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## Russo-Western Conflicts

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### ABSTRACT

The words of Dmitri Medvedev that saying, “We are rapidly rolling to a new Cold War.” were leading to a very important question of strained relations between the Western World and Russia could be considered as to be a new Cold War. Looking back at the United States and Russian relations after the Cold war resignation of Michael Gorbachev in 25th of December 1991 was formally end of the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin as the president of Russia and George Bush stated that US and Russia do not see each other as competition a year after which is a new era of more positive relations as partnership. In order to keep the relations in line going upwards, at one point, both tolerated each other and even at some point Bill Clinton was criticized of its foreign affairs to be such Russia related. On May 2000 Putin was elected to be the president of Russia and it is noteworthy that before he was the one to act as the president told to BBC that “would not rule out” the possible situation to joining to NATO (Luhn, 2015). After Putin a lot changed between United States and Russia.

**Keywords:** *Conflicts, Russo-Western, War*

### Ukraine Crisis

Ukraine crisis was the major event that took Russo-Western relations to a “new low”. In 2013 starting on 21st of November, with an association agreement between European Union and Ukraine that is not in favor of Russia so that resulted in protest initially in Kiev, then after other cities in Ukraine. Since protestors were clear on Yanukovych, the President of Ukraine, to step down in February a mediation agreement was signed by Yanukovych and the opposing side with the conciliation of Russian and European Union representatives. Although it is signed, opposition already broke the agreement and took control over government by force and the other day Turchinov was named as the head of the state. In places that has more ethnically Russians and in Crimea protests against new government was emerging so on 2nd of March Putin sent troops over Crimea and 16th of March was the referendum day to determine whether Autonomous Republic of Crimea should remain in Ukraine or reunite with Russia.

Voters were alongside with the idea of joining Russia but after all these legally documented in 21st of March only 11 countries were recognizing Russian annexation of Crimea and while 100 other countries were stating that annexation had no legal grounds, and it is still a discussion that whether the referendum was sabotaged or not. Yet these conflicts between Russia and Ukraine is not still over today since to Soviet Union, Ukraine had of geopolitical, economic, political, and cultural importance. Firstly, Crimea was given to Ukraine simply because Khrushchev had intentions to strengthen the brotherhood between Ukrainian and Russian people. Separating the ways with Ukraine and Russia was thought to be damage to Russia’s prestige as a superpower by Russian politicians. Also, both countries were their important business partners, notably Russia aimed to incorporate Ukraine in the Eurasian Economic Union, but partnership has been recently declined since China replaced Russia trading-wise. It can be also said that any Moscow state would take

actions to ensure control over Kiev's military and foreign policies regarding Ukraine's geopolitical position for the reason that Ukraine is lesser than 480 kilometers to Moscow. (Götz, 2015). Western interests in Ukraine can be explained through this: "U.S. interest in Ukraine is attributable not only to its desire to "use Ukraine as a military counterweight to Russia" but also to the possibility of establishing an American military presence in Crimea. This is clearly the key to American policy toward Ukraine." (Nikolin, 2014, pp.44). In the perspective of a new Cold War these conflicts were not the actual reason for the disordered scene in international relations like "the Cold War" created or refugee crisis, Syrian Civil War, 9/11. Ukraine crisis was the freezing point for EU-Russia Relations and the point that Russia clearly reduced its efforts to maintain the relationship with the West. (Nitoiu, 2016) Also according Nitoiu, after the crisis European Union still had the intention to cooperate but it was shown by Russia that Western influences in post-Soviet spaces will arouse responses that will be loud and strong without any hesitations (2016). Ukraine remains a serious problem still.

### **NATO Expansions Eastwards**

Another point to be made that the relationships were more strained with Russia and the West was the expanding movements of NATO towards the East. According to policies of the West NATO shall expand There is differences of opinion when it comes how this process must be proceeded. What Brown states in his article is that there are three schools of thought. Initially, the first group thinks that the process should be slow, while the second argues that it should be at a fast pace since it is thought that Russian expansionism is unpreventable, and lastly, the third group asserts that NATO should expand accordingly with the European Union, which it will reduce the risk of getting into more conflicts with Russia (1995). Regarding the chronological order after the end of the Cold War of Atlantic Alliance expansions in 1999 starting with Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic that could be perceived as a crisis by Russian foreign affairs specialists also being conscious that Russian geopolitical interests in the region will be disregarded. In the post-Cold War world diplomacy 1999 expansions were one of the most major moments of European politics and American foreign affairs and it was a mistake as stated by many analysts (Barany, 2002). President Yeltsin was getting more unease, but his actions were hesitant and United States continually tried to assure Yeltsin that expansions were not anti-Russian. Clinton government stated that America's interests in Baltics is to define and systemize the security relations. All these were reflected as Baltic governments were deceiving the West by exaggerating the threat of Russian aggression in term of military in the Russian press (Black, 1999). In 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were added within the fifth wave. Political elites began to place a greater reliance on China than on the United States, while the people became wary of expansions. Russian President Vladimir Putin was aggressively against expansions unlike Yeltsin. Increasing Ukraine and West relations after annexation of Crimea were making Russia significantly uncomfortable. Russia demanded legally binding guarantees in order Russia to secure its border but Russian proposals for security assurances in the region have been denied by Joe Biden. So, demands were not met, NATO were onto making more moves towards east, as a result of these the West and Russia were rolling into war-like situation. Sanctions During the Ukraine crisis, which was the most extensive and recent usage of sanctions was in between West and Russia, the United States and the European Union are attempting to modify Russia's conduct by implementing a huge number of economic and financial embargoes, as well as individual sanctions (Bagheri and Akbarpour, 2016). Bilateral terms of trade have indeed was under the cast of political phenomena but the sanctions and

counter sanctions were a scathing part of the conflicts. The day following the Crimea Autonomous Republic's vote on whether to leave or stay in Ukraine, the United States and the European Union blacklisted twenty-one people from traveling and frozen their assets that are assumed to be straight involved in annexation. Initially sanctions were warning than aiming to hurt Russia in terms of economy. President Barack Obama updated his sanctions list with a slew of new persons linked to Vladimir Putin's economic dealings, even so-called "money people." Moscow took a similar stance and retaliated by prohibiting nine States representatives from crossing the borders of Russia. Russia was also excluded from the G8 that making it the G7. The United States kept on adding individuals and a number of companies to the equation. Members of the European Union and the United States have heavily focused on restricting market financing for Russian businesses and their access to technological exports, while Russia's focus was mostly on blocking certain imports that are from other regions, such as many types of agricultural products (Korhonen et al., 2018). As an example, restrictions on energy companies, trading bonds and stocks, as well as brokering services provided, including Russia's major banks that controlled by the government. These regulations, however, synced up with two other notable financial instability to the Russian economy: a dramatic decrease in price of oil and a sharp collapse in the currency, Russian ruble. Matter of fact; trades in goods as well as unifications of Russian companies into international supply chains, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and equity investments, finally the shady financial activities that served the Russian elites and state's autocracy have developed in the last twenty-five years. Yet trade relationships between United States and Russia have never been regarded as ideal or fairly large. A New Cold War or not? In the center of these conflicts, it is beyond doubt that the ghost of the actual Cold War lies underneath according to Sakwa stated in his article and to elaborate, what was unsolved in December 1989, the official end of the Cold War, was the main source of conflicts and the outcomes after the Cold War were political, strategic, intellectual and cultural problems. (2008). The highly tense relationship among Russia-United States-European Union triangle has always been complex, and it is unknown that how a normal scene would look like. On the other side, the way the situation is defined is also critical since it can worsen the whole relationship since it affects how the strategies are made which may end up in having more dangerous results (Legvold, 2014). It can also be stated the strained relationship being called a war is blinding at some point since, as a rising power, China was more on the background while press and academia concentrated on United States and Russia (Smith, 2019). The characteristics of these current events and the original Cold War are significantly distinct from each other. In the purpose of comparing the two, four different dimensions emerges in consonance with Smith that are structural, ideological, psychological and technological (2019). First of all, Cold War was about balanced powers were avoiding a vicious war simply because it was considerable amount to afford. so, in the light of this, evaluating the present, situation is about staying in the prestigious circle of international order. Neither extremely opposite ideological collisions nor two bloc structures are on the table as in the real Cold War.

Russian governments falling image after several catastrophic economic crisis -like increased devaluation and decreased real income and elongated sanctions of the West that eventually raised the price of merchandise and reduced steady demand and yet the most markedly, oil prices fell to their weakest pace since 2003 that is considered to be incredibly damaging for an economy which is highly dependent on oil- direct the focus from higher food prices to nationalism and inevitably support to government will be increased. Conclusion Medvedev's claim that states a new Cold War requires more serious sequence of actions that could unstablize the global order but not to underestimate the situation that is clean and clear seen that ignoring these would cause bigger problems and open the doors of even more strained relations and deteriorate the east-west balance

to a worse point. BBC author Jonathan Marcus analyzed the conflicts by stating that there was an armed cease-fire in European borders throughout the actual Cold War, but the real fighting took place all over the world from Angola to Cuba to the Middle East and so the front lines of present confrontations are often far closer to Russia's own borders, namely Georgia and of course Ukraine. He also stated between Russia and the West, there is a radically different balance of forces and Russia's "soft power" is likewise restricted as it lacks an appealing internationalist philosophy to "market" to the globe (2018). Cold War of twentieth century, 1947-1991, has its own characteristics that these conflicts do not fill up. Calling it a war has many reasons behind for the Russian press and the world which should not blind the third persons perspective of foreign affairs and it goes without saying that it is essential to stay unbiased. And even President of United States of America, Barack Obama, declared in July 2014 that "It is not a new Cold War ... It is a very specific issue related to Russia's unwillingness to recognize that Ukraine can chart its own path." (Obama, 2014). Further to the point, the United States requires Russian assistance on a variety of global issues, including Iran's nuclear program, the Syrian civil war, the Middle East peace process, Afghanistan's stability, and counter and on the understanding that Russia is prepared to cooperate on terrorism these concerns, the United States has its incentives to do the same confrontations (Bagheri and Akbarpour, 2016). may not be enough to be called a new Cold War rather a That is to say, these nother historical sequence.

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