline should start to deliver natural gas to china” (Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016).

Although, Russia outright dependency on energy as a source of political assertiveness and economic planning has faced criticism, but Russia still remains a key player in the global energy markets and essentially, a “source of energy (in)security for Europe (Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016). Apart from exporting natural gas and oil derived from her territory, Russia also transports energy resources from other former Soviet states to the international market via the pipelines (Sonmez & Cabanoglu, 2016). Europe relies heavily on Russia gas supply “much of which travels through Ukraine, and a total supply cut might have the potential to start an energy crisis across Europe” (Martin, 2015). While Russia defines energy security in terms of continue demands from Europe

Aje & Chidozie

and Asia, the U.S view energy security as supply and guaranteed access to hydrocarbons which also involves diversification and a shift away from Russia's energy dependency. The U.S has been critical of her allies over dependency on Russia energy supply, and the Russian price disputes with Ukraine and Belarus which caused temporary supply shut down made the energy issue a critical food for thought for America and her European allies (Rutland, 2008). The issue has led to the politicization of energy between U.S and Russia. While Russia seeks to become an indispensable supplier of energy resources to Europe and prevent the construction of anymore pipelines that seeks to bypass Russia (such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline) , the U.S seeks to promote energy diversification in the region so as to relief Europe of her dependency on Russian oil. This has led to the politics of pipeline that underscores U.S-Russia relations in the energy sector. Thus, part of the conflict in Cold War 2, are intertwined with the energy strategy in Europe and Asia, and U.S.-Russia desire to dominate key transit routes in Eurasia (Korybko, 2015).

It is pertinent to mention that with the emergence of fossil fuels, at the peak of the industrial revolution, environmental problem has also emerged. The emission emanating from the production of the resources has resulted in climate change that has become a major issuing facing contemporary global system. Russia remains the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide behind the U.S and China; the increase confrontation between the two countries could also halt cooperative efforts needed to cut down global emission of carbon dioxide which has become a major threat to the globe.

Furthermore, with the pile of sanctions on Kremlin companies following the annexation of Crimea and with the decline in the price of oil and gas Russia has not reduced emphasize on enhancing its military capabilities. Bradshaw and Connolly (2016) argues that if the "Kremlin perceives Russia to be facing a threatening 'arc of crisis' –as it currently does" there is the likelihood that Russia will continue to place emphasis on mobilizing resources so as to prevail in geopolitical conflict at least as an incitement to balance the "materially worse-off population". This appears to be a possible course of action considering Russia's moves and actions in recent time. On the other hand however, if the Kremlin threat perceptions from the West are reduced, it is possible that the Kremlin will pursue a less radical move (Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016).

In this regard, the U.S has two choices; one to respond equally with an emphasis on military capabilities and strengthen NATO's space as a counter measure to that of Russia. Should this be the case, it could prove costly for both characters, economically and in terms of conflict. Economically because the U.S will require finance from her European aligns who are not doing much better than Russia; and in terms of conflict because it will increase the possible confrontation between Russia and the West (Bradshaw & Connolly, 2016). Alternatively, the U.S could choose to eradicate or reduce the threat of insecurity in its relations to Russia. Constructive engagement carved by mutual interest which include, "mutual beneficial trade, investment and technology transfer" could encourage a stable energy and nuclear partnership.

Aje & Chidozie

In essence, giving the indispensable role of energy in the World, and Russia strategic location as a supplier to Europe and some parts in Asia, the concomitant result of emission and global warming; U.S-Russia face is capable of erupting energy crisis for Europe, dwindle progress on the combating global warming among others. It thus becomes unequivocal that there exist central points where Russia and U.S relations become decisive for global security. Although economically, the world cannot be held hostage by Russia, but in terms of nuclear and energy facilities, the world could become hostages to Russia and U.S relations.

Hence, while accessing the implication of U.S-Russia relations on global security; Feaver opines that, “as two of the most powerful states in the global arena, U.S.-Russian relations directly affect global security. When they can work cooperatively, that has a positive effect. When they cannot, it is decidedly negative” (Feaver, 2016). Recognising all the above possibilities, Plekhanov (2016) decry that the whole World must demand responsible relations between U.S and Russia if climate change, international terrorism and nuclear proliferations are to be averted. Emphasising that the world needs to be more aware of the possibility of an escalated Cold War 2; as it were currently, attention to the implications of U.S-Russia relations is lacking around the world. Accordingly, “Cold War 2 is a disease which is afflicting the world and the world behave as a patient who doesn’t want to hear about the disease”. In fact, it is a dangerous disease which demands seeing the doctor as soon as possible this is how the world must treat Cold War 2. More awareness and search for possible solutions, instead of focusing on all kind of non-issues or minimal issues that the world is occupied with. “The world should think about the horror of a nuclear war, which could happen at any time, over the clash in Syria, Ukraine or some other places” (Plekhanov, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the forgoing, because of the way these two states can influence the world in all kind of settings, when they cooperate they can help resolve some issues which are critical to global security and on the other hand, when they disagree the effect can also be enormous. Unequivocally, U.S.-Russia relations in a way do influence global security. However, the two countries’ have not behaved responsibly in shouldering the threats that confront the global system in contemporary times. Rather, they are perpetually lost in the strategic struggle for power and influence, which have fuelled distrust, and suspicion over the years. The nature and character of their bilateral relations is definitely bound to have a spill-over effect on global security, thus the urgent need for them to behave responsibly in their relationship.

Indeed, Russia and U.S are both relevant in current international system, Russia’s influence resonates more in the Eurasia region while U.S possess a global outreach. This is what has probably informed U.S. description of Russia as a regional power, but the Kremlin have rejected this claim, by asserting that Russia is a global power that must be taken into consideration on global issues. However, issues of this should not be magnified into basis of confrontation rather; U.S. must try to accommodate Russia for mutual interest and for the interest of the global system.

Aje & Chidozie

The two states must recognise that there are areas of cooperation that are important to both states and cooperation must continue in those areas. The stability and management of strategic weapons is an area where U.S. and Russia must continue for mutual sake and global security. Transparency and commitment in the implementation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction treaty must be encouraged; non-proliferation and enhancing the security of nuclear weapons and materials away from terrorist groups and other aggressive elements must be a focal point of cooperation between U.S and Russia. Not forgetting that these are in line with both the interest of the U.S., Russia and the entire international system in general. (ISAB, 2014). Cooperation in the energy sector must be encouraged as this will help ensure energy stability in Europe and Asia. There could be joint energy project between the two countries that will help align the interest of the two states. More so, the two states can cooperate in space exploration, in the Artic, in science, climate change, and counter terrorism; these are areas where the U.S and Russia must consider serious engagement to assure mutual trust and interest.

REFERENCES

- Baker, P. (2013, November 6). The Seduction of George W. Bush: How the president of good and evil romanced Vladimir Putin. And how a warm friendship turned to ice. Foreign Policy. Retrieved January 11, 2017, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/11/06/the-seduction-of-george-w-bush/>
- Bradshaw, M., & Connolly, R. (2016). Russia's Natural Resources in the World Economy: history, review and reassessment. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 700-726.
- Brown, C., & Ainley, K. (2005). *Understanding International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Daddow, O. (2013). *International Relations Theory*. London: Sage.
- Donaldson, R. (2008). U.S.-Russian Relations: A View from the Future. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from <http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~robert-donaldson/scenarios.html>
- Donaldson, R. (2009, June 6). Getting Off on the Wrong Foot in Moscow. Retrieved February 21, 2017, from <http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~robert-donaldson/summit.html>
- Donaldson, R. (2016, December 11). Interview on U.S.-Russia relations . (O. Aje, Interviewer)
- DS. (2000). *Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin, and U.S.-Russian Relations*. Retrieved January 13, 2017, from Department of States ; Office of The Historian: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/clinton-yeltsin>
- Feaver, P. (2016, December 17). U.S.-Russia relations. (O. Aje, Interviewer)
- Folarin, S. (2017, January 20). U.S.-Russia relations. (O. Aje, Interviewer)
- Goldbalt, J. (2003). *Arms Control: The New Guide to Negotiations and Agreements*. London: Sage Publication.
- Graham, T. (2008, July). *U.S.-Russia Relations: Facing Reality Pragmatically*. Center for Strategic and international studies. Retrieved December 11, 2016, from <https://csis->



e-Governance Conference

Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria - CUCEN2017



Aje & Chidozie

- prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-
public/legacy_files/files/media/isis/pubs/080717_graham_u.s.russia.pdf
- Hamburg, D. (1986). Understanding and Preventing Nuclear War: The Expanding Role of the Scientific Community . In F. Solomon, & R. Marston, *The Medical Implications of Nuclear War* (pp. 1-11). Washington, D.C: National Academy.
- Hornat, J. (2013). Obama’s “Reset” with Russia: Failure or Lost Opportunity? *Post*. Retrieved January 22, 2017, from <http://postnito.cz/obamas-reset-with-russia-failure-or-lost-opportunity/>
- Hudson, M., & Desvarieux, J. (2016, July 19). *US-NATO Border Confrontation with Russia: Risking Nuclear War*. Retrieved October 13, 2016, from CounterPunch: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/07/19/us-nato-border-confrontation-with-russia-risking-nuclear-war/>
- ISAB. (2014). *Report on U.S.-Russia Relations*. International Security Advisory Board , U.S. Retrieved November 20, 2016, from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/235118.pdf>
- Jakobsen, J. (2013, November 6). Neorealism in International Relations – Kenneth Waltz. Retrieved October 11, 2016, from <http://www.popularsocialscience.com/2013/11/06/neorealism-in-international-relations-kenneth-waltz/>
- Jenkins, B. (2010, June). The Future Role of the G-8 Global Partnership: Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction. *Stanley Foundation*. Retrieved November 2, 2016, from http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/Jenkins_610.pdf
- Karaganov, S. (2010, July 7). Global Zero and Common Sense. *Russia in Global Affairs*. Retrieved December 13, 2016, from http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Global_Zero_and_Common_Sense-14889
- Kegley, C. (2007). *World Politics Trends and Transformation*. USA: Thomson Learning Inc.
- Kolawole, D. (1998). Personality and Foreign Policy: An Analysis of the Idiosyncratic Attributes of Selected Nigerian Foreign Ministers. In D. Kolawole, *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*. Ibadan: Dekaal Publishers .
- Korybko, A. (2015, May 15). *US-Russia Round Three: Macedonia*. Retrieved December 17, 2016, from Oriental Review: Open Dialogue Research Journal: <http://orientalreview.org/2015/05/15/us-russia-round-three-macedonia/>
- Kristensen, H., & Norris, R. (2016, May 3). Russian nuclear forces, 2016. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*, 72(3). Retrieved December 15, 2016, from <http://thebulletin.org/2016/may/russian-nuclear-forces-20169394>
- Kristensen, H., & Norris, R. (2016, December 14). United States nuclear forces, 2017. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*, 73(1). doi:10.1080/00963402.2016.1264213
- Margaryan, A. (2013). U.S – RUSSIAN RELATIONS UNDER THE OBAMA-MEDVEDEV PRESIDENCIES: THE RESULTS OF ‘RESET. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from http://www.noravank.am/upload/pdf/7.Ashot_Margaryan_21_CENTURY_01_2013.pdf



e-Governance Conference

Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria - CUCEN2017



Aje & Chidozie

- Martin, W. (2015, November 25). *Russia just froze Ukraine's gas supply in what could be really bad news for Europe*. Retrieved January 28, 2017, from Business Insider: <http://www.businessinsider.com/gazprom-cuts-off-gas-supplies-to-ukraine-2015-11?IR=T>
- Miller, E. S. (2010). Russia and American Nuclear Interests. In AspenInstitute, *U.S.-Russia Relations: Policy Challenges for the Congress* (Vol. 5). Washington, D.C: The Aspen Institute. Retrieved January 12, 2017, from https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/upload/2010_Russia_CR-Madrid.pdf
- Morgenthau, H. (1985). *Politics Among Nations* (6th ed.). (K. Thompson, Ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Plekhanov, M. S. (2016, Decemebr 16). U.S-Russia Relations: Challenges and Implication for Global security. (O. Aje, Interviewer)
- RussiaToday. (2015, May 28). *US won't accept idea of global sphere of influence*. Retrieved January 11, 2017, from RT: <https://www.rt.com/usa/262573-biden-spheres-influence-russia/>
- Rutland, P., & Dubinsky, G. (2008). U.S.-Russian Relations: Hopes and Fears. In M. Cox, & D. Stokes, *U.S. Foreign Policy*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Shines, R. (2016, October 10). *The Snowball Effect of Continued U.S.-Russia Strategic Mistrust*. Retrieved January 12, 2017, from Foriegn Policy Association: <http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2016/10/10/continued-us-russia-strategic-mistrust/>
- Sonmez, A., & Cobanoglu, S. (2016). The Use of Energy Resources as Foreign Policy Tools: The Russian Case. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(11). Retrieved January 11, 2017, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n11p78>
- Sthel, M., Tostes, J., & Tavares, J. (2013). Current energy crisis and its economic and environmental consequences: Intense human cooperation. *Natural Science*, 5(2), 244-252. doi:10.4236/ns.2013.52A036
- Sutch, P., & Elias, J. (2007). *International Relations: The Basic*. New York: Routledge.
- Thomas, L. (1986). Foreword. In F. Solomon, & R. Marston, *The Medical Implications of Nuclear War* (pp. ix-xi). Washington, D.C: National Academy Press.
- Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of International Relations*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- WorldEnergyCouncil. (2015). *2015 World Energy Issues Monitor Energy price volatility: the new normal*. Retrieved January 7, 2017, from <https://www.worldenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2015-World-Energy-Issues-Monitor.pdf>



e-Governance Conference

Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria - CUCEN2017

