

# RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE AND ATTENDANT SANCTIONS WESTERN COUNTRIES: EMERGENCE OF A NEW COLD WAR

James E Archibong, University of Calabar

## ABSTRACT

*After the Second World War, former associates in the conflict, the United States (US) and its allies on one hand, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its satellite states on the other hand, turned adversaries and got embroiled in a bitter rivalry christened 'Cold War.' Their relationship was characterized by an arms race, ideological fray, proxy wars, and threats of nuclear annihilation. The Cold War ended following the collapse of socialism in Europe and the dismemberment of the USSR in 1991. In a new era of cooperation, Russia's successor to the USSR was rehabilitated with massive Western aid and integrated into the global economic system. However, this new-found partnership was short-lived as rejuvenated Russia started asserting its military and economic might in the global arena. Its territorial ambition and overseas military exploit led to a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, an act that engendered crippling Western sanctions against Russia. The paper examines the acrimonious relationship between the West and Russia and the unfolding scenario in the context of a new cold war. It finds that the characteristics of the previous Cold War are visible in the present circumstance; and that a new cold war has resurfaced between the two. The paper recommends cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, immediate withdrawal of Russian troops, as well as an international guarantee of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in return for the lifting of sanctions on Russia.*

**Keywords:** Russia-Ukraine war, new cold war, iron curtain, sanctions, US-Russia, nuclear threats.

## INTRODUCTION

A cold war has been defined as "a state of extreme unfriendliness existing between countries, especially countries with opposing political systems that expresses itself not through fighting but through political pressure and threats" (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary & Thesaurus). It is a state of conflict that does not involve actual hostility (Littlejohn, 2022). In the context of this paper, the expression 'Cold War' relates to the era of rancor, tense relations, and non-kinetic hostility of 1945-1991 between the world's superpowers Blakemore (2022), propelled by ideological, political, economic, and strategic wrangles (Atkinson, 2011). The concept was invented shortly after the Second World War by George Orwell, a British writer (Smith & Davies, 2017).

The protagonists were the US and its allies in the Western bloc and the USSR and its satellite states in the Eastern bloc (Blakemore, 2022; India Today, 2017). Following the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, and an end to their fragile coalition, the two superpowers set out to create spheres of dominance and control for themselves, without necessarily engaging in a direct military confrontation (Blakemore, 2022; India Today, 2017). The antagonism which took the form of threats, economic and political actions, propaganda,

espionage or proxy wars, rivalry in sports, science, and technology, and psychological showdown, persisted for several decades (Littlejohn, 2022; Blakemore, 2022). It consisted basically of a war of ideology between capitalist and socialist systems both sides struggling for supremacy and seeking to export their beliefs to other parts of the world, especially Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Blakemore, 2022).

Mutual suspicion, distrust, and rivalry characterized the relationship between the opposing sides (Littlejohn, 2022). The West strongly deplored the expansion of communism in Europe and other continents and adopted the policy of containment (Blakemore, 2022). Both blocs built military alliances to bolster defenses and advance their interests. In 1949, the US and states allied to it formed a coalition tagged the "*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*" (NATO), to fend off any potential attack by the USSR under the leadership of Joseph Stalin (Littlejohn, 2022; Blakemore, 2022). This initiative was reciprocated by the Soviet Union when it formed its military alliance known as the "*Warsaw Pact*" in 1955 (Blakemore, 2022). The USSR maintained several satellite states in Eastern Europe and used force to suppress dissents and any agitations for freedom (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1992). Germany was divided into east and west with the 'Berlin wall' separating them. They competed for influence and supported antagonistic sides in conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America (Littlejohn, 2022). The US condoned heinous crimes and gross human rights violations committed by regimes it supported. The military blocs were embroiled in squabbles and entangled in major crises such as the Berlin Blockade (1948-1949), the Korean War (1950-1953), the Hungarian Revolution (1956), the Suez Crisis (1956), the Berlin Crisis (1961), and the Cuban Missiles Crisis of 1962 (Littlejohn, 2022).

### **Characteristics of the Cold War**

One of the features of the Cold War was the relentless research and development, stockpiling, and deployment of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles (Blakemore, 2022). The US deployed nuclear weapons in several European countries to contain the Soviets. The investment was huge with a very high budgetary cost. The administration of Ronald Reagan launched the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), also known as 'Star Wars' to weaponize outer space with a web of nuclear missiles capable of intercepting and destroying incoming Soviet missiles (Kennedy, 2019). The Cold War almost assumed the form of actual physical confrontation, during the Cuban missile crisis between October 18 and 29, 1962. The stationing of nuclear missiles by the USSR in Cuba within striking range of the US sparked outrage and a flurry of activities and brought both sides to the brink of direct military confrontation (Blakemore, 2022). Eventually, the USSR removed the missiles with guarantees from the US that it would not attack Cuba and, in addition, remove its missiles from Turkey (Blakemore, 2022).

In the campaign for global dominance, the US and USSR engaged in proxy wars, by sponsoring or supporting conflicts around the world (Blakemore, 2022). The US-backed right-wing governments and groups opposed communism, while the USSR supported left-wing governments and groups. It was a constant battle for supremacy for the opposing sides. Third states, such as Angola and Nicaragua, supported by these powers participated in real violence. The US and USSR directly intervened in major wars such as the Vietnam and Korean wars (Blakemore, 2022). The USSR intervened in Hungary to suppress an uprising in 1956, and in 1980 invaded Afghanistan.

The Cold War rivalry extended to the work of the UN, in the aspect of the maintenance of international peace and security (Berkes, 1959). The US and USSR turned the UN Security

Council into a battle royal while pursuing their interest and those of their allies. It was difficult to find a common ground or build a consensus as each side was ready to cast the veto to nullify any resolution of the Security Council. The function of the Council was deadlocked, as it could not adopt any resolution to address the 1950 Korean War. The paralysis in the Security Council led to the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution 377A (V), the “*Uniting for Peace*” resolution of November 3, 1950, which authorized the General Assembly to act in the event of the failure of the Security Council to perform its function (Security Council Report, 2013).

### **End of the Cold War and victory for the West**

Several states in Eastern Europe, under the USSR sphere of influence, were embroiled in crisis, as citizens mounted strong agitations for freedom from their totalitarian governments (Blakemore, 2022; Palmer, 1990). Unlike what was obtained in the past, the Mikhail Gorbachev regime refused to intervene to prop up the dying regimes, which were eventually brought down by the power of the people (Palmer, 1990). Tensions persisted up to the late 1980s when the USSR started experiencing economic plunge, and financial challenges. The invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 significantly drained its resources, owing to the huge cost and protracted nature. The USSR eventually lost the Afghan War and left the country in 1989 (Taylor, 2014).

With dwindling resources and huge defense spending, the economic predicaments of the USSR worsened, with citizens having to wait in queues for food and other basic items (Goldman, 1988). Under tremendous pressure from the West, erstwhile President Gorbachev acceded to reforms in exchange for palliatives (Kolesnlk, 2022). He introduced reforms known as Perestroika (restructuring) and Glasnost (openness), which ended an era of dictatorship, oppression, and gross violation of human rights (Blakemore, 2022). Glasnost opened up the tightly closed, controlled, and secretive Soviet society, granting citizens certain rights, and Perestroika gradually transited the economy from a state-controlled system to a free market economy, and eventually (Goldman, 1988). The single-party communist system was eventually replaced with a multi-party democracy.

The end of the Cold War came with the collapse of the USSR in 1991, after popular revolutions in some of the satellite states (Palmer, 1990). This was preceded by an abortive coup in August 1991 by some desperate elements in the military to save the union. In response to the deteriorating situation, the West deliberated on the need for economic aid to the USSR but tied further help to transition to a market economy (Bolz, 1991). The last straw for the USSR was its economic challenges, which caused the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev to turn to the West, its adversary, for relief (Losch, 1990). President Gorbachev requested grants and loans to speed up the transition to a free market economy, which was not forthcoming (Negroponte, 2016). Faced with the West's hesitation to provide aid, restiveness in the military, and an imminent economic collapse, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned in December 1991 (Negroponte, 2016). In the aftermath of the resignation, the USSR was dissolved under the facilitation of the president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin; the Communist Party was disbanded; and the other parts became independent (Steele, 2007).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Following the extinction of the Cold War in 1991, attempts were made to build a new world order founded on international cooperation, global consensus, and multilateralism. Russia a major player in Cold War was incorporated into Western economic and financial systems. Many of the satellite states of the USSR joined the EU and NATO and embraced Western values. However, in February 2022, Russia launched a major military onslaught on Ukraine, its

smaller neighbor, to bring the latter under its sphere of influence. Ukraine which has been seeking membership in the EU and NATO, received massive military and economic support from the West to fend off the invasion. The attack has reignited the East-West tensions reminiscent of the Cold War. It has also occasioned the Cold War rhetoric and mentality, tit-for-tat sanctions, and the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, as well as aroused the issue as to whether a new cold war has emerged. This work interrogates the perception that a new cold war has surfaced, in the light of the imperialist tendencies of the Russian authorities and the need by the West to contain them.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of the study is to interrogate the claim or perception that a new cold war has cropped up in light of the unfolding tensions between the West and Russia occasioned by the invasion of Ukraine. The specific objectives are:

- To delve into the nature and characteristics of the original Cold War and juxtapose them with the current events and developments, which have split (pit) major world powers along geopolitical and ideological lines;
- To examine the territorial ambitions, nationalistic tendencies and search for superpower status of the Russian Federation as the catalyst for the new cold war;
- To assess the role, capacity, and limitations of the United Nations in terms of conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security; and
- To investigate the effect of the new cold war on globalization, multilateralism, and other critical subjects of international concern.

### **Significance of the study**

The study is significant as it is one of the pioneering works on the resurfacing of the cold war. Apart from instigating a robust discussion on the subject, it will add to the volume of literature on the Cold War phenomenon, as well as provide information and source material for researchers, students, and policymakers. It will also provide a penchant for collaboration between political and social scientists, historians, and international relations practitioners.

### **Post-Soviet era Cooperation between Russia and the West**

From the ruins of the USSR, Russia emerged as the biggest and most powerful of the 15 erstwhile republics, with Boris N. Yeltsin as the president (Steele, 2007). He continued with economic reforms, transformation, and privatization initiated during the twilight of the USSR (Till, 2011). But the success of the reforms came at a high price, with strings attached to the financial assistance from the new-found friends in the West. Under Boris Yeltsin, Russia also developed a cordial relationship with the West and signed several agreements to limit the production of strategic arms. The aid promised by the West to ease the cost of the reforms, however, did not come right away and President Yeltsin, who could no longer endure the internal pressure, abdicated the presidency in 1999 (Steele, 2007; Bohlen, 2000). He was succeeded by Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, who continued with the reforms and recorded a huge growth in the economy (Bohlen, 2000). Mr. Putin also had to contend with an internal rebellion by separatists from Chechnya, one of its satellite republics.

### **Putin's Presidency and Resurgence of Russian Nationalism**

In the next decade after Putin became president, he achieved a strong and stable economy, and Russia became abundantly rich through its huge energy resources (Parker, 2010). His policies ushered in economic recovery, brought Russia out of the wilderness, and ended a

decade of uncertainty and turmoil (Letterman, 2018). The next agenda set by the Russian leadership was to bring back its great power status and return the country to its lost glory as a highly respected world power (Letterman, 2018; Parker, 2010). The determinants of great power status include the size and robustness of the population, the flourishing, and buoyancy of the economy, a powerful military that commands global respect, and strong ties with other major powers (Parker, 2010). In this regard, Putin sought to improve relations with the US and Europe (Parker, 2010).

Russia under Putin developed a strong and dynamic foreign policy predicated on strategic depth, great power ambitions, and uneasy relationships with Western countries (Gurganus & Runner, 2022). Russia had come out of the doldrums and started to assert itself as a major international player, including making territorial claims and creating a sphere of influence (Letterman, 2018). In its quest for global influence, and as a major military and economic power to be reckoned with, Russia demonstrated its military might across the globe (Chotiner, 2022). It has exercised significant military influence abroad and changed the tide of conflicts, such as the situation in Syria (Chotiner, 2022). As Russia flexes its military muscles, Baltic States are so vulnerable and rely on NATO for protection (Watson et al, 2016). In pursuit of its foreign policy goals, Russia uses the Wagner Group, a private military company (Parens, 2022). The company has made inroads in Africa by embarking on numerous military adventures in Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Central African Republic, and Sudan (Parens, 2022). In addition to its use of military force, Russia engages in propaganda, information warfare, psychological warfare, and cyber warfare. Allegations have surfaced of Russian hackers targeting the US elections. Russia has been trying to build a formidable body of allies by pursuing relationships with Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia in addition to building a strategic partnership with China. He attended a meeting of the Caspian states in June 2022 calling the five members to strengthen cooperation in politics, security, the economy, and the environment (Teslova, 2022).

Concerning Africa, Russia established the Russia-Africa Summit to discuss with African business and political leaders (DW, 2019). Different topics were discussed at the two-day event which was attended by over 3,000 delegates from Africa and Russia. To woo African states and strengthen the bonds of friendship in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine, the Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergey Lavrov, embarked on a tour of some African countries, namely Egypt, Uganda, DR Congo, and Ethiopia (Cascais, 2022). The move is designed to counter Western influence in Africa (Yusuf, 2022).

On the dark side, Russia started tending territorial expansion through conquests and ideological and political unions (Figes, 2022). Following a period of antagonism between it and Georgia, both former republics of the USSR, Russia-backed separatist groups fighting the Georgian government. On August 8, 2008, Russian troops invaded Georgia, signifying the beginning of the first major armed conflict in Europe (Dickinson, 2021). After a brief five-day war, Russia seized the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both territories declared independence from Georgia and were only internationally recognized as such by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Syria. Russia sought to exert some leverage and control over the states around it, including Ukraine, to which it lays a historical claim (Figes, 2022). Putin has long maintained that Ukraine is part of the territory he rules (Durand, 2022). The signal by Russia to re-establish itself as a major world power to be respected was not taken seriously by the international community. Leaders of EU countries simply called for a ceasefire in Georgia, appearing to acknowledge the right of Russia to protect its interests in the region (Dickinson,

2021). Russia's right to operate in its traditional sphere of influence was extended to Crimea, a Ukrainian territory in 2014 (Figes, 2022). Apart from the annexation of Crimea, Russia took its territorial ambition to eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. However, it was Russia's shooting down of the MH17 passenger plane that caused the West to impose sanctions on Russia for its acts of hostilities in Ukraine (Dickinson, 2021).

### **Invasion of Ukraine and Imposition of Western Sanctions**

In his address on March 18, 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, the Russian President described Russia's historical claims to the peninsula and the Russian-speaking population (Figes, 2022). Ukraine had leaned towards the West, seeking to join the military alliance NATO and the EU, a move strongly opposed by Russia. The worsening relations between Russia and Ukraine came to a head on 24 February 2022. In the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine, Western countries imposed a wide range of sanctions on Russia targeting its economy, assets, financial system, and prominent individuals (Hopkins & Kurmanaev, 2022; U.S. Department of State, 2022; DNB, 2022). A ban has been placed on the export of luxury goods and items endowed with civilian and military purposes to Russia; and the import of Russian gold. Russian aircraft have been banned from the airspace of the US, UK, EU, and Canada. The EU has also placed restrictions on a wide range of Russian exports, including oil and gas, coal, and agricultural products (Northam, 2022).

As part of the sanctions, the US has prevented Russia from accessing \$600 million held in US banks (Aljazeera, 2022). Russia now finds it extremely difficult to repay its international debts. Russia has been denied access to its foreign reserves valued at \$630 million. Russian banks have been barred from the global financial messaging system (Bown, 2022). Major Russian banks and companies have been sanctioned in the UK financial system and their assets were frozen. The UK also imposed punitive tariffs on some Russian products (UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2022).

Several prominent Russian individuals, politicians, tycoons, business leaders, and firms have been targeted, with their assets, including yachts and aircraft seized or frozen in the US, UK, and EU (Northam, 2022; UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2022). The persons directly affected include President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, representatives of the Russian government, and their relatives. Multinationals operating in Russia have either suspended their businesses or pulled out of the country (Northam, 2022). Russia has also been excluded from all international sports (Ghosh, 2022).

In a tit-for-tat move, Russia has placed an embargo on the export of several products to Western countries. However, it is in the energy sector that Russia is exerting economic pressure on the rest of Europe. It has reduced the oil and gas supply, causing shortages and driving up global prices. Following the imposition of a price cap on Russian oil by the G-7 nations and the EU, President Putin banned the export of oil and oil products to Western countries (Dress, 2022). Russia also prohibited the payment of interest or dividends to foreign investors and shareholders, amid other special measures (Bychkov & Efremov, 2022).

### **The Emergence of a New Cold War**

Events and circumstances reminiscent of the Cold War are unfolding between the West and Russia, following the latter's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 (Abrams, 2022). The division, enmity, and threats between them are so deep that analysts believe that what is being witnessed is the birth of a new Cold War (Abrams, 2022). The Russian Foreign Minister has

openly acknowledged the return of the 'Iron Curtain' (Hall et al, 2022; Benoist, 2022; Leroux & Hecker, 2022).

The invasion of Ukraine has seriously strained the relationship between the West and Russia and resulted in a tit-for-tat imposition of sanctions (Reuters, 2023). In the unfolding scenario, events reminiscent of the first Cold War are already playing out. Bluhm (2023) describes the unnerving similarities between the current moment and the Cold War. The first Cold War was inundated with propaganda and rhetoric. In March 1983, US President, Ronald Reagan described the USSR as an evil empire (Glass, 2018). The return of Cold War rhetoric is not in doubt (Abrams, 2022). In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the US President, Joe Biden, described the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, as a butcher who should not be allowed to be in power (Boffey et al., 2022).

The return of the arms race is another sign of the return of the Cold War. When the first Cold War ended in 1991, the US and USSR downsized their armed forces, weapons stockpile, and military budgets, which enabled them to invest in economic development and global security (Archibong, 2021). In a global demonstration of cooperation, Russia became a member of the G7 countries in 1998, which was renamed G8. The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February rang an alarm bell among Western nations, increased tension across Europe, and brought back memories of the Cold War. As a result of the antagonistic and belligerent posture of Russia, NATO a military alliance of 30 countries has responded with far-reaching security measures (Graham, 2022). Apart from strongly condemning the attack on Ukraine, NATO member countries felt threatened and resolved to embark on a significant upgrade of their defense forces (Bayer, 2022). According to NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, the alliance has decided to hike its troop level on high alert from 40,000 to over 300,000, specifically to be deployed in Europe along the eastern flank (Bayer, 2022). This deployment is designed to be NATO's considerable reorganization of its defense strategy after the Cold War (Sabin, 2022; Lawless et al, 2022).

On its part, Russia has tested some of its modern weapons such as hypersonic missiles (Associated Press, 2022) and Satan II missiles, with the capacity to carry multiple nuclear warheads. In a show of strength, the US tested its modern nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile, Minuteman III, a few months after the Russian test (McFall, 2022). US Air Force has also unveiled the world's most advanced military aircraft, the B-21 Raider stealth bomber (Tingley, 2022). President Putin has also proclaimed a large-scale military mobilization, involving 300,000 troops, the first of its kind since the Second World War. The current tension between Russia and the West is also reshaping military alliances. Iran an unrepentant adversary of the West is the main supplier of drones to Russia for use in Ukraine (Sanger et al, 2022), while North Korea supplies Russia with artillery (Powell, 2022). In an unusual show of cooperation, China has been conducting joint military exercises with Russia (Lendon, 2022), thus making them staunch allies against the West (Bluhm, 2023; Bosco, 2022). Both countries have also announced a 'no-limits strategic partnership', signaling a declaration of a new cold war between them and the West (Bosco, 2022). Fearful of Russia's territorial ambition and onslaught on Ukraine, Finland, and Sweden have sought membership in NATO (Masters, 2022; Graham, 2022).

The threat of the use of nuclear weapons and mutual destruction has resurfaced. Russia has warned the West of its stockpile of thousands of nuclear weapons and its willingness to use them in the event of an existential threat (Williams, 2022). Like the original Cold War, Russian leaders have openly discussed using nuclear weapons (Bluhm, 2023). President Joe Biden of the

US, in his response, warned that the world would witness ‘Armageddon’ if Russia used tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine (Alberque, 2022). The US National Security Adviser also warned that any Russian use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine would be met with a decisive response and ‘catastrophic’ consequences (Vanguard, 2022). During the Cold War, the American policy towards the USSR was that of containment, to impede the spread of communism. Even though the Cold War ended, the West retained its military alliance, NATO. Apprehensive of the Russian government's intentions the US and NATO have declared Russia a ‘significant and direct threat’ to the alliance (Lawless et al, 2022).

Another indication of the emergence of a New Cold war is the return of the iron curtain, an unreal barrier that rived Europe into two (Benoist, 2022; Leroux & Hecker, 2022). The Russian Foreign Minister has spoken of the return of the Iron Curtain descending between the West and Russia (Hall et al, 2022). Like the first, the Cold War, cooperation at the UN Security Council has dwindled, as Russia readily uses its veto to frustrate the adoption of any resolution relating to the Ukraine war (Romo, 2022). In light of the paralysis at the UN, member States have resorted to the 1950 General Assembly Resolution 377A (V) “*Uniting for Peace*” to take major decisions on the Ukraine war when the Security Council cannot do so because of the Russian veto (Besheer, 2022). Vetoes have been used mischievously to prevent strong actions against pariahs such as Iran and North Korea (Bosco, 2022).

### **Return of the Cold War: In whose interest?**

The original Cold War which spanned several decades was characterized by mistrust and fear of mutual destruction (Spacey, 2020). The circumstance of an emerging cold war is not different, as evidenced by the behavior of Russia and the responses of the West. Already the Russo-Ukrainian war has negatively impacted the whole world, resulting in global food shortages, energy crises, and soaring prices (Daily Trust, 2022). The conflict has taken a great toll on Africa, with several countries grappling with trade disruption, inflation, the decline in the movement of development finance, and a slow recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic (Sen, 2022). The new arms race and the threat of nuclear annihilation occasioned by the Russian President’s claim of putting his nuclear forces on high alert and US President Biden's warning of Armageddon do not serve anybody's interest, but only add to the world's growing misery. Russia's purported annexation of four regions of Ukraine, namely Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson (Busari, 2022), is not worth the violence, suffering, agony, and calamity that millions of innocent Russians, Ukrainians, and citizens of other countries have been plunged into. The Russian-speaking population in Ukraine can always co-exist with Ukrainians, as they have always done for centuries in former Soviet states – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Latvia, Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, Turkmenistan, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Armenia (Shevchenko, 2021). Will Russia also wage war on all these countries under the pretext of protecting ethnic Russians Bender (2014)? Only time will tell!

### **Summary of the Results of the Study**

- The original Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union (later succeeded by Russia) started shortly after the Second World War and ended in 1991, after the 1989 Revolutions that dismantled communism in Europe.
- Attempts to build an international order based on multilateralism failed due to Russia's belligerent attitude towards its neighbors and the desire to create a sphere of influence, as well as reestablish its superpower status.
- The belligerency culminated in the February 24, 2022 invasion of Ukraine, an action which has been widely condemned, and which has led to tit-for-tat sanctions between the West and Russia.
- The West and Russia have returned to the old practice of economic and political recriminations, propaganda, arms race, and the threat of nuclear annihilation.



- The world is gradually splitting into two hostile blocs, marking the return of the iron curtain and a descent into the new cold war. Already, the work of the UN Security Council has suffered setbacks due to the wanton use of the veto.
- The new cold war and lack of international cooperation may adversely affect the concept of globalization and multilateralism, and relegate to the back burner other issues of global concern such as climate change, Covid-19, and global hunger.
- Resuscitating the Cold War is not in the interest of the West, Russia, and non-aligned countries.
- The UN must rejig its practices, procedures, and mechanisms for conflict resolution and the actualization of its fundamental objectives. Under the auspices of the UN, Russia must end the attacks on Ukraine, withdraw its troops, and commit itself to the peaceful settlement of any disputes in return for the lifting of sanctions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK**

### **Reforms of the UN to achieve its mandate**

The UN was founded on the premise of conflict prevention, maintenance of international peace and security, and promotion of human rights. The UN has to large extent failed to achieve these objectives. Future work should examine the weaknesses and limitations of the UN to address them; and the issue of reforms of the UN, especially the use of the veto, to enhance its effectiveness.

### **Need to promote multilateralism and inclusiveness**

The international community is presently largely polarized, thus making consensus on major global issues unachievable. Therefore, it is important to examine how to strengthen the concepts of globalization, multilateralism, and inclusiveness as tools for the advancement of the international system.

### **Propagation of democracy and fundamental freedoms**

Like the original Cold War, dictatorship, totalitarianism and lack of democracy are largely responsible for the return of the cold war. Future work can interrogate how the concept of democracy can be spread and given universal acceptability; and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as universal rather than relative concepts.

### **Nuclear disarmament**

The Cold War was and is still largely fuelled by the possession and stockpile of nuclear weapons. It is therefore essential to develop a legal and institutional framework and mechanism to curb nuclear proliferation and provide incentives and security guarantees for nuclear disarmament.

## **CONCLUSION**

After almost one year of fighting, the war is taking a great toll on the belligerents, their allies, and the international community. It is apparent that Russia cannot win the war by conventional means, and has therefore resorted to indiscriminate bombing and destruction of Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure in circumstances amounting to war crimes. The world is in dire need of cooperation instead of confrontation in many areas of economic development, medical research, disease control, poverty alleviation, and climate change. The outbreak of Covid-19 and attendant deaths and the current global devastation caused by climate change is indicative of the compelling need for global cooperation and mobilization of resources. Russia is currently the most heavily sanctioned and isolated country as a result of the conflict. Its once

vibrant economy is now struggling and on the brink. Will it survive the Western economic and financial onslaught and for how long? It is time to end the violence and seek a pacific settlement of the disputes that led to the conflict, and the time to do it is now.

## REFERENCES

- Abrams, E. (2022). "The new cold war" *Council on Foreign Relations*.
- Aljazeera, (2022). Russia's Putin says Western sanctions have failed.
- Archibong, E.J. (2021). Private Military Contractors: Legitimate Entrepreneurs or New Fashioned Mercenaries. *J Civil Legal Sci*, 10, 279.
- Associated Press. (2022). Russia says it has test-fired another hypersonic missile.
- Bayer, L. (2022). NATO will increase high-readiness force to 'well over 300,000 troops politico.
- Bender, J. (2014). These Countries with Large Russian Populations should fear what Putin might do next. *Business Insider*.
- Benoist, A. (2022). The return of the iron curtain. *The Postal Magazine*.
- Berkes, R.N. (1959). The United Nations and the Cold War Conflict. *Current History*.
- Besheer, M. (2022). General Assembly Holds Historic Session on Ukraine. VOA News.
- Blakemore, E. (2022). What was the Cold War – and are another one?.
- Bluhm, M. (2023). Are we in a new Cold War?. *Vox*.
- Boffey, D., Walker, S., & Oltermann, P. (2022). Biden: 'butcher' Putin cannot be allowed to stay in power. *The Guardian*.
- Bohlen, C. (2000). Yeltsin Resigns: The Overview; Yeltsin Resigns, Naming Putin as Acting President to Run in March Election. *The New York Times*.
- Bolz, K. (1991). USSR in need of Western aid. *Intereconomics*, 26(5), 205-206.
- Bosco, J. (2022). China and Russia prepare to turn Cold War II into a hot war. *The Hill*.
- Bown, C.P. (2022). Russia's war on Ukraine: A sanctions timeline. *Peterson Institute for International Economics*.
- Busari, B. (2022). Russia announces annexation of four regions of Ukraine. *Vanguard*.
- Bychkov, A., & Efremov, V. (2022). Russia imposes special economic measures in response to Western sanctions.
- Cascais, A. (2022). Russia's reengagement with Africa pays off
- Chotiner, I. (2022). Reexamining Putin's Military Interventions in the Middle East.
- Deudney, D., & Ikenberry, G.J. (1992). Who won the cold war?. *Foreign policy*, (87), 123-138.
- Daily Trust. (2022). The Ukraine-Russia Conflict & Impact On The World Economy.
- Dickinson, P. (2021). The 2008 Russo-Georgian War: Putin's green light. *Atlantic Council*.
- DNB. (2022). The sanctions against Russia at a glance.
- Dress, B. (2022). Putin bans oil exports to Western nations that imposed price caps.
- Durand, O. (2022). An analysis of Putin's imperial ambitions and Ukraine's 300-year road to statehood.
- DW. (2019). Vladimir Putin opens first ever Russia-Africa Summit.
- Figes, O. (2022). Putin Sees Himself as Part of the History of Russia's Tsars – Including Their Imperialism.
- Ghosh, S. (2022). Explained-Russia's recent exclusions from international sport" The Hindu March 03,
- Glass, A. (2018). Reagan brands Soviet Union 'evil empire.
- Goldman, M.I. (1988). Gorbachev and Economic Reform in the Soviet Union. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 14(4), 331-335.
- Graham, T. (2022). NATO Countries Signal Resolve at Summit: What Does It Mean for Russia?.
- Gurganus, J., & Rumer, E. (2019). *Russia's Global Ambitions in Perspectives*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Hall, S., Parekh, M., Zagon, C., & Diver, T. (2022). New 'iron curtain' descending warns Sergei Lavrov.
- Hopkins, V., & Kurmanaev, A. (2022). War and sanctions threaten to thrust russia's economy back in time.
- India Today, (2017). Understanding the Cold War: Know the allies who later became adversaries.
- Kennedy, L. (2019). Why Reagan's 'Star Wars' Defense Plan Remained Science Fiction. *History*.
- Koesnlk, A. (2022). Gorbachev's Revolt. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.
- Lawless, J., Wilson, J., & Corbet, S. (2022). NATO deems Russia its 'most significant and direct threat.
- London, B. (2022). Russia and China unite for live-fire naval exercises in waters near Japan.
- Leroux, V., & Hecker, J. (2022). Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompts fear of new 'Iron Curtain' in Europe.
- Letterman, C. (2018). Image of Putin, Russia suffers internationally. *Pew Research Center*, 6, 41st.

- Littlejohn, G. (2023). What is the Cold War? Meaning of the term explained and when the conflict between the US and USSR ended.
- Losch, D. (1990). Massive Western aid for the USSR?. *Intereconomics*, 25(4), 161-162.
- Masters, J. (2022). How NATO Will Change If Finland and Sweden Become Members.
- McFall, C. (2022). US launches Minuteman III ICBM in show of nuclear readiness.
- Negroponste, D.V. (2016). The Hesitant U.S. Rescue of the Soviet Economy.
- Northam, J. (2022). Russia's economy is still working but sanctions are starting to have an effect.
- Palmer, T.G. (1990). Why Socialism Collapsed in Eastern Europe.
- Parens, R. (2022). The Wagner Group Playbook in Africa: Mali.
- Parker, J.W. (2010). Russia's Revival: Ambitions, Limitations, and Opportunities for the United States. *Strategic Perspectives*, 3.
- Powell, A. (2022). US Days North Korea Is Secretly Supplying Russia With Artillery for Ukraine.
- Reuters, (2023). Russia sanctions 77 Americans in tit-for-tat move.
- Romo, V. (2022). Russia vetoes UN Security Council resolution that denounces its invasion of Ukraine.
- Sabin, L. (2022). Nato increases forces on high alert from 40,000 to more than 300,000 amid threat.
- Sanga, D.E., Barnes, J.E. & Schmitt, E. (2022). U.S. Scrambles to Stop Iran From Providing Drones for Russia.
- Shevchenko, N. (2022). Where else do Russians live, apart from Russia?.
- Security Council Report, (2013). Security Council Deadlocks and Uniting for Peace: An Abridged History.
- Sen, A.K. (2022). Russia's War in Ukraine Is Taking a Toll on Africa.
- Spacey, J. (2020). 19 Characteristics of the Cold War.
- Steele, J. (2007). Boris Yeltsin.
- Taylor, A. (2014). The Soviet War in Afghanistan, 1979 – 1989.
- Teslova, E. (2022). Putin calls on Caspian states to strengthen cooperation.
- Till, B. (2011). Mikhail Gorbachev: The West could have saved the Russian economy. *The Atlantic*, 26, 94-106.
- Tingley, B. (2022). US Air Force unveils new B-21 Raider stealth bomber, most advanced military aircraft ever.
- U.S. Department of State, (2022). The Impact of Sanctions and Export Controls on the Russian Federation.
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, (2022). UK sanctions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Vanguard, (2022). U.S. warns Putin of 'catastrophic' consequences over nuclear weapons.
- Watson, I., Mortensen, A., & Kehl, J. (2022). Why Russia's military adventures worry Europe.
- Williams, H. (2022). Detering Nuclear Weapons Use in Ukraine.
- Yusuf, M. (2022). Lavrov Visit to Africa Seen as Effort to Counter Western Narratives. *VOA*.

**Received:** 05-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. JOCCC-23- 13134; **Editor assigned:** 07-Jan-2023, Pre QC No. JOCCC-23- 13134(PQ); **Reviewed:** 21-Jan -2023, QC No. JOCCC-23- 13134; **Revised:** 26-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. JOCCC-23- 13134(R); **Published:** 31-Jan-2023