

**THE RESURGENCE OF RUSSIA AS A SUPERPOWER AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY IN EAST EUROPE: CASE OF  
UKRAINE (2014-2016)**

**BY**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>DEDICATIONS .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Background to the Problem .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Statement of the Problem .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3. Objectives of the Study .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.4. Justification of the Study .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.5. Delimitations of the Study .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.6. Limitations of the Study .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.7. Dissertation Outline .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>THE NEXUS BETWEEN THE RESURGENCE OF RUSSIA AS A SUPERPOWER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY IN EUROPE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.2. The Rise of Russia in the post-Cold War Era .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.3. Energy Economics and the Resurgence of Russia.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.4. Military Mighty .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.5. Russia's Strategic Alliances.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.6. Russia's Resolute Foreign Policy .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.7. European Union's Foreign Policy on Russia's Resurgence.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.8. NATO's View of the Resurgence of Russia as a Big Power .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.9. Russo-Ukraine Aggression .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.10. Realist theory- A Power Perspective of Russian Resurgence.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.11. Constructivist theory- A Socio- Political Perspective of Russia's Resurgence .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.12. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.2. Research Design .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.2.1. Methodology .....</b>	<b>25</b>

3.2.2. Case Study of Ukraine .....	26
3.3. Sampling Method .....	26
3.4. Data collection methods.....	27
3.6. Data Analysis.....	28
3.6.1. Content Data Analysis .....	28
3.6.2. Thematic Data Analysis.....	29
3.7. Validity of the Study .....	29
3.8. Reliability of the Study .....	30
3.9. Ethical Considerations.....	30
3.10. Conclusion .....	31
CHAPTER 4.....	32
RUSSIA’S EXPANSIONIST EXPERIMENT IN UKRAINE AND IMPLICATIONS ON SECURITY IN EAST EUROPE .....	32
4.1. Introduction.....	32
4.2. Locating the Resurgence of Russia in the Discourse of European Security .....	32
4.3. The Evolution of Russia’s Relations with Ukraine since 1991 .....	33
4.4. Geopolitical Roots of the Ukrainian Crisis- An Immediate Precursor to the 2014 Crisis.....	36
4.5. The 2014 Ukraine Crisis in Detail- A Manifestation of Russia’s Resurgence .....	39
4.5.1. The Kiev Protests (The Maidan).....	39
4.5.2. The Crimean Conundrum- Another Exhibition of Russia’s Resurgence .....	40
4.6. The Putin Factor in the Ukraine Crisis and its Impact on Security in East Europe .....	41
4.7. Russia’s Foreign Policy on Ukraine and its Impact on Security in East Europe .....	42
4.8. USA and NATO Involvement in the Ukraine Crisis.....	45
4.9. The Energy Economic Incentives and its Nexus to the Ukraine Crisis .....	46
4.10. The Media and the Ukraine Crisis and Impact on Security in East Europe .....	48
4.11. Western Sanctions against Russia over Ukraine.....	49
4.12. The Ukraine Crisis: Geopolitics at Home and Abroad.....	52
4.13. Ukraine Crisis-Centre of Instability in Eastern Europe – Analysing Risk.....	56
4.13.1. Political Instability .....	56
4.13.2. Militarization and Para-Military Incursions.....	57
4.13.3. Political Instability and Militarization- Analyzing High Risk .....	57
4.13.4. Voting Patterns and Economic Performance .....	58

4.13.5. Environmental Stress and Risk Assessment of Ukraine.....	58
4.13.6. An Internal Stakeholder Analysis of the Ukraine Crisis and Insecurity in East Europe...	59
4.13.7. An External Stakeholders Analysis of the Ukraine Crisis and Insecurity in Europe .....	60
4.14. Conclusion .....	60
CHAPTER 5 .....	61
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	61
5.1. Introduction.....	61
5.2. Purpose and Overview of the Research-Restating of the Objectives .....	61
5.3. Summary of Major Arguments of the Study .....	62
5.4. Summary of Major Conclusions of the Study .....	63
5.4.1. Ukraine and the 2014 Crisis (The Maidan)-Conclusions .....	64
5.4.2. Ukraine and the 2014 Crisis (The Maidan)-Recommendations.....	64
5.4.3. Donbas War and Ukraine’s Security-Conclusions.....	65
5.4.4. Donbas and War and Ukraine’s Security- Recommendations .....	67
5.4.5. Civic Society in Ukraine-Conclusions .....	68
5.4.6. Civic Society in Ukraine-Recommendations .....	69
5.4.7. Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms in Ukraine-Conclusions .....	69
5.4.8. Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms in Ukraine-Recommendations .....	70
5.4.9. Ukraine Economic Situation and Reform-Conclusions.....	71
5.4.10. Ukraine Economic Situation and Reform-Recommendations .....	72
5.4.11. Ukraine Judicial Reform-Conclusions .....	72
5.4.12. Ukraine Judicial Reform- Recommendations .....	73
5.5. Overall Conclusion.....	74
Bibliography .....	76
ANNEXURE I .....	81
ANNEXURE II.....	83

## **DEDICATIONS**

For my daughters, parents and siblings.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study discusses Russia's resurgence or reawakening as a sovereign state with dominant status on the globe and its repercussions, effects or ramifications on security in Europe with particular focus on Ukraine. Thus, the overarching purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which the resurgence of Russia as a world superpower has impacted on security in Europe in general, and its bilateral security affairs with Ukraine in particular. The findings of the study are predicated upon an Ukraine narrative that has witnessed a huge humanitarian crisis that left some parts of Ukraine war zone; the Crimean Peninsula annexed, the Donbas, Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics raging war, the economy of Ukraine in limbo; thousands of civilian dead; and infrastructure destroyed and a raft of restrictive measures and sanctions imposed against Russia. The study is undertaken through the lenses of realist related theories of international relations which are relevant to the growing influence of Russia in the world order that manifested in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are mainly the hegemony, realist, constructivist and balance of power theoretical aspects of the implication of Russia's reawakening on security in East Europe. These theories are imbedded in the fast growing international strategic affairs phenomenon of the Military Industrial Complexes that seem to excite the Kremlin authorities. The study employs a qualitative research methodology achieved through a case study of the Ukraine crisis of 2014. The study concludes that the resurgence of Russia as a world power since the 1990s has had a negative impact on security in Ukraine and its occupied separatist territories and Eastern Europe in General and also proffers recommendations on how to checkmate that state of insecurity.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS**

#### **1.1. Background to the Problem**

The resurgence of Russia as the world superpower during the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been the geo-political subject under review by many scholars in the post-cold war era. This study discusses Russia's resurgence or reawakening as a sovereign state with dominant status on the globe and its repercussions, effects or ramifications on security in Europe with particular focus on Ukraine. Russia enjoyed the status of a superpower in the bipolar world during the Cold War era that commenced in 1945 to 1991 (Larrabe 2010; 33). However, Russia's status as one of the world superpower was menacingly threatened by the end of the Cold War in 1991 when the demise of the Soviet Empire was registered. This was due to the increased United States' diplomatic, military, and economic pressures on the Soviet Union, leading to the formal dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in December 1991.

Whilst on one hand, the United States of America (USA) was now a sole superpower, it was entangled in many a crises around the globe by the year 2000. On the other hand, the European Union (EU) was busy working on perfecting its process of integration and casting its net wider to other Eastern European countries which formerly were the colonies of Russia. That was the period when Russia started to grow its influence in the international system and projected its influence on the international and military front. Colton and Skach (2005: 19) submit that this period coincided with the coming into power of President Vladimir Putin who commandeered the resurgence of Russia, both on the military and economic fronts. Colton and Skach (2005: 21) further posits that the resurgence of Russia is based on five important factors; Putin's leadership, energy economics, strategic alliances, military reawakening and a resolute foreign policy as shall be discussed in the literature review.

Fish *et al* (2000:21) argues that this resurgence has however been welcomed with mixed feelings in Europe as this is likely to unsettle this Russian competitor on the world stage and hence impact negatively on security in Europe as shall be explored in this study. This has already manifested itself in the Russo-Ukraine debacle that gripped the Eastern European strategic affairs and the global political players such as the EU, the USA, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). The Russo-Ukraine conflict was compounded by the holding of a highly condemned referendum in the Ukraine South-Eastern



province of Crimea which led to its annexation by Russia as shall be discussed in the following Chapters.

In view of the foregoing, this study will be guided by two important operational definitions of the concepts of superpower and security. In view of the fact that this study explores Russia's resurgence as a superpower on the globe, and its implication on security in Europe it is appropriate to define what a 'superpower' is in this context. Huntington (1999:1) defines a superpower as a state with influence in all facets of might ranging from diplomacy; ideology, economy, military, technology and culture. These must be exercised with the projection and capabilities to promote its interests internationally. Yao (2007:1) defines the superpower concept by identifying the United States of America (USA) as a superpower in all aspects of: size of economy, per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP), military strength, science and technology and international influence.

This resurgence on the basis of these factors has serious implications on security in Europe. Buzan (1991: 18) defines the concept of security as 'pursuit of freedom from threats.' However, Sulovic (2010: 2) rejects that definition as narrow and traditional preferring to embrace an expanded definition of the concept of security that it should be horizontally expanded from exclusively military onto political, economic, societal and environmental sectors and vertically expanded to individuals, social groups, and humanity as a whole other than exclusively states. The UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 and the Bonn Declaration of 1991 on Human security also repudiate the traditional view of security asserting that security is multi-dimensional covering issues such as economic, food, health, personal, community and political security.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The resurgence of a more assertive Russia, as Freedman (2007:24) argues, ushers in a set of novel security conundrums that have the real risk of destabilising the peace and security of the Eastern European region and subsequently cause insecurity in that region. Freedman (2007: 24) further argues that this development inspires mercurial security developments in Eastern Europe. Such security dimensions instigated by the resurgence of Russia in Europe are understood from the interface between it and the NATO operations in Eastern Europe.

Therefore, the resurgence of Russia is a problem facing the EU inhabitants, policy makers and leaders alike. Eastern European countries which fall under the influence of the privileged

interests of Russia have become members of NATO, with examples being Ukraine, Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. With Russia's resurgence and its appetite to reclaim its authority in its former sphere of influence, this may unsettle NATO and create potential for military clashes hence impacting negatively on security in Europe.

This has already manifested in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine debacle where it is on record that Russia has been preventing Ukraine's wish to be a member of NATO for a long time as a result of its resurgence. It has sponsored a number of security threats to Ukraine, with the most recent one being its influence of the Crimea to become part of Russia by sponsoring a worldwide condemned referendum that left Crimea part of Russia. This has rubbed Kiev which has been threatened by Russia for oil disconnections together with European supplies. Furthermore, Russia's propensity to overwhelmingly invade any of its neighbours militarily in the fashion of its military adventures in Georgia in 2008, particularly possible Russian incursions into the Baltic States such as Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia has the potential of leading to diminished prospects of sustainable peace in Eastern Europe.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The overarching purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which the resurgence of Russia as a world superpower has impacted on security in Europe in general, and its bilateral security affairs with Ukraine in particular. This overarching objective is encapsulated by the following specific objectives:

- To demonstrate that Russia is resurging as a world superpower.
- To outline factors that which have caused the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.
- To analyse the response of sovereign European states to the resurgence of Russia.
- To examine the extent to which the Russian's resurgence as a world superpower has impacted on security in Europe.
- To recommend solutions on how European Union policy makers can counter Russian expansionism.
- To recommend alternative dispute resolutions that can foster a sustainable win-win peace deal between Russia and Ukraine in East Europe.

### **1.4. Justification of the Study**

This study provides a contribution to the ongoing debate and body of knowledge of the implication of Russia's resurgence as a superpower on security in Europe. This research is

significant as it endeavours to examine the practical prospects of stopping Russia early enough before its ambitious project of the re-annexation of its former territories in Europe which has the potential of triggering off an impasse in the same region thereby causing speculations of another world war. This can also act as a significant warning sign to foreign policy makers in both Russia and Europe to ensure that they reasonably forecast disaster if Russia is left unrestrained.

This study helps the foreign policy makers in Russia and Europe to engage each other and pursue other mutually beneficial and diplomatic options than allowing confrontational approaches to take a dominant role as demonstrated by Russia's expansionist policies in that region. The study also goes a long way towards consolidating the relatively peaceful status quo prevailing in Europe as opposed to the Europe witnessed during the World Wars and the Cold War alike. Resultantly, the study will inspire a sense of military, economic, social, cultural security among the many citizens of Europe and Russia who have come out of bruising consequences of the cold war which ended recently in 1991. It also proffers possible solutions of bringing the two-year Ukraine crisis to a sustainable end and restore peace and security in the same country whose future between the marauding ambitions of Russia and the growing influence of the European block remains uncertain.

### **1.5. Delimitations of the Study**

This study analyses the short term implications of the resurgence of Russia on security in Europe from 2014 up to date and also proffer a prognosis of the long term implications given that Russia's ambitious project appears unstoppable. The study is also limited to the implications of Russia's resurgence on security in East Europe although there is vast literature on its impact on security on both Asia and America. The areas of the subjects intended to be covered largely constitute the analysis of the nexus of Russia's resurgence and the potential implications on security in Europe.

### **1.6. Limitations of the Study**

The limitations on the study are by and large occasioned by the difficulty with which the researcher will access direct audience with the ambassadors for in-depth interviews. The experts and academia may be sceptic of the researcher's motives given the polarization that continues to haunt the Zimbabwean political environment. Access to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may also be a herculean task given the rigorous and bureaucratic procedures the researcher has to follow in order to get the information. However, the researcher will engage

the relevant department of Europe and Americas in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to utilise all diplomatic channels available to ensure interviews with the relevant Ambassadors are granted. Getting that information is also difficult because civil servants swear to the Official Secrets Act. Notwithstanding, the researcher painstakingly follows the due process required per very stage to gain access of the relevant information.

### **1.7. Dissertation Outline**

This study is divided into five chapters as follows:

**Chapter 1** provides general introduction to the study focusing on the problem. **Chapter 2** covers a review of the existing literature and presents the realist and power theoretical aspects of the implication of Russia's reawakening on security in East Europe. A set of criticisms of the theories and views of scholars are also presented from the researcher's perspective. **Chapter 3** on methodology articulates the research design and presents the various methods to be used in data collection, analysis and presentation.

**Chapter 4** covers major findings on the ramifications of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower on security in East Europe, with a thorough exploration of the Russo-Ukraine aggression and an examination of the actors' short term and long term interests in international affairs. The case study of the Ukraine crisis is also covered extensively under this chapter. Under **Chapter 5**, conclusions flowing from the findings are presented and a raft of recommendations to policy makers in international relations and Eastern European Affairs in order to stop the growing discontent in Ukraine and the potential conflagration of violence, war and insecurity in that region are proposed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE NEXUS BETWEEN THE RESURGENCE OF RUSSIA AS A SUPERPOWER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY IN EUROPE**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of the existing literature by authoritative international relations scholars in strategic affairs, peace and security with the view to address the objective that speaks to the factors that have led to the rise of Russia. The conceptual, and theoretical frameworks under which the discourse of the nexus between the resurgence of Russia as a superpower and its implications for security in Europe is also presented in this chapter. This is achieved through unravelling various theories of international relations which are relevant to the growing influence of Russia in the world order that manifested in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are mainly the hegemony, realist and balance of power theoretical aspects of the implication of Russia's reawakening on security in East Europe.

These theories are imbedded in the fast growing international strategic affairs phenomenon of the Military Industrial Complexes that also seem to excite the Kremlin authorities. Constructivism will also be explored as a theoretical veneer upon which Russia advances its international influence. A set of criticisms of the theories and views of scholars are also presented from the researcher's perspective in a bid to really locate the debate of Russia's resurgence as a superpower in the status of security in Eastern Europe.

#### **2.2. The Rise of Russia in the post-Cold War Era**

Since the beginning of the twenty first century, a plethora of studies dealing with the resurgence of Russia as a world superpower and its potential implication on security in Europe have been undertaken. The election of Vladimir Putin in 1999 and his subsequent strong leadership helped the resurgence and come back of Russia back to the world stage. Mason (2008: 23) posits that Putin as a resolute nationalist endeavoured to change the fortunes of Russia. Mason (2008: 24) further describes Vladimir Putin as an ex-high profile figure in the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (KGB), ultra-conservative and veteran of the Soviet years. Putin embarked on the efforts to strengthen state owned enterprises operating in the various sectors of the economy, with the view to transform the Russian economy. Yao (2007: 2) submits that Putin ruthlessly restricted the operating space of the oligarchs whose economic influence had entrenched in various business interests across the country and made sure that he dealt with the externalisation of the Russian wealth.

Mason (2008: 25) further argues that Putin firstly focused on domestic affairs and optimised the economic situation through commandeered policies which could thrive only under dictatorial conditions. Thus, he managed to gain a grip on the nation and counter US attempts to weaken Russia which is rapidly developing without following the example of Western liberal democracy. Yao (2007: 3) reasons that Russia, under Putin's leadership, has opted to openly challenge the West as well as the US at practically every turn, whether by planting a flag on the seabed beneath the Arctic icecap, testing the massive ordnance air blast bomb or disputing the siting of US early-warning defense systems in Eastern Europe, which it has managed to successfully halt for the moment. Russia's re-invention as a world power is illustrated in Putin's message himself in his famous speech at the Munich Security Conference (MSC) in February 2007 in tough talking commensurate with the Cold War nomenclature and that Russia assuming its place on the international arena and did not need any country to dictate to it how it was supposed to behave in the global affairs. (Larrabe 2010: 3). This illustrates Putin's strong will to take Russia back to its glory days.

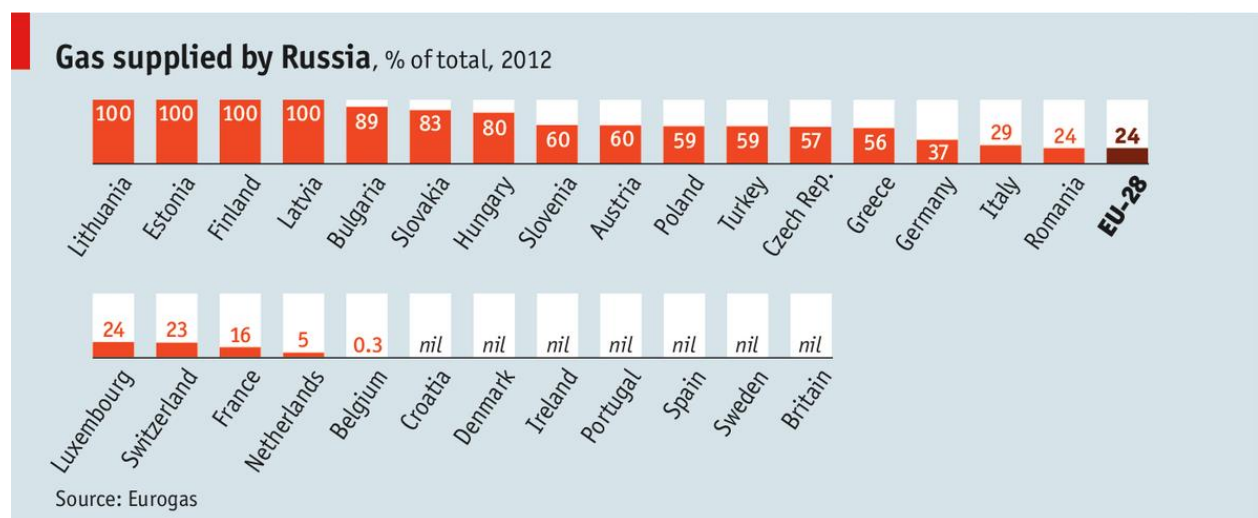
However, notwithstanding Russia's resurgence and its likely impact on the security in Europe, there are other views that the ascendancy of Putin ushered in a period of a purported sense of resurgence. There are views that the strength exuded by the Putin regime is illusory. According to Menon and Motyl (2007: 6) Putin inherited frail institutions from Yeltsin, but he has made them weaker still. Menon and Motyl (2007: 7) further argue that, accelerating a trend that began under Yeltsin, Putin has also promoted members of the secret police, the military, and various other security services to prominent positions. While Russia's body politic itself is riven by factionalism, this military-security complex shares an instinctive antipathy for democratic norms. In such polities, the lack of accountability invariably permits social problems to fester while office holders and the powerful take bribes and steal with abandon. In that vein the sustainability of the Putin factor as an indicator of Russia's resurgence is doubted.

### **2.3. Energy Economics and the Resurgence of Russia**

Energy resources also constitute a large part of the Russia's resurgence success story. The world boom in crude oil by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century facilitated the growing influence of the Russian energy industry (Hill 2004: 27). According to Olikier *et al* (2007: 19) earnings from gas, petroleum and refined oil products exports raised from \$28 billion in 1998 to \$217 billion in 2007 alone. Gazprom is Russia's largest company and the largest gas-producing company in the world where the state has the majority shareholding. Maranville (2006: 2) posits that

Gazprom has or is in the process of signing deals with China, India, Japan, Korea, Italy, Germany, France, Iran, Britain, Austria, Belgium, Turkey, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, Belarus and the USA. It hopes to be a major supplier to the United States, providing up to 20 % of America's liquefied natural gas needs within a decade or so (Maranville 2006: 3). As a result of a favourable oil production regime, the economy has grown in leaps and bounds since the end of the Cold War. The Graph 1.1 below illustrates the energy trade volumes of gas supplied by Russia to European states.

Graph1.1



(Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) on the 20/03/17)

The market economy that substituted the painful and traumatic Russian transition to the beginning of the new millennium in the 2000s inspired domestic economic stabilization and that surge in economic growth spurred Russia's confidence to take the world by storm. The Federation scored points on economic growth of up to 6.7% in 2007 with economic dynamism registering progress in telecommunications, transport, energy industry, construction retail and wholesale trade, and Financial Services (Oliker *et al* 2007: 21). The domino effect created by a booming oil industry saw Russia building up its currency reserves and start repaying its foreign debts (Trenin 2006: 33). Trade volumes between Russia and Europe rose dramatically leaving a favourable balance of trade for Russia by 2010. These energy resources have been utilised many a times by Russia in its carrot dangling project to the surrounding relatively smaller states to ensure loyalty, with Ukraine as the brilliant case in point. Failure to show that loyalty by the Balkan states has always triggered off avalanches of ugly consequences for them, especially the threat of military aggression.

Contrary to the boost brought by Russia's energy resources to bolster the resurgence of Russia, Menon and Motyl (2007: 8) argue that Russian oil and gas production may have peaked, and unless substantial investments are made in the near term, may even decline. Menon and Motyl (2007: 9) further argue that Russian oil and gas must pass through pipelines controlled, at least to some degree, by non-Russian states, particularly Ukraine. Due to this factor alone, as long as its neighbours retain this leverage, Russia's capacity to blackmail them will be balanced by their capacity to blackmail it, as the tumultuous energy relations between Russia and Ukraine illustrate. While Russia plans to build new pipelines that skirt its neighbours, most of its energy will continue to traverse the European territories for many years where sabotage of the pipeline is the order of the day.

#### **2.4. Military Mighty**

Another significant factor characterizing Russia's resurgence as a world superpower is its resurrected Military strength. Defence spending has risen 25 % annually since 2004, and Russia remains a nuclear power, having inherited the Soviet nuclear arsenal and its nuclear armoury certainly suffices for deterrence (Menon and Motyl (2007: 10). Putin has also under seen a vast modernity of the military with a multitude of project finished and currently underway in all branches. (Menon and Motyl 2007: 11). According to Mason (2008: 24), Russia has become the largest supplier of arms to China, Iran, and Venezuela and is courting the Middle East while the Air Force has developed the Mig-35 jet fighter, Su-34 fighter-bomber and Mil Mi-28 attack helicopter since 2000 (AFT, 2010). The Navy has been building new surface and submersible ships like the Admiral Sergey Gorshkov class frigate, Admiral Grigorovich class frigate and Lada Class submarines and also constructing Ivan Gren class landing ships whilst attempting to purchase French Mistral class amphibious assault ships (Filimonov 2010: 13). Filimonov (2010: 14) further predicts that all told, Russia's rearmament plan will see 100 additional ships deployed by 2020.

Filimonov (2010: 15) also posits that it remains to be seen what Russia plans to do with this modern naval capability, especially landing ships since they only serve the single purpose of invasion and this has unsettled its European neighbours. Russia has signed a deal with India to develop a stealth fighter as well as various military pacts. Moreover, its Middle East tours, position it as an alternative superpower to the US which is supplemented with its observer status in Arab league (Mason 2008: 25). As if that was not enough, Russia continues to use its Iran card and the sale of the S-300 missile systems card to frustrate US plans on UN sanctions against Iran. Russia plans to spend over \$200 billion in the next 5 years to modernize its military



(Mason 2008: 25). This includes new nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, a fleet of TU-160 supersonic strategic bombers and the development of a fifth generation fighter jet. (Mason, 2008: 26).

Dunne and Skons (2011: 1) argue that the strength in military spending has spurred Russia's competitiveness in the arms race which is in tandem with the Russian ambitions of wanting to be tagged as a dominant player in the strategic enterprise of the Military Industrial Complex (MIC). The MIC is the former United States of American President Dwight Eisenhower's lexicon, when he then referred to the need to establish large long term military wares buttressed by a permanent arms industry to counter the external threats of societal and political forces. (Eisenhower 1961). Dunne and Skons (2011: 3) further posit that, the MIC concept gradually evolved to mean deep rooted state and industry vested interests in expanding the military sector and increasing military spending, with external threats standing as the rationale for pursuing the same. This has been Russia's *modus operandi* in projecting its influence in Eastern Europe and the Kremlin authorities have for long sought to internationalise the view that it is a big player in the military industrial complex regime and has crystallized that aspect into fact worth boasting of on the international plane.

Menon and Motyl (2007: 11) posit that notwithstanding the military expansion, Russia's military industry is still a generation behind America's. During the Cold War the Soviet Union competed with the US in the arms and space race. Both nations developed powerful nuclear weapons. They both competed in delivery systems and both were able to construct Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) to deliver powerful warheads alongside strategic weapons systems. Both nations had huge military industry complexes which supplied technologically advanced weapons. Menon and Motyl (2007: 12) maintain that the disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in the newly independent states dividing up the military's assets. This led to a serious population decline from 148 million people to 141 million affecting the number of men and women who make up the army. This militates against the view that Russia is on the trajectory course to become a superpower.

## **2.5. Russia's Strategic Alliances**

The Russian Strategic Alliances with its former communist alliances is also a cause of concern for Europe and America. Mason (2008:23) submits that the growing integration of Eurasia within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is one notable example of Russia's spreading influence in Europe and Asia. The SCO was formed by Russia, China, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in 2001 and has expanded itself to court the sympathy of Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran. This coalition, which is similar in form to the European Union, boasts a half of the world's population, a half of its nuclear arsenal and a seemingly bottomless pit of natural resources to boot (Mason, 2000: 26). Now they have begun conducting joint military training exercises, something the EU struggles quite well at, the SCO is seemingly becoming a large counter-weight to NATO dominance. Illustratively, one Japanese foreign policy guru; Hiro noted in 2010 that the SCO was fast crystallizing into a rival block against USA's global coalition (Hiro 2010: 7). Hiro (2010: 11) further argued that if America continues expanding NATO further and further east of Berlin, the Beijing and Moscow authorities could easily shift the SCO's current priorities as an economic project, into a NATO matching military alliance (Hiro Ibid: 8). This view by Hiro could only be of utility to unpack the resurgence of Russia from the point of view of strategic alliance if these countries were highly integrated in the EU fashion. The fact that they are a loose conglomeration of states who have a reactive agenda to counter a strong security community such as the EU speaks volumes of their strength and sustainability of their relationship as an alliance worth its salt in military, economic and political affairs.

Another strategic alliance is the Moscow-Berlin pact where the alliance between Russia and Germany has disempowered Germany to act in a manner that appears to be contrary to the Russia's expansionist and military adventure in Eastern Europe. According to Maranville (2006: 4), this notion was evidenced by the procrastination by Chancellor Merkel in disapproving the Russian's military actions in Georgia in 2008, and when she later did she was not assertive as expected of her given that German by then had assumed some influential leadership in the EU. Maranville( 2006: 5) thus notes that Germany had avoided actions that appeared like they antagonized Russia in their NATO operations.

Menon and Motyl (2007: 12) however, argue that although Russia has built alliances in Europe and Asia, the Euro-American alliance remains the strongest and difficult to compete with in the long run. The USA proxies are numerous. Menon and Motyl (2007:14.) by bringing formerly Baltic nations into NATO, with the majority having joined in 2004, America provides their security and hence controls their defence apparatus. Similarly politically Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were integrated into the EU in 2004 when they became full members. This, in a big way reduces the purported dominance of Russia on its former interests.

## **2.6. Russia's Resolute Foreign Policy**

The resurgence of Russia is also marked by her pursuit of a resolute foreign policy. Russia has become more assertive as ever on the International plane. Russian foreign relations are currently being driven on reversing the post-Cold War trend and securing Russia's periphery by bringing all the former Soviet republics under its influence as is manifesting in the Crimean Province of Ukraine which has just voted in a referendum in 2014 for the secession from Ukraine for reintegration with Russia notwithstanding the world wide and in particular the EU condemnation.

Maranville (2006: 6) posits that Russia's exploits in Ukraine is directly competing with the world's superpower once again. Russia has taken full advantage of America's preoccupation with the Islamic world where Iran, Iraqi, Syria, the Israeli-Palestine crisis in the occupied territories of Gaza and the Islamic State of Iraqi and Syria (ISIS) are draining down the capacity of USA, leaving the Russian authorities with the an open cheque to proffer an octopus grip on its former territories of interest such as Ukraine. Moreover, the USA's political arena has been of late marred by divergent views on what foreign policy to project towards Moscow. The Congress has been divided with majority Republicans under President Donal Trump inclined towards a favourable alliance with Russia, and the minority Democrats calling for a tough stance against Moscow. This global vacuum has been strategic for Russia given that the USA, has remained entangled in many a crises around the globe by the year 2000. Dunne and Skons (2011: 5) argue that the global financial crisis of 2008 also proved to be of utility to Russia as it rallied itself as a sole option and saviour to the small states which looked towards Europe and America for strategic economic and military alliances. Meanwhile, Russia sought to project its influence and military capabilities far and wide.

Colton and Skach (2005: 19) advance that the project to bring all of the former Soviet republics under Russian influence has been a meticulous task led by Vladimir Putin and it has already made significant gains in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia and set to make significant gains in Azerbaijan and should have removed what remains of western influence in the Caucasian nation. Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia are already members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a Moscow-led security group comprising pro-Russian former Soviet states. The CSTO is primarily a bloc that Russia uses to integrate with and project influence throughout former Soviet republics via security coordination while Russia has concluded a deal for a Customs Union with Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia which will align their economies to Moscow further. Azerbaijan is considering CTSO membership and in

Ukraine's January 2010 elections a pro-Russian came to power and in Kyrgyzstan, similarly Russia inspired regime change in May 2010. Maranville (2006: 11) forecasts that Russia will very soon have 70% of the former Soviet Union under its control and any effort to change Russian expansion must be monumental if it is to succeed. Mason (Mason 2008: 27) posits that with the US still looking to extricate itself from Iraq and Afghanistan, Russia looks to be moving into poll position in attempting to shift the global balance of power.

However, while the Russian foreign policy is inclined towards strengthening its status as a resurging superpower, the ambitions of China should not be ignored as they far outweigh those of Russia as illustrated by the Sino-American ties especially in the storm of the global financial crisis that has seen America extending a friendly handshake to Beijing. China's growing economy, technology and military strength has seen it spreading tentacles to Asia and Africa hence frustrating the Russian agenda of re-emerging as America's match in world and European affairs.

## **2.7. European Union's Foreign Policy on Russia's Resurgence**

While the news of the resurgence of Russia explored above is received positively within Russia, the same has not been taken lightly in Europe from a security perspective. The impact or Russia's resurgence as a world superpower has negatively impacted on the European authorities. A very crucial point of departure is the pronouncement by the then President and now Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev in 2008. He outlined five principles guiding foreign policy of Russia in the wake of the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states in an interview given to Television Channels: Channel One, Rossia, NTV: as follows:

.....Fourth, protecting the lives and dignity of our citizens, wherever they may be, is an unquestionable priority for our country...We will also protect the interests of our business community abroad. It should be clear to all that we will respond to any aggressive acts committed against us. Finally, fifth, as is the case of other countries, there are certain regions we pay particular attention to, there are regions in which Russia has privileged interests. These regions are home to countries with which we share special historical relations and are bound together as friends and good neighbours. We will pay particular attention to our work in these regions and build friendly ties with these countries, our close neighbours. These are the principles I will follow in carrying out our foreign policy.

These Medvedev objectives only help to fan hostilities with the EU given its assimilative policy towards the East European countries as evidenced by its flexibility in allowing other countries from that region to join it in 2004. These words articulate overall Russian foreign policy as it

seeks to re-establish its influence in post-soviet space and intends to alter the security order and narrative. In fact this speaks to the growing influence of Russia that firmly believes it cannot be a co-author of global strategic affairs.

## **2.8. NATO's View of the Resurgence of Russia as a Big Power**

Another security dimension instigated by the resurgence of Russia in Europe is understood from the interface between it and the NATO operations in Eastern Europe. Eastern European countries which fall under the influence of the privileged interests of Russia have become members of NATO, with examples being Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. With Russia's resurgence and its appetite to reclaim its authority in its former sphere of influence, this may unsettle NATO and create potential for military clashes hence impacting negatively on security in Europe. This has already manifested in the 1999 Kosovo conflict where the Russians supported the Communist Kosovo government while NATO Supported the Kosove Albanian Group (Hiro 2010: 9).

There is also growing discontentment on the party of the NATO Balkan states on the failure by NATO to deal with Russia decisively especially in view of the 2008 Georgian conflict which saw Russia shelling Georgia with no action from NATO. Hiro (2010: 13) submits that Russia has been accused of supplying Surface-to-air missiles to Syria and Iran, Ukraine rebels and Hamas and supplying fuel for Iran's experimental nuclear reactor which are all in clear contradiction to NATO policy in the area and are considered successful at advancing Russian relations with the Middle East, as seen by dwindling support for the Islamic Chechen rebels.

## **2.9. Russo-Ukraine Aggression**

The Russia-Ukraine debacle is also very crucial in explaining the impact of Russian resurgence on security in Europe. It is on record that Russia has been preventing Ukraine's wish to be a member of NATO for a long time as a result of its resurgence. It has sponsored a number of security threats to Ukraine, with the most recent one being its influence of the Crimea to become part of Russia by sponsoring a worldwide condemned referendum that left Crimea part Russia. This has rubbed Kiev which has been threatened by Russia for oil disconnections together with European supplies. The Russian energy giant Gazprom cut off natural gas supplies to its neighbour in June 2014, warning that the reduction could diminish the amount of gas flowing to Europe. The cut-off came after Ukraine missed a Russian-imposed deadline to pay a nearly \$2 billion instalment for past gas deliveries, with senior officials on both sides exchanging heated remarks blaming the other (Hiro 2010: 19).

In that vein, the Ukrainian leadership accused Russia of fomenting a gas war on top of the violence for which it blames Moscow, while the Russian Prime Minister, Dmitri Medvedev, dismissed the entire Ukrainian leadership. Hiro (Hiro 2010: 15) submits that on the surface, the dispute was about a large unpaid bill, nearly \$4.5 billion in total, that Gazprom said Ukraine owed. The company, 50.01 % owned by the Russian state, demanded that Kiev both settle its debt and pay in advance for future delivery before supplies resume. According to Hiro (2010: 27) the gas showdown is rooted in two larger disputes as illustrated below.

First and foremost, the violence in eastern Ukraine between separatists devoted to Russia and the Ukrainian military is escalating, when the separatists shot down a transport plane and demonstrators in Kiev swarmed the Russian Embassy in response. In a statement, the then Ukrainian Prime minister, Arseniy P. Yatsenyuk, in early 2014 said that Russia's move was part of a larger pattern of Kremlin aggression and was not about gas but a deep hatred that caused it to scheme against Ukraine as evidenced by the annexation of Ukraine.

Secondly, Gazprom has provoked economic ire in Europe over its plans to build an alternative gas route under the Black Sea for the company's exclusive use, contradicting Europe's open access laws. The Russian Naval base called the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) the Crimean city of Sevastopol was also a major cause of friction as the Moscow authorities wanted to extend its dominance and they had to find means to maintain the naval base there, hence their continued grip on Ukraine territory in the eastern parts which fuels the growing uncertainties surrounding the future of Europe in view of the same.

In view of the foregoing review of literature, it can be argued that Russia has a history of global ambitions and was a world power in its recent history, the dissolution of the Soviet Union created a crisis in all aspects of Russian society. Putin came to power and he has managed to gain a grip on the country and brought stability to many areas. This has enabled Russia to build its defences, reconstruct its broken economy and today it is able to project power globally. Moreover, America's occupation with Iraq and Afghanistan has allowed Russia to rebuild its offensive capabilities and reverse many of the strategies the US implemented when the Soviet Union collapsed. Russia has the advantage of ample supplies of energy to fuel its global military ambitions. Russia has the world's largest proven natural gas reserves; it is the world's second largest oil producer in the world and possess the world's third largest Uranium reserves (USA Energy Information Administration 2016).

Moreover, Russia has successfully used its energy as a political tool against Europe and the reversal of EU expansion has been due to Russia's energy advantages over Europe. As Russia puts the finishing touches on winning back the former soviet republics on its immediate border, Russia is well placed to project its influence globally. Although its military remains well behind America's, its resurgence on many fronts cannot be ignored. Its ambitious resurgence as a world assertive superpower as discussed above has ugly implications on security in Europe.

## **2.10. Realist theory- A Power Perspective of Russian Resurgence**

It is pertinent to point out from the outset that realism according to Cozette (2008:667) realism contends that politics is a manifestation of the struggle for power and survival, and thus depicts international politics as a battlefield of perpetual states conflicts with little or no prospects for change and peace. This statement is apt in view of the resurging Russia which has become so assertive a player in the international system since the ascendancy of Putin to power in the early 2000. This is also evidenced by the mayhem and pandemonium that Russia has been sponsoring in Ukraine, chief among such being the case of the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The ideas of realism come from the writings of such historical figures as Sun Tzu of ancient China, Thucydides of ancient Greece, and Renaissance Italy's Niccolò Machiavelli. All of these thinkers argued that the leaders of nations use their power to advance the interests of their own nations with little regard for morality or friendship. Realism as the most widely accepted pessimistic approach to the understanding and the study of international relations, advances that states like human beings are essentially selfish, and bound to clash for power. Realists such as Morgenthau (1960:327) propound that states act only out of self-interest and that their major goal is to advance their own positions of power. Morgenthau, quoted in Mearsheimer (2001:151) famously proclaims classical realism which is the extreme version of the two strands of realism opposed to neo-realism propounded by Walts (1979), which envisages a never-ending appetite and indefatigable pursuit for power struggle among States arising from a natural human urge to dominate others. He further argues that states are hardwired with an insatiable lust for power. This study on Russia's resurgence is unravelled within the context of the classical realism given Russia's assertive approaches in expanding its territories into its former colonies. Moreover, the classical realism is the kind that suits Putin's voracious appetite for pursuing an expansionist agenda, with him as the only author other than co-author of international affairs.

This puts paid to Russia's propensity and appetite to project its influence in the Balkans with its military exploits in Georgia in 2008 and the Ukrainian peninsula in 2014, the Crimea as glaring cases in point. Putin's new found zeal and gusto to amplify the capabilities of Russia at the expense of smaller Balkan States, without due regard to the well-being of the inhabitants of those territories is an eloquent witness to the fact that States like human beings and in a realistic fashion, act solely out of self-interest fired up by selfish considerations.

The realist theory is firmly rooted in the notion that, in an endeavor to survive, leaders build their power and avoid feelings of friendship or morality towards their adversaries. Waltz (1979: 126) underscores power as a means rather than an end in an anarchic international system and the goal the system encourages them to seek is security. Mearsheimer (2001: 2) buttresses Waltz's point of view by describing international politics as dangerous and ruthless business where the great powers renders the international arena as a battleground with the view to amass more and more power. Mearsheimer (2001: 12) further argues that calculations of power lie at the heart of how states think about the world around them, with states recognizing that maximizing one's relative power is the key to survival in an anarchic world. Mearsheimer (2001:36) further depicts that the best way for a state to survive in anarchy is to take advantage of other states and gain power at their expense.

Accordingly, and in a manner that resonates well with Morgenthau and Mearsheimer's theoretical postulations, Russia's main strategic goal in its strategic geopolitical location between Europe and Asia lies in the achievement of great power status equal to the US, China or the EU. Therefore, Russia foreign policy focuses on creating a system of international relations, in which large states are the primary guardians of the global order based on a general balance of power among themselves (multipolarism), respecting one another's position within their spheres of influence as big powers but taking advantage of small States around them. This balance of power scenario helps to promote stability sometimes as the powerful states would be reluctant to go to war fearing consequences that leave them on the loss. Russia aspires to be a unique balance holder and intermediary between the West and the rest on the global scene pursuing independent course with equal distance to other poles of power. (Balcer, A and Petrov, N. 2012: 3). However, Russia's military and economic power as compared to the USA with which it competes leaves a lot to be argued if the balance of power is symmetrical or asymmetrical. This is in view of the fact that Russia does not match the USA's power militarily, economically and in terms of global influence. Thus, it can only be argued that the balance of



power currently in play is asymmetrical in nature, but that said, Russia remains competitive especially with its new found optimism of grace and growing influence on the international arena. Russia harnesses its uniqueness well which it derives from its locus of belonging in the European cultural community and, simultaneously, the Eurasian and non-western economic character of its geopolitical advantage.

Realists such as Morgenthau (1960: 328) believe that conflict and war are inevitable. As stated, anarchy predominate the international landscape. In such an environment, conflict between powers became more likely. This is true if the manner in which the Moscow authorities at the decree of Putin is anything to go by, especially in light of how Russia launched a surprise attack on the South Eastern province of Ukraine, the Crimea. Donnelly (2000:70), amplifies the preceding point, by holding that the international system is anarchic, and that states inherently possess some offensive military capability, which gives them the wherewithal to hurt and possibly destroy each other He further notes that no state can ever be certain another state will not use its offense military capability, the most basic motive driving states is survival and states are motivated primarily by their national interest. The Russian military adventure left Southern Ukraine a war torn zone and that left the world awe-stricken, and worse still, instead of casting Russia in bad light, it charmed the inhabitants of Crimea who, in an unprecedented fashion, voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to become part of Russia. As a matter of fact, it is offensive realism for Russia which is indeed interested primarily in security for herself at all cost, notwithstanding that such security moves do threaten other smaller states, and thus throw the whole of East Europe in general, and Ukraine in particular into pandemonium mode, causing them to take countermeasures, as in the security dilemma, and subsequently crystallizing the situation into an infinite vicious circle of fear and insecurity.

Furthermore, realist theory purports that for one nation to gain something, another must lose. In support of this, Rourke (1998: 20) coins that realists see this struggle for power as a zero-sum game, one in which a gain for one country is inevitably a loss for others. The Russian military exploits in Ukraine which led to its annexation of Crimea is a good case in point. This is accompanied by possible bad consequences like revenge thus creating an environment of perpetual rifts. In this spirit of revenge, Ukraine escalated its efforts in forging strong alliances with the EU in order to attract the sympathy of NATO with the view that if Russian aggression continued, Ukraine would be secure enough to counterbalance the Russian threat. This is underscored by Mearsheimer (2001:151)'s realist narrative that all states have capabilities for

doing each other harm, and each is driven to amass much power as it can, in order to be as more secure as possible against attack. As intimated to earlier, for Mearsheimer (2001:151), the offensive realist scenarios are moves of territorial expansion, which involve actually taking something from others with arms procurement or alliance formation. The actual behavior on the way of achieving this objective can be virtually indistinguishable from pure aggrandizement by great powers such as Russia.

In a true realist fashion, Mearsheimer (2001:363) argues that international institutions such as intergovernmental organisations are essentially irrelevant, because they merely reflect state interests and policies and do not exert any independent effects on the struggle for power. In addition, nations act selfishly and do not answer to such purported higher authority. Thus, without higher authority, States must protect themselves and look after their own interests. According to Ito (1997:1), the power states seek to gain for their defense in turn appears to be threatening to others, and states have constant fear and an incessant need to acquire and exercise power. The belittling of international institutions derives relevance from the actions by Russia in Ukraine and Crimea in particular. Notwithstanding the worldwide condemnation by the United Nations and the EU bloc and the transatlantic neo-liberal democratic forces, Russia ignored such clarion call to abandon its military campaign in Ukraine in order to pursue the pacific settlement of dispute option. This practically absolves the realist narrative as a relevant, living and applicable theory in international relations especially if the extent to which Russia undermined international institutions in the demonstration of its military prowess in Ukraine is to be considered. In any event, Russia is a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with veto power to outflank any attempts by the USA and its European allies in the UNSC; France and Britain to slap it with any form of embargo envisaged under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

While the realist approach invariably appears very relevant in unravelling the nexus between the resurgence of Russia as a big power and implications of security in Europe, it is nevertheless without impurities. The realist approach, first and foremost, has been criticized for being too pessimistic of the prospects of peace and security in the international affairs. It has also been attacked for being too simplistic and thus fails to capture the complexities of international relations such as the south to south cooperation and complex interdependence in view of possible bilateralism and multilateralism among states. According to Carr (1946:236), it is simplistic for realists to advance that States exist exclusively to pursue power mongering and

maximization. Carr (1946: 237) further advances that realists paint a very eerie and bloody picture of relations among States, forgetting the friendly and humanitarian gestures between even those States perceived as enemies. This can be supported by the fact that, no matter how Russia may seek to deploy its aggression against Ukraine, it still needs it as Ukraine offers the only safe gateway passage for Russian pipeline infrastructure that transports gas to the rest of Europe. Accordingly, prospects of peace and economic solidarity are always there.

Critics of realism that defines national interest only in terms of power and selfishness of States also argue that a nation's actions result from the conflicting pulls of various interest groups, constituencies, agencies, and individuals. They maintain that the national interest of any nation may not be centered solely on power because so many different constituencies exist, and a nation's pursuit of its interests may be far from being rational. Keohane and Nye (1977: 42) also offers a systematic critic of realism citing complex interdependence predicated upon a 'multiple of issues' approach as a signaling of the fundamental shift from pursuit of power as the sole interest of States other multiple issues and actors. McInnes (1993: 71) buttresses this point by observing that the end of the Cold War has fundamentally altered the contours of traditional security issues to cover a broad spectrum of issues such as individual human rights, the environment, climate change, the economy, unemployment, immigration, international terrorism, illicit arms and drugs trafficking, AIDS and cultural/identity. A good example is of possible isolation of Russia by its trade partners such as the EU and the USA over its military adventure in Ukraine which seems irrational because Russia would at the end of the day lose more than it would gain. Conversely therefore, the struggle for power may assume a bloated role for Russia in its Balkan interests far beyond what might be considered "realistic."

The most conspicuously persuasive argument in the anti-realist analysis is the existing 'non-security' interests of states, which are not solely centered on the enterprise of selfish power mongering such as advancement of an ideology, national unification or protection of human rights. According to Carr (1946:236) there is a sense of unity, evidenced by the formation of international and regional bodies such as the UN, Southern African Development Committee (SADC), Arab League, Europe Union (EU), African Union (AU) and others in mastering their efforts to foster unity. United Nations plays a very centripetal role in securing peace by pursuing mediation, thus undermining the raw realist notion that international politics merely constituted with power struggles. In support of this above notion, Ito (1997:1) postulates that there are supranational actors such as inter-governmental organisations, international non-

governmental and transnational organizations engaging in peace movements and international economic solidarity and development. Russia itself is one such country that seeks to be a big player in these international fora for mutual benefits even with smaller Balkan States. Therefore, it is unfathomable that Russia repudiates the transformation of international politics from largely a competitive arena to one of cooperation, prediction of peaceful world institutions and economic interdependence.

In the final analysis, and in view of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower and its implications for peace and security in Europe, eminent realist writers aptly maintain that there is a clear hierarchy of state goals, with security being the primary concern and once survival is assured, states can safely seek such other goals as wealth, ideology, or human rights (Waltz 1979 and Mearsheimer 2001). They hold steadfastly that this can only be to the extent that the pursuit of these goals does not come into conflict with the pursuit of security goals. Cozette (2008:667)'s appraisal is thus persuasive as it classically locates Russia's resurgence and ambitions in its 'former interests' States such as Ukraine as that of sometimes pursuing other goals but with its eyes focused on the ball of power and or its security interests. This, often times, is unfortunately characterized by an albatross of insecurity in East Europe when Balkan States such as Ukraine attempt to also flex their muscle in forging alliances with Europe in a manner that threatens the reawakening giant in Eurasia, Russia.

Therefore, this study explores the resurgence of Russia as a world superpower through the lenses of the realist theory is imbedded in power relations of States. Russia's resurgence will be viewed as an attempt by the same to gain power or influence to reclaim its status it enjoyed during the bipolar cold war era with the USA through maximisation of military power, expansionism in the Balkan states such as Ukraine and the unfettered spread of its economic, military and diplomatic tentacles in Europe. This quest to maximise power will be analysed so as to debunk the nexus between such application of power and the potential implications on security in Europe.

Thus, Russia's power position on the world scene is predicated upon its military capabilities characterized by the largest stock-piles of nuclear weapons and fissile materials in the world, military-industrial complex second only to the US, the fifth military expenditures in the world and the second according to their share in the GDP among the biggest economies, one of the largest armed forces on the globe regarding numbers of serviceman and military equipment (Balcer and Petrov 2012). It also has the largest natural potential (agriculture, minerals, energy)

with particular importance of energy resources. The BP Statistical Review of 2011 revealed that Russia has nearly 24% of proven world reserves of natural gas (1st place in the world), more than 18% of the world's proven coal deposits (2nd place), nearly 9% of the world's proven reserves uranium (3rd place) and more than 5.5% of global proven crude oil (7th place). It also boasts of a massive territory with economic potential (the sixth GDP (PPP) in the world, the third international foreign exchange reserves, the third fastest pace of growth among the largest economies (top 10) since 2000, small public and foreign debt (Ibid).

### **2.11. Constructivist theory- A Socio- Political Perspective of Russia's Resurgence**

The resurgence of Russia as a superpower is also viewed through the lenses of constructivist theory. The constructivist approach of international relations, which focuses on perception and identity, providing an explanatory element to ideas, perceptions and interpretations, is also relevant in assessing the resurgence of Russia and its implications for security in Europe. The analysis of Russian strategy in terms of power, security, international influence and military and economic components provides a partial explanation for the situation, a meta-analysis focusing on discourse, perceptions and imagination as an incomparable tool for understanding the elements underlying strategic decisions of Russia in its ambitious influential reawakening

According to Walter and Simmons (2002: 95), although considerations of an economic, political or security-related nature are taken into account by the actors in the decision-making process, strategic decisions are also influenced by socially-constructed knowledge. Similarly Perrier (2014: 1) argues that the constructivist theory provides a link between social identities and political decisions: perceptions developed in different ideological contexts, providing a method to understand international relations, giving meaning to the different strategic decisions, shaping perceptions of national interest, of threats and challenges, the vision of the country's place in the world, its historical mission and the notion of national security that results.

Jackson (2001: 10) posits that constructivism offers the promise of reintroducing a focus on the particular and unique social, cultural and political practices of states to international relations theory. Thus, constructivism centres on the analysis of the interplay and development of historically contingent identities, worldviews and inter-subjective understandings of international relations is central to the Constructivist approach to analysing world politics. Jackson (2001:127) further argue that in contrast to realism and neo-Realism which assume

that States act in terms of an unvarying and universal self-interest understood as enhancing their power and security in the context of an anarchic political setting, constructivism assumes that the "self" or identity of a state is a dependent variable determined by historical, cultural, social and political context (Hopf, 1998, Wendt, 1999).

Therefore, a state's behaviour is viewed as an intention to reproduce its identity as a state actor conditioned by shared, intersubjective constitutive norms. A good example is of Russia's clear intention to reproduce itself as a great power not only in Eurasia but in the world. Constructivist international relations theory focuses not only on policy elites' construction of the identity of the state as actor and the construction of national interests, but the construction of national identities by elites, as well as the self-construction of individual political identities. (Hopf, 1998, Wendt, 1999). This point speaks to Putin's projection of power and his 'strong man' identity which has been acknowledged in the international domain even by world leaders such as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the USA, Donald Trump. Even in his diplomatic encounter with Ukraine, President Putin presented himself as a tough man who is resolute on annexing the Crimea and protect the Russian population in Ukraine.

It is evident that from the viewpoint of constructivist theory, Russia's state actor identity is not produced in isolation from its former territories and a larger world. It is constructed and reproduced in interaction with other identities, and in accordance with international intersubjective norms which signify, what constitutes a superpower State. The Russian authorities thus strive to deploy an identity of a superpower that is ready to defend its former territories, challenge the USA and forge alliances with the Balkan states with itself as a big brother. Moreover, Russia is keen on projecting its military power in order to counter balance the threat posed by NATO. While Realists assume that the anarchic character of the international system is an objective reality which profoundly shapes the behaviour of states, constructivists assume that anarchy is shaped and inspired by states (Jackson 2001: 11). From a Constructivist viewpoint, for instance, Putin chose to pursue a different path from that pursued by Gorbachev who pushed cooperated with Ronald Reagan as a major boost to the ending of Cold War and Boris Yeltsin who pursued a rather passive international diplomatic offensive and left Russia a less influential State (Koslowski, 1994). Thus, as intimated to before, Putin can be said to be insistent in being the sole author rather than the co-author in the shaping of global affairs.

In theory the contemporary Russian political elite has embraced and acted to sustain a variety of Russian international political actor identities, projecting Russia as Great Power, Russia as regional hegemon, Russia as modern, Russia as separate Slavic orthodox civilization and Russia as centre of Eurasian civilization (Jackson, 2001) it has also reshaped its military world outlook to be one of the greatest military actors who are ready to defend itself at all costs. Its big military spending is meant to send a clear message to the outside world that it remains and continues to be a big military player. It has not done this by its military adventures in Ukraine alone, but has asserted its dominance in the Syrian crisis, as the custodian of reason and broker of peace in Damascus.

It can be argued with somewhat air of authority that Russia's behaviour in international relations is assumed from the standpoint of Constructivism to represent an effort to reproduce an international identity in a form that will be recognized by other in terms of intersubjective, constitutive norms. It has emphasized in forceful diplomacy in dealing with political conflicts in the post-Cold War era as evidenced by its military involvement in Georgia and Ukraine.

## **2.12. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the literature review and theoretical framework that guides this study. The realist theory and constructivist theories have been discussed and their relevance in the growing influence of Russia in the world order that manifested in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its implication for security in Europe has been explored. The prominent realist theory has illuminated on other subsidiary theories such as the power and balance of power theories. This chapter also presented a critique of the relevance of the realist theory to the study by counter arguing its applicability in the face of liberalism manifesting in complex interdependence. Given the overly pessimistic nature of realism, constructivism has laced the discussion in an interesting manner given its distinct feature of providing the explanatory power of the changing influence of Russia on the international plane that is necessary to the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This Chapter explains how the objectives intimated earlier would be operationalised in view of the theoretical parameters presented in Chapter two. It presents the overarching qualitative inclined research design in form of sampling procedures, followed by an outline in form of data collection techniques that were used during the research and how that data was analysed.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

This study subscribes to a paradigm of realism as Healey and Perry (2000:118-126) posit within the epistemological debate of qualitative research paradigm achieved through the case study research design. Thus, the obvious consequence of this approach is that the sampling methods, the data collection and research instruments, and the incidental data analysis will be in line with the qualitative approaches. This approach is largely employed because the study aims at exploring subjective experiences and the meanings attached to the experiences of various representatives of States in East Europe and Russia and other international relations analysts as interested stakeholders or actors in the international affairs of that region.

Both explanatory and descriptive approaches are relevant under this case study design. In this case the descriptive research approaches enabled the researcher to describe characteristics of the phenomenon of the resurgence of Russia and the characteristic implications on security in East Europe (Shields and Tajalli 2006:320). The explanatory approach, also known as causal research, allowed the researcher to identify the extent and nature of cause-and-effect relationships between the resurgence of Russia and its implications on security in East Europe. Zikmund et al (2012: 22) notes that causal research is conducted with the view to assess impacts of specific changes or aspects on status quo.

##### **3.2.1. Methodology**

As intimated earlier, this research adopts a qualitative research methodology informed by phenomenological philosophy which has numerous advantages. The research seeks to analyse the effects of the resurgence of Russia as big power and its implications on security in East Europe, and this involves people's perceptions on the phenomenology of strategic affairs as well as behaviours of states in the international system. Shaughnessy *et al*, (2012:27) posits that qualitative research describes other than explaining. Howitt and Cramer (2011: 36)



buttresses the preceding argument by arguing that qualitative research is of utility in unlocking value from subjective experiences, and probing deeply into the actions, insights and motivations of people.

### **3.2.2. Case Study of Ukraine**

This research adopts a case study approach in the collection of data. Case study is an intensive description and analysis of a single individual or situation (Finlay 2008: 15). Case studies frequently make use of qualitative data. Howitt and Cramer (2011 :37) points out that when carrying out research using case study method, data is obtained from several sources which include naturalistic observation, interviews and archival records. Case studies are a source of hypotheses and ideas about normal or abnormal behaviour (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Shaughnessy *et al* (2012: 9) asserts that case studies provide a potentially rich source of information about individuals or situations. Shaughnessy *et al* (2012: 11) reiterates that case studies also provide new ideas and hypotheses and a chance to study rare phenomenon.

The chosen case study explores the Russo-Ukraine aggression and military experiences which had the real risk of destabilising East Europe post 2014. Thus, Ukraine has been chosen as a case study as it is at the centre of the Russian's quest to reclaim its former territories that now seem to be inclined towards joining the EU. The case study focus of this research is on the understanding of meanings, beliefs and experiences as they relate to Russia's resurgence and security in East Europe. This understanding can only be achieved by subscribing to the case study research design. The case study design embedded in the qualitative approach will also allow a thorough probe into the forces behind the behaviour; motivations and choices of state actors in the Russo-European security discourse through the use of in-depth interviews with the ambassadors representing East European countries, the European Union, Russia and Ukraine in Zimbabwe.

### **3.3. Sampling Method**

Strauss and Cobin (1990: 77) define sampling as the use of a subset of the targeted population to represent the whole population or to inform about social processes that are meaningful beyond the particular cases, individuals or sites studied. This study employed non-probability sampling method which does not allow the probability of getting any particular sample to be calculated as is in the case of probability sampling, which adjusts to the research question that the envisages to answer (Strauss and Cobin 1990). Thus, this study confined itself to non-probability sampling which is qualitative in nature other than probability

sampling which favours qualitative techniques at two levels: the diplomatic level and the local level.

At the diplomatic level, the first group of respondent constitutes key informants who will be purposively sampled whereby those considered as most appropriate rich sources of information on the subject will be deliberately chosen to be interviewed (Lucas 2014: 338). These include ambassadors, high commissioners, permanent representatives of European states, the European Union and Russia. Ambassadors from the neighbouring Asian states such as China, Iran, and India are also relevant in exploring the influence of Russia in its strategic alliance building for the purposes of defeating Europe. This were carried out through non-probability sampling with particular use of the purposive or judgemental sampling method where ambassadors from the region under review are obviously experts in the International affairs and security aspects for the same.

The second phase of sampling at the local level involved in-depth interviews with local academia, international relations analysts and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Purposively sampled interviewees were chosen on the bases of non-probability sampling approaches, in particular the purposive method as defined above. This is so because of the need to sample relevant categories of people due to their expertise and education in Russo-European international relations and security affairs.

### **3.4. Data collection methods**

Data collection ranged from in-depth interviews with the relevant key informants who are ambassadors, experts, academia and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials to secondary data analysis through a thorough review of documents. In-depth interviews with ambassadors helped the researcher to get first-hand information pertaining to how and why Russia has used its resurgence a superpower to expand its influence in Europe. The local experts also added value to the study as they helped to explore the extent to which Russia's resurgence has impacted on security in East Europe. They also provided the technical assessment of the security issues in Europe and the possible solutions to the ongoing debacle. Various documentary resources such as internet and library research were used. Where possible, foreign policy sources of various states involved in the research were also explored.

### **3.5. Data Collection Instruments**

An interview guide was used to collect data from key informants. The guide was emailed to the chosen respondents prior to meeting them for a face to face interview encounter. The interview guide was employed in interviewing all the chosen officials. Depending on the flow of the discussion during the interview, the researcher randomly paused questions guided by the interview guide.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

According to Ader (2008: 333), data analysis refers to a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. Content data analysis was employed to analyse the data from secondary data such as documentary evidence, speeches, and texts from the library and internet research. In analysing data and decoding or deriving meaning from the in-depth interviews, the thematic analysis was relevant.

#### **3.6.1. Content Data Analysis**

According to Hodder (1994: 155), content data analysis is a set of manual techniques for contextualized interpretations of documents to produce valid and trustworthy inferences. In that vein, secondary data that constitute journals, authoritative texts, foreign policy documents of Ukraine, Russia and selected European Union and American was analysed through a content analysis which is a qualitative research technique useful for analysing and understanding collection of texts, that is, examining words or phrases within a wide range of texts.

The researcher in analysing the resurgence of Russia and its implications in East Europe paid particular attention on large amounts of textual information addressing generic aspects such as the role of Putin, energy resources and strategic alliances and systematically identify the thrust of that information in unlocking the value of the research. The properties of the text in journals and texts, such as the frequencies of most used keywords and identification of the most important structures of content of text in speeches and public policy pronouncement such as Russian Presidents Medvedev and Putin's assertive statements on their need to protect and fight for their former territories and Russians abroad in places such as Crimea, Donbas and Donetsk were also coded by the researcher. This helped the researcher in identifying patterns permeating the text and interpreting meanings, by labelling words and phrases that relate to research questions pertaining to the factors characterising the resurgence of Russia and implications of such phenomenon on security in Eastern Europe.

### **3.6.2. Thematic Data Analysis**

The qualitative data generated from in-depth interviews was categorized into themes in order to facilitate the data analysis. Thematic data analysis entails pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns or themes within data (Braun, *et al* 2006: 83). According to Fereday (2006: 4) themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question, which in this study represented two major themes: the Resurgence of Russia and security implications in Eastern Europe which became the major categories for analysis.

After the researcher interviewed five senior Officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who are serving and had served in Eastern Europe, five officials serving in the Political Affairs Unit of the Russian embassy in Germany [The Researcher visited Berlin in April 2017), three ambassadors of occidental origin and two scholars in International Relations, thematic analysis was performed firstly by familiarization with the data laid down on note books. This was followed by generating initial codes categorised into factors that spurred the reawakening of Russia as a big power in international relations such as the military might, resolute foreign policy and strategic partnerships by Russia. This was followed by assigning themes to the six codes identified which spoke to the factors that influenced the resurgence of Russia. The two themes which emerged were two variables of the research, the resurgence of Russia and security in Eastern Europe. These themes were reviewed and were defined and named as such and became the basis of the production of the final set of arguments as presented under Chapter 4 on the findings.

### **3.7. Validity of the Study**

Issues of validity of the study on the resurgence of Russia as a world power and its impact in East Europe, with particular focus on Ukraine are very critical. In view of the foregoing, it is imperative for this study to ascertain the validity or the extent to which a test measures what it claims to measure. Both internal and external validity will be ascertained. This is due to the fact that internal validity of the extent to which the resurgence of Russia, which is the independent variable in this study, will produce the observed effect on security, the dependent variable, in East Europe is only due to the variations in the independent variable. On external validity, the potential of generalising the results of the study of Russian resurgence and its effect on security in Ukraine and extending such results to other Eastern European States such as Turkey and Georgia which have for a long time been at the receiving end of insecurity because of Russia's military adventures in East Europe.

### **3.8. Reliability of the Study**

Dependability or consistency of this study is of paramount importance if it is to be regarded as worthy venturing in. Given a very protracted history of Russian military prowess in East Europe, particularly in Ukraine (2014) and Georgia (2008) and its octopus grip on the small independent States which used be part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, it is imperative that the dependability or consistency of Russia's military behaviour in East Europe be explored. If the world has witnessed an aggressive Russia in Georgia and its bruising encounters with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Georgia in 2008, can that be decoded to be of utility in determining the likely attitude of Russia in its diplomatic and military encounters with Ukraine in international affairs? This question is key as it directly speaks to the reliability of the extent of this study's quality of measurement and whether it suggests that the same data would each time it is collected reflect repeated observation of the same phenomenon.

Thus, both stability reliability that is concerned with reliability of this study across time and representative reliability which is concerned with reliability across sub-populations or groups of people are relevant. This is so given that across time since the end of cold war, Russia's expansionist policies have been very evident as she tries to assert her authority in East Europe and across sub-populations or groups of people concentrated along the Balkan enclave.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

Research involves collecting data from and about people. For this reason, it is integral to observe high ethical standards if credible and trustworthy research findings are to be produced. According to Creswell (2014), it is essential that researchers protect their research participants, develop a relationship of trust with them that is cultivating a rapport, promote the integrity of research, and guard against misconduct and impropriety. Consistent with these views, ethical protocols for this study will be followed in light of fieldwork and the data analysis. Pera and Van Tonder (1996:4) define ethics as a code of conduct or behaviour considered correct in research. Thus, ethics define the rule of the game in the conduct of research.

The researcher first acquired an authorization letter from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies. The letter helped the researcher to enter into the designated institutions and targeted respondents. Before conducting any data collection, the researcher will first seek consent from the respondents which will be based on voluntary participation. The researcher explained the purpose of the research, in this case the academic purpose of the study, and then

asked respondents to participate willingly. The researcher respected privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. The researcher assigned pseudonyms and occupational designations instead of real names of the participants to those who refused to be named in the study.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This Chapter has outlined how the study is executed. It has laid bare the theoretical justifications of the qualitative methods and approaches to be used in this study. The next Chapter will present and discuss the findings of the operations presented in this Chapter appertaining to the study outlined in the first Chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RUSSIA'S EXPANSIONIST EXPERIMENT IN UKRAINE AND IMPLICATIONS ON SECURITY IN EAST EUROPE**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This Chapter focuses on the changing security dynamics in East Europe as a result of Russo-Ukrainian clash that was kindled in 2014. It seeks to explore the ramifications of the expansionist Russian's appetite to conquer its former territories it lost after the end of the Cold War as discussed in Chapter 2. An examination of Russia's resurgence as a big power in Eastern Europe and the world at large and the challenges it poses will be revisited and strengthened. A focus on Ukraine's transition and its geopolitical links with other international players such as the EU, USA, Asia and East Europe shall be discussed through the lenses of its relations with Russia. This will be undergirded by a discussion on the impact of these interest-based and complex States relations on security in Eastern Europe. The changing context of NATO enlargement and its implications on Russo-Ukraine relationship and other interested countries such as the US policy on Russia and Ukraine will explored.

Secondary data analysis and interviews of eminent international relations scholars, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials and Diplomats constitute the bulk of the results presented in this Chapter.

#### **4.2. Locating the Resurgence of Russia in the Discourse of European Security**

This study seeks to use this analysis to focus on how the Ukrainian crisis fits into the broader framework of the resurgence of Russia. While some details of the crisis will be necessary, this part of the study attempts to locate the Ukrainian situation into a regional and international context by examining Russia and Ukraine's special relationship, as well as the post-Cold War power dynamics between East Europe in particular and the West in general and its allies and the Russian Federation.

The crisis in Ukraine as well as periodic Russian interventions are events constantly in a state of flux in the East European region (Anthony 2014:1). That said, the crisis remain also pertinent to the Eastern European countries as well as the relationship between "the West" and Russia. This study seeks to examine the Ukrainian crisis, with focus on the annexation of Crimea since

2014 up to date, focusing more on the underlying tensions that have led to the crisis than on the timelines or month to month events.

This Chapter, in keeping with the case study approach, begin by laying out what has happened thus far in Ukraine during revolutionary turbulent times preceding and succeeding 2014. An analysis of the current Russian regime and its relationship with Ukraine will be explored thereafter, with an inclination towards the historical underpinnings of the East/West tensions that underlie this long standing conflict.

#### **4.3. The Evolution of Russia's Relations with Ukraine since 1991**

Russia and Ukraine have had difficult relations ever since the two countries split off from the Soviet Union in 1991. Wilczewska and Sakwa in Rutland (2016: 122) posit that the relationship the Kiev administration with the Moscow authorities is a sub-set of Russia's problematic relationship with the outside world at large following the Soviet collapse. Ibid further underscore that in 2014, Ukraine only became the touchstone of two decades of Russian frustration and insecurity, albeit with disastrous ramifications. Notwithstanding Russia's hangover with the super power status as a major player in international relations, especially in East Europe, and a penchant of wanting to claim the same share of the cake on strategic international affairs with the USA. This state of affairs left the Russian Federation in an invidious position as the Soviet collapse meant that Russia was stripped of half its population, a third of its territory, and all its bloc of ideological allies and client states (ibid).

Accordingly, the loss of superpower status coupled with economic collapse and an ideological vacuum created a profound identity crisis in Russia in the 1990s. This triggered off an avalanche of other predicaments as Russia under President Boris Yelstin was humiliated by his perpetual dependence on loans from the West, and by NATO's decision to amplify the alliance to include former Warsaw Pact countries. The bombardment of Yugoslavia by NATO forces in 1999, in a bid to stop human rights violations in Kosovo, was a turning point (Mankof 2015). It underlined the geopolitical marginalization of Russia, as its inability to protect its traditional ally, Serbia was put to test.

In the 2000s, on the foundation of a growing economy and due to booming world oil prices and the success of one of Russia's prime state owned enterprise with vast business interests in



oil, Gazprom, Vladimir Putin forged a new Russian identity. It was an identity of a great power, able to stand up to the depredations of the US, the world's 'sole superpower.' Trenin (2014:3) opines that the idea of Russia as a great power was something which resonated strongly with the Russian public, and which of course had deep roots in Soviet and Russian history. This spurred Russian economic growth, together with a resurgence of its military capacity and thus catapulted it back to the center of international political drama, with its influence radiating more in Eastern Europe, particularly its former spheres of influence which constituted the former Soviet Union.

Brzezinski (1997: 46) asserts that the Ukraine crisis actually came as a litmus test of Russia's resurgence. With 46 million people, Ukraine was by far the largest of the states that had split away from Moscow's sphere of control in 1991, and was strategically located between Russia and the trans-Atlantic partners, the USA and Europe. Ibid famously and mockingly argues that 'without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire'. Ukraine's new leaders however, were keen on transforming into a sovereign and independent country ready to take the world by storm and champion its course of destiny. Resultantly, Ukraine joined the Commonwealth of Independent States, a loose association of 11 former Soviet States, but was wary of any closer military or political alliance with Russia as Ukrainians complained that Russia never fully accepted their existence as a sovereign nation.

Wilczewska and Sakwa in Rutland (2016: 125) posit that traditionally, Russians treated Ukrainians as a 'younger brother,' with a language and culture that were rooted in the countryside, and that were but a pale shadow of Russian civilization. Ibid further argue that Russia also objected to Kiev's efforts to persuade the country's Russian-speakers, who amount to half the population, to adopt the Ukrainian language, and its refusal to legally protect the rights of Russian-speakers. This was despite that, on the economic front, the two countries continued to maintain close economic ties. Russia remained Ukraine's largest trading partner, and much of Ukraine's export steel and chemicals industry was based on the supply of cheap energy, mainly gas from Russia (Balmaceda, 2013:17). Russia, in turn, was dependent on Ukraine for the transit of half its natural gas exports to Europe, and Russia's defense industry relied on some crucial components from Ukrainian factories such as the engines for ballistic missiles (ibid).

Notwithstanding the suspicions, Russia and Ukraine established a rather convenient alliance under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, brokered by the USA, with Russia recognizing Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in return for which Kiev gave up any claim to the former Soviet nuclear weapons which were still located on Ukrainian territory (ibid). As if that was not enough a partnership, Kiev in 1997 gave Russia a twenty year lease on the Sevastopol naval base in Crimea, home of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Moreover, in the mid-1990s, Russian nationalists agitated for the return to Russia of Crimea, which had been given to Ukraine in 1954 to mark the 300th anniversary of Ukraine's unification with Russia (EU Diplomat Interview). However, Boris Yeltsin allegedly refused to give any support to this campaign and it fizzled out.

With time, the fragile equilibrium between Moscow and Kiev was threatened by the 2004 Orange Revolution, which saw the electoral defeat of Viktor Yanukovych, Russia's favorite candidate at the hands of his West Ukrainian rival, Viktor Yushchenko. This triggered off a wave of 'colour revolutions' in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005) which saw authoritarian leaders toppled by popular protests demanding fair elections. Putin grabbed this opportunity and saw this as an orchestrated campaign by the West to spread democracy and pro-Western governments into the post-Soviet space, and thus took decisive steps to prevent this fast growing phenomenon from engulfing Moscow, tightening restrictions on the opposition while creating pro-Kremlin popular movements.

These colour revolutions came against the backdrop of the eastern enlargement of the two key Western regional organizations: the European Union and the NATO. This left Putin firmly convinced that Russia was subject to a deliberate ploy of encirclement and containment by the US and its western allies. Russia's relations with the US thus deteriorated after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and further compounded the problematic relations as Russia was angered by the Western recognition of the independence of Kosovo in February 2008. Things came to a state of a stalemate in August 2008, when Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili sent his forces into the breakaway region of South Ossetia, killing several Russian peacekeepers in the process. Russia responded with a full-scale invasion, driving back the Georgian forces and going on to grant recognition to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Wilczewska and Sakwa in Rutland (2016: 127) argue that in retrospect, we can see Russia's actions in Georgia in 2008 as setting a precedent for what would happen in Crimea in 2014: Moscow used military force to change internationally-recognized borders in full glare of the international community.

In 2009, the newly elected President Barack Obama tried to revive the partnership with Russia's new president, Dmitry Medvedev, launching a 'reset' of relations with Moscow. This produced some positive results – a New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was signed in 2010 and the US started using the Northern Distribution Network across Russia to ferry troops and equipment into Afghanistan. However, relations deteriorated once more in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring, which Russia saw as yet another example of America's aggressive democracy promotion. Moscow was angered by the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya following NATO air strikes and, in 2012, vetoed proposed UN action to halt the Syrian civil war. In September 2013, Russia scored a diplomatic coup by persuading President Bashar Assad to decommission Syria's chemical weapons, allowing Obama to step back from his threat to attack Syria if chemical attacks continued. This showed that Russia and the US could still cooperate where areas of common interest were found, but Russia could not loosen its grip on its most coveted treasure, Ukraine which it firmly believes to be part of its interests both for geopolitical reasons and economic reasons, thus rendering Ukraine a Russian project. This would profoundly influence's Russia actions and Ukraine and the general political standing of Moscow in the Eastern European block.

#### **4.4. Geopolitical Roots of the Ukrainian Crisis- An Immediate Precursor to the 2014 Crisis**

The EU began negotiations for a free trade and association agreement with Ukraine in 2008. However, after Yanukovich won election to the presidency in February 2010, he moved quickly to centralize political power and bring Ukraine back into Moscow's orbit of influence. In April 2010, Medvedev and Yanukovich signed a deal to extend Russia's 1997 lease of the Sevastopol naval base for 25 years beyond 2017, in return for a 30% cut in the natural gas price. In June 2010, the Ukrainian parliament voted to abandon NATO membership aspirations. In October 2010, the Constitutional Court overturned the limits on presidential power introduced in 2004. In November 2011, former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was sentenced to seven years on spurious abuse of office charges, connected to the signing of the 2009 gas deal with Russia.

In April 2013, the European Court of Human Rights declared Tymoshenko's sentence illegal. Yanukovich's actions left Brussels in a quandary. Some Europeans pushed for the introduction of sanctions on Ukrainian leaders and the suspension of talks on the creation of a free trade zone until Tymoshenko was released. Others argued that isolating Yanukovich would drive him further into the arms of the Kremlin. A similar tension between democratic principles and the logic of *realpolitik* dogged EU policy towards Belarus. The EU's plan to open up the Ukrainian economy brought it into conflict with Putin's efforts to create a deeper economic union in the post-Soviet space. This was a priority for Putin, who was determined to forestall the expansion of EU influence and the presumed democratization that would accompany it. In January 2010, Russia launched a Customs Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan, introducing tariff-free trade between the three countries. This was the precursor to the Eurasian Economic Union, launched on 1 January 2015. In September and December 2013, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan agreed to join the Union. Putin hoped to persuade Ukraine to join as well, but this would not be possible if Ukraine signed the free trade agreement with the EU.

The EU pressed ahead with its plans for Ukraine, despite misgivings over the state of democracy and the rule of law there. The association and free trade agreements were initialed in Brussels in July 2012, and were due to be signed at a summit in Vilnius on 29 November 2013. However, European Parliamentarians were insisting on Tymoshenko's release as a condition for final approval. In the course of the summer, Putin increased the pressure on Ukraine by for example, in July 2012, banning the imports of Ukrainian chocolates from the Roshen Company owned by Petro Poroshenko who later became President of Ukraine. On 21 November, Yanukovich abruptly announced that he would not, after all, sign the association agreement in Vilnius, and the parliament rejected the EU's demand to release Tymoshenko. Yanukovich's refusal to sign the agreement triggered the Euromaidan protests, which spiraled out of control over the winter.

It is unclear whether Yanukovich refused to sign the agreement because of the Tymoshenko issue, or because he was conducting a bidding war between Russia and the EU. EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle said Yanukovich had been asking for \$27 billion in aid to sign the agreement. On 17 December, Putin agreed to lend Ukraine \$15 billion, and to cut the price of gas by a third (from \$400 to \$268 per 1000 cubic meters). However, by then it was too late to prevent Yanukovich's loss of control of the situation on the streets. International players (Russia, the EU, and the US) were heavily involved in the unfolding political conflict.

Ironically, each accused the other of interference in Ukrainian affairs. The EU's Catherine Ashton and the US Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, encouraged Yanukovych and the protestors to reach a compromise - while Russia was pushing Yanukovych to hold firm. Russian propaganda portrayed Nuland as the architect of the protests, playing video of her giving out food on the Maidan square, boasting that the US had spent \$5 billion on democracy promotion in Ukraine, and playing tapes of an intercepted 6 February phone conversation in which she discussed the composition of the future Ukrainian government.

Putin's advisor, Sergei Glazyev, opined that the Ukraine crisis was being sponsored by the USA in solidarity with its erstwhile partners in Europe. (Simes, 2014). The collapse of the 21 February agreement in the face of insurgent demonstrators and the flight of Yanukovych was seen by Moscow as the point of no return. They assumed the new government would sign the association agreement with the EU, apply to join NATO, and revoke the agreement granting Russia the use of the Sevastopol base. Putin responded with force and vigor: annexing Crimea and using surrogates to launch an insurrection in east and south Ukraine.

Putin's decision to annex Crimea on 16 March caught the international community by surprise. Recognition of national sovereignty and the inviolability of borders are central to the international state system and, since 1991, the Russian Federation had been an ardent defender of these principles. The EU and the US responded swiftly with 'smart' sanctions, imposing asset freezes and travel bans on a few dozen politicians directly involved in the Crimean annexation. German industrialists doing business with Russia, urged Chancellor Angela Merkel not to bow to US pressure to introduce broader sanctions. As the surrogate war raged in East Ukraine, on 16 July, the US introduced 'sectoral' sanctions on strategic corporations, barring them from long-term borrowing. The next day, separatists apparently shot down Malaysian Airlines Flight 17. This atrocity, and Russia's seeming unwillingness to help bring those responsible to justice, caused a groundswell of support for tougher action, particularly in the Netherlands and Germany. On 25 July, the EU expanded its sanctions to an additional 15 top Russian government officials. Putin responded on 6 August by introducing a one-year ban on imports of fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and meat from countries that had imposed sanctions on Russia.

The political association agreement with the EU was signed on 21 March 2014, and the economic chapters on 21 June. Implementation of the economic dimension was postponed for

a year as an incentive to Russia to help bring peace to East Ukraine. Negotiations in Minsk, under the auspices of the OSCE, resulted in a shaky ceasefire on 26 August, but agreement on a permanent solution remained out of reach. Kiev refused to yield to Russian demands that Ukraine would abjure from NATO membership and would grant full autonomy to the secessionists in Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia had suspended gas deliveries through Ukraine in June, which was not an immediate problem since demand is low in summer and Ukraine had ample reserves. Negotiations continued over supplies for the next winter. On 31 October, Ukraine agreed to pay Russia \$3 billion in arrears and \$1.5 billion as prepayment for 2015 gas at a price of \$378 per 1000 cubic meters.

#### **4.5. The 2014 Ukraine Crisis in Detail- A Manifestation of Russia's Resurgence**

At the time Yanukovych was participating at a joint summit in Lithuania, it was no secret that he was going to agree on any policy shifts that would integrate Ukraine in the EU. This torched a storm of disgruntlement among Ukraine people who had hoped that he was going to join the EU and had therefore put up with his politics of patronage in Ukraine. This prompted an Afghan-born opposition journalist to reach out for his Facebook account and agitated citizens to meet on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, an open space at midnight. This galvanized the social media and encouraged people to gather for the protests and the Maida was born. (Nayyem 2013).

##### **4.5.1. The Kiev Protests (The Maidan)**

To demonstrate their strong resolve to the Maidan cause, the students in universities and other non-state actor activists converged daily on the independent square in solidarity with stronger ties with the EU. Thus, the protests the protests, attended by dozens of thousands of people, were mainly pro-EU and largely non-partisan, as they did not brandish and wave any symbols of Ukraine's political parties. While Yanukovych's actions were initially a trigger of the Maidan, the cause shifted focus to purely pro-EU agitation. This did not defeat Yanukovych as he caused the deployment of police to surround the area occupied by sleeping students and beat them injuring a great number. While this was meant to quell discontent, it on the contrary stimulated more vigor and massive demonstrations with more than around half a million coming to the Maidan (BBC 2013).

The demonstration had grown into something bigger: the resignation of Yanukovych with immediate effect and; secondly, the Maidan had turned into a national movement against

broader national grievances such as corruption, patronage and bad governance which could not be dismissed as mere radicals with no real issues undergirding their protests. With time, the protests had crystallized into a solid movement with multifaceted mix of people ranging from students, war veterans, professors (Kotliar 2014). . The war veterans volunteered their services of protecting the protesters under the framework of Maidan Self-Defence Force. International solidarity galvanized the protestors when western governments also showing sympathy for the protestors. Western governments condemned the violence used against peaceful protesters.

Meanwhile, Yanukovych was losing supporters, including some of his trusted lieutenants such as his presidential administration Serhiy Lyovochkin who resigned, with some police in some parts of Western Ukraine disobeying orders (Aslund 2015 45). By late February, 200 protesters had disappeared or killed, with thousands more were maimed (Aslund 2015: 47). By February 20, a number of Members of Parliament, those formerly pro-Yanukovych defected to the opposition, allowing Parliament to finally pass a resolution calling for government forces to stand down. This forced Yanukovych to sign the EU-mediated agreement with three opposition leaders, but this could not spare his office, as he left Kyiv by helicopter to Russia. He had resigned at last! However, the prolonged protests left a trail of destruction, with one of the worst humanitarian crisis burdening East Europe in proportions without precedent in that region, which created a breeding ground for deepened instability and human insecurity in East Europe.

#### **4.5.2. The Crimean Conundrum- Another Exhibition of Russia's Resurgence**

On February 23, with the dramatic departure of Yanukovych from Kyiv, demonstrations of both pro-Maidan and Pro-Russian were staged in Crimea. Little did anyone knew that the Kremlin had other plans- the plan to annex Crimea! It is reported that President Putin had held an all-night meeting with the heads of Russia's security services, upon Yanukovych's departure from Ukraine and directed them to start working on returning Crimea to Russia. Four days later, military details without insignia, a direct violation of international humanitarian law, gripped state buildings in Crimea, including its legislature (Agency of French Press, 8 March 2015). This prompted members of the Crimean Parliament to immediately defect to a new pro-Russian government and declared independence from Ukraine. The *de facto* authorities then commandeered the holding of a referendum on whether Crimea should join the Russian Federation or remain, although the alternative on the ballot was not to remain part of Ukraine,

but significant autonomy within Ukraine as provided by the 1992 constitutional compromise (Reuters 17 April 2014).

During the referendum, paramilitary units were reported to be patrolling the streets and pro-Russian armed brigades securing polling stations. Political pundits argued that voters felt coerced, and the international community decried the referendum as having been held at gunpoint (CNN Report 25 April 2014), thus giving a resounding 96.77% of the vote favoring to be part of Russia, with 83.1% of voters participating (The Telegraph 16 March 2014). Besides worldwide condemnation of the referendum as a sham, Russia was in both in effective and *de jure* control of the Crimean territory. Its objectives had been met of asserting its dominance and demonstrating that it was a rising great power with a huge influence in Eastern Europe and abroad.

Russian separatist paramilitary groups also experimented with the hope that they might establish a breakaway state called New Russia. This only gained sporadic support in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (provinces), with Russian-backed armed groups taking over certain state functions (Gasparyan, 13 July 2014). Today, Ukraine continues to be on a war path and in a war mood. Russian is alleged to be supporting political, military groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. After the three years of conflict in Eastern Ukraine, more than 10,000 people have died and nearly 21,000 have been injured, and this only reflects available data on the Ukrainian side (Amnesty International Report on Ukraine 2016). The civilian population left in this region has been left amidst a simmering humanitarian and human rights crisis.

#### **4.6. The Putin Factor in the Ukraine Crisis and its Impact on Security in East Europe**

The crisis in Ukraine has produced a new narrative about Vladimir Putin's leadership. In contrast to the stated modernizing goals of his first two presidencies: the achievement of greater state efficacy and the improvement of living standards and prosperity for ordinary Russian citizens, Putin has been recast as the saviour of the Russian nation. This new narrative includes a mission to protect the citizens of the 'Russian World' that live beyond the borders of the Russian Federation. In some analysis, this has led to parallels with Slobodan Milosevic's political journey in the former Yugoslavia (Whitmore, 2014). Moreover, his regime's relationship with the nationalist leadership in eastern Ukraine, and their ideological backers in Russia, has not always been cordial during the Ukrainian conflict. Putin's commitment to the



creation of a new territory, ‘Novorossiya,’ which would lead to the breakup of Ukraine, has been questioned by nationalist ideologues and militia leaders throughout the crisis (Sonne, 2014).

Thus, it can be argued that the Ukrainian crisis has reinforced a trend that was already present prior to Russia’s annexation of Crimea. It is also worth contending that the crisis has raised the stakes for the Putin regime. If Putin fails to deliver in Ukraine, the possibility of a challenge to his authority from a more radical nationalist agenda is likely to be greater than it was before the start of the crisis. His broad coalition of core supporters, moderate patriots and more radical nationalists, accounts for the sharp spike in support for Putin during the Ukrainian crisis. Yet, the ability of the regime to maintain this coalition presents a new set of challenges. Unless the Ukrainian crisis has radically transformed the attitudes of Russian citizens, which is doubted, the Kremlin will have to satisfy a diverse range of conflicting demands. This task will be rendered more difficult by economic crisis and the international limitations to territorial expansion in eastern Ukraine. The regime’s willingness to engage with more radical nationalist ambitions, such as the creation of “Novorossiya”, may have raised expectations beyond realistic limits. This may become a new focus of opposition to the regime as the conflict in Ukraine grinds on. Thus, Putin’s nationalism problem has not been resolved by the Ukrainian crisis, and it could define the remainder of his presidency. However, Putin’s second assumption of the reigns at the Kremlin has registered serious rivalry in Eastern Europe and has characterized the resurgence of Russia in a remarkable way.

#### **4.7. Russia’s Foreign Policy on Ukraine and its Impact on Security in East Europe**

These dramatic developments were most traumatic for Ukraine. From a Russian perspective, Ukraine had for two decades been a weak, fragile, and often unreliable state, chronically creating problems for Russian energy giant Gazprom’s transit to Europe. However, to most Russians, the country was anything but foreign. Ukraine was suddenly turning into a country led by a coalition of pro-Western Elites in Kiev and anti-Russian western Ukrainian nationalists. This shift, in the Kremlin’s eyes, carried a dual danger of Kiev clamping down on the Russian language, culture, and identity inside Ukraine and of the country itself joining NATO in a short order. Putin reacted immediately by apparently putting in motion contingency plans that Moscow had drafted for the eventuality of Kiev seeking membership in the Atlantic Alliance.

Russia's Ukraine policy, which until then had been publicly low-key and heavily focused on top-level interaction with the Ukrainian president, immediately went into high gear. Defense and maneuvering stopped to be replaced by a counter offensive. The main goal became to keep Ukraine from joining NATO and, ideally, to win back the country for the Eurasian integration project, whose core element is the reunification of what Moscow sees as the "Russian world." In pursuing its new, proactive approach, Russia had two main objectives. The first was to make Crimea off limits to the new post-Yanukovych authorities in Kiev. This was executed by means of Russian Special Forces physically insulating the peninsula from mainland Ukraine, neutralizing the Ukrainian garrison in Crimea, and helping Crimea's pro-Russian elements take control of the local government, Parliament and law enforcement agencies. Russia also encouraged those elements to hold a referendum on Crimea's status and pursued an all-out campaign in favour of Crimea's reunification with Russia.

Moscow's second objective was to achieve a new federal settlement in Ukraine, which would forestall complete domination of the country by Kiev and western Ukraine and thus make any move toward NATO structurally impossible. On March 1, 2014, Putin had already sought and received powers from the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian Parliament to use Russian Armed Forces inside Ukraine. Russian Forces began exercising along the Ukrainian border, appearing ready to invade, but no cross border invasion happened.

The Kremlin was putting pressure on the new authorities in Kiev, making them nervous and indecisive deterring Washington and Brussels from intervening by dramatically raising the stakes; and encouraging Moscow's political friend in the Russian speaking parts of Ukraine. Indeed, in the largely Russophone eastern and southern Ukraine, mass rallies began to demand regional autonomy, including rights for the Russian language. These rallies were later followed by reasonably well-organized militant groups seizing government buildings, arming themselves, and taking over towns. In the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, the militants held regional Referendums in early May and proclaimed their own "republics" independent from Kiev. Moscow did not hide its sympathy and support for these separatists, but it refrained from either recognizing them or sending the Russian forces to protect them.

Thus, it can be argued that Russian policy towards Ukraine, as well as the former Soviet states as a whole, originates in the Russian government's perceptions of its control on power. The Russian state has become significantly weaker since the collapse of the USSR, as has its

coercive capacity. Under Putin, the regime has become very cohesive and insulated from interest groups, but the government struggles to reform and faces perception problems with the Russian people, who sometimes view it as illegitimate and corrupt (Tompson.2002: 933). Despite the government's perception problems, Putin personally remains very popular among the Russian people.

Russian foreign policy is founded on a doctrinal framework of noninterference, based on the idea that one state should not intervene in another's affairs. The Kremlin made one recent exception when it abstained from voting on UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which allowed the Libyan intervention. This intervention went beyond protecting civilians and wound up effecting regime change, reinforcing Russian fears that the West seeks to expand its influence. At the same time, the Arab Spring and pushes for democracy in other areas have increased Russian concerns over unrest in former Soviet states, which may turn more to the West. Thus, it has actively worked to prevent Western intervention in Syria through the UN Security Council.

With regards to former Soviet states, Russia aims to keep them within its sphere of influence in order to maintain its own economic and military strength, but more importantly to control the influence of the West. The expansion of NATO and the EU into this region is one of Russia's paramount concerns. Putin has publically stated that the end of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century (Redman, 2014: 244). Despite its policy of non-intervention in other regions, Russia has proven willing to take action in former Soviet states to maintain its own power. Of all the former Soviet states, Ukraine remains the most important to Russia. With the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, the transportation of oil and gas via Ukraine to Europe, and Ukraine's unique status as the birthplace of the Russian Orthodox faith, Ukraine holds significant military, economic, religious and cultural weight. Additionally, the population of Russians and Russian-speaking people in Ukraine further connects it to Russia.

Thus, the Russian government had incentives to curtail Western influence, and it could better justify acting on those goals given the high public support for them. In late 2013 Ukraine appeared likely to sign the EU Association Agreement, which the EU had made clear would not work with Putin's Eurasian Union plan. The Eurasian Union represents Putin's vision to improve Russia's economy through a network of cooperative economic relationships with

former Soviet states, and Ukraine is the cornerstone of the plan. The possibility of Ukraine aligning with the West threatens the Russian economy and therefore the regime's security. As a result, Russia placed economic sanctions on Ukrainian businesses. Russia's success in preventing the agreement convinced the Russian regime that Ukraine could be persuaded to join the Eurasian Union plan, thus keeping Ukraine away from EU influence.

The situation changed dramatically with the February 2014 ousting of the Ukrainian President, which seemed to confirm Russia's fears of Western interference. The EU became involved in the accord that allowed for changes in Ukraine's constitution and changes in the presidential election timing. Its role in conjunction with the fall of the Ukrainian President could be seen as a violation of Russia's non-intervention principles. Ukraine therefore symbolizes larger concerns within the Russian regime as it seeks to maintain its influence on former Soviet states in order to secure its grip on power, both internationally and domestically.

#### **4.8. USA and NATO Involvement in the Ukraine Crisis**

The United States has taken a very limited role in the Ukrainian conflict thus far. The most direct action that the U.S.A publically took had been to announce plans to provide over \$18 million in non-lethal security assistance (Caroll *et al* 2014). Aside from this specific aid package, the U.S. has also pledged to provide \$50 million in aid for Ukraine that will go toward alleviating its \$2.2 billion Russian debt that has accrued over natural gas. No major international organizations such as the United Nations or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were ever involved in the intervention in Ukraine, and military intervention could incur severe diplomatic costs for the war-weary U.S.A. Although the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has shown no signs that it will militarily intervene in Crimea, NATO the then Secretary-General said Moscow must pull back troops from the Ukrainian border. In a press conference on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, the Secretary General said that Russian intervention would, have grave Consequences for the relationship with Russia and it would further isolate it internationally

Although NATO has 13,000 high-readiness troops provided by the allies, deployment of the troops would require consensus amongst the 28 independent member countries of NATO. Such action is highly unlikely, especially in light of the military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. As the research consultant on NATO at Chatham House, in independent policy institute based

out of London, said that there is a feeling that the use of force isn't necessarily the best way to resolve conflict. Moreover, even if NATO desired to use force, its legal justification would not be without controversy. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty states that any armed attack against a single member organization of NATO would be considered an attack against all members. Given that Ukraine is not one of the 28 member's states of NATO, however, Russia's intervening into Crimea would not be considered an attack on a member state and NATO's guiding principles would not require, nor suggest, action.

#### **4.9. The Energy Economic Incentives and its Nexus to the Ukraine Crisis**

Russia's security concerns can be traced back to the climate of uncertainty that has come to characterize the country's economy. Although Russia has experienced substantial growth in its economy over the last several years, an over-reliance upon natural resources makes it vulnerable to market fluctuations. Relatedly, Russia is likely concerned about the disruptions in its natural gas trade that the alignment of Ukraine with the EU could cause. Russian GDP growth took a steep dive in 2008 but recovered quickly, suggesting that powerful and temporally inconsistent forces may be at work, and as a result the Russian economy might not rebound quite so quickly in the future. Forbes also notes that their economic growth has slowed, a trend that Putin is likely eager to reverse to paint himself as a guarantor of prosperity (Mark 2013). These economic concerns could explain why Putin annexed Crimea with relatively little provocation. Furthermore, a ten-year prediction from the World Bank shows that Russia's economy will stabilize but shrink modestly relative to the mid-2000s. This prospect might pressure Putin to pursue aggressive action in order to prevent stagnation in the near future (ibid).

Elimination of political competition has led to corruption in Putin's government, which prevents the implementation of new economic policies that might make the system more efficient. The economic inefficiencies that this corruption has produced may motivate Russia to seek other sources of revenue (Cooper *et al* 2016: 121). Like many nations, Russia also faces the pressures of an aging population without a large enough workforce to support it. These demographic changes will cause a more significant strain over the next decade and may force Russia to secure its economic strength through increased trade or more accessible infrastructure, such as the Ukrainian gas pipes or Crimean ports. Relatedly, budgetary issues and anemic investment could lead Russian living standards to deteriorate relative to other

nations, putting additional pressure on Putin to secure the resources necessary to facilitate economic growth (Sergey 2012:31)

Dependence on oil has also made the Russian economy prone to rapid fluctuations. Russia has the world's largest natural gas reserves a major source of revenue for the Russian government along with oil and other hydrocarbons (USA Energy Information Administration 2014). Crimea possesses valuable offshore oil and gas reserves, which would allow Ukraine to become less dependent on Russian energy imports and travel through pipes in Ukraine, making them a strategic ally (ibid). Therefore, Crimea posed a threat to Russian energy trade with Ukraine at a time when Ukraine was shifting to a European trade alliance.

In mid-August, trade between Russia and Ukraine briefly halted, which could have indicated to Russian elites the possibility that if Ukrainian leaders chose to align with the West, they might yank valuable resources away from the Kremlin. Such considerations could have led Putin to annex Crimea to deter Russian trade partners from pivoting towards Europe. Russia has a near-monopoly on natural gas sales to Ukraine, and is using it as a source of leverage against the country. Putin has demanded increased repayment of the \$2.2 billion that Ukraine owes for natural gas that Russia has delivered to Ukraine. This demand was compounded by Russia's decision to increase the price of the natural gas that it sold to Ukraine by 80%. The Ukrainian government had claimed that Russia's stance on natural gas was politically motivated. Putin had expressed concerns that these policies might result in Ukraine illegally siphoning natural gas from the gas lines that led to the rest of Europe. If Ukraine were to respond to Russian gas cutoffs to Ukraine, then Putin's threat of gas cutoffs would not inherently prove as motivating to the Ukrainian government.

Until recently, Crimea's electrical infrastructure had been dependent on Ukraine. On March 24th, power to Crimea was interrupted for several hours, and Russia was unable to restore it because electricity in Crimea originates in Ukraine. Although Russian forces currently occupy Crimea, they are not in control of basic elements of its physical infrastructure. Online spectators and several news agencies affiliated with Moscow accused Ukraine of intentionally disrupting power to Crimea as a demonstration of Ukraine's partial control over the region, but the Ukrainian government has denied these accusations. Thus far, the Russian government has moved over 1,400 mobile power stations to Ukraine as part of an effort to stymie future power interruptions.

#### **4.10. The Media and the Ukraine Crisis and Impact on Security in East Europe**

The Russian leadership views mass communication as a crucial arena of global politics, in which rival powers work to undermine each other and further their own interests at others' expense. The ability to project narratives to foreign audiences is therefore considered a matter of national security, as is the ability to control the circulation of narratives at home. In its Foreign Policy Concept of 2013, Russia declared that it must 'create instruments for influencing how it is perceived in the world', 'develop its own effective means of information influence on public opinion abroad', and 'counteract information threats to its sovereignty and security' (Russian Foreign Ministry, 2013). In line with these goals, the Russian government has invested heavily in media resources that can convey its point of view to other countries, such as the TV news channel RT.

The post-Yanukovich Ukrainian government quickly banned Russian channels from Ukrainian cable networks, fearing that tendentious Russian reporting was stoking unrest in the eastern regions. It has certainly caused widespread offence in other parts of the country. Ukraine has set up a Ministry of Information in an attempt to 'repel Russia's media attacks' (Interfax-Ukraine, 2014). The conflict in Ukraine has thus become an 'information war' as much as a conventional one. Studying Russia's main narratives can tell us much about the ideas, fears, and goals that drive its foreign and domestic policy. Anti-western narratives were already a salient feature of Russian political and media discourse before the crisis in Ukraine began (Smyth and Soboleva, 2014, pp. 257-275; Yablokov, 2014, pp. 622-636), but the crisis has imbued them with particular vitriol. These narratives attribute various negative characteristics to the USA and EU states via an interrelated set of plotlines that explain current developments with reference to 'historical' patterns.

Negative narratives about the West serve the goals of the Russian leadership in a number of ways: they diminish the credibility of western criticism of Russia, they legitimize Russian behaviour in the eyes of the public, and they defend Russia's self-identity as a European great power. At the same time, the narratives frame how Russians at all levels of society, including the elite, interpret world politics. Therefore, the fact that they are used instrumentally to bolster support for the Russian authorities should not obscure the fact that the narratives have also been internalized among those in authority and thus influence the direction of policy. Characteristics attributed to western governments by the Russian media include hypocrisy, risibility, arrogant foolishness, and a lack of moral integrity to the point of criminality. Russian television finds

evidence of these characteristics in events both past and present. At one point in summer 2014, for example, it referred back to US President Woodrow Wilson promoting democracy and self-determination 'just for export' while denying rights to African and Native Americans. The presenter claimed that the USA had demanded 'the right to judge everyone by its own very flexible standards for a hundred years' (Rossiya 1, 2014). Such claims undermine the validity of international condemnations of Russian actions in Ukraine by conveying that those doing the condemning have only their own selfish interests at heart not any real moral values.

'Double standards' (*dvoynnyye standarty*) is a charge that is levelled against the West by the Russian state media as they report and echo the words of the Russian president, foreign minister, and other officials. President Vladimir Putin, for instance, pointed out that American troops and military bases were all over the world, 'settling the fates of other nations while thousands of kilometres from their own borders'. This makes it 'very strange', He argued, that the Americans should denounce Russian foreign troop deployments so much smaller than their own (Putin, 2014). Not only does such a line of argument again attack the moral standing of Russia's critics, it also implies, through a comparison of Russian actions with 'similar' American actions, that Russia is just behaving as great powers do for few doubt the USA's great power status.

#### **4.11. Western Sanctions against Russia over Ukraine**

The Ukraine crisis and the imposition of economic sanctions by Western powers and their allies have the potential to cause a radical shift in economic policy in Russia, with important implications for Russia's future place in the global economy. This is because Western economic sanctions and Russia's response to those sanctions have set Russia on a course towards greater isolation from the Western parts of the global economy, and towards greater state control of economic activity at home.

Economic statecraft refers here to the economic measures employed by Western powers, their allies, and Russia as instruments of foreign policy, especially in relation to Russia's role in the conflict in Ukraine (Baldwin, 1985; Hanson, 1988). In addition to measures targeted at individuals, Western countries imposed a range of so-called sectoral sanctions. They include: the suspension of preferential economic development loans to Russia by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); a ban on trading bonds and equity and related brokering services for products whose maturity period exceeds 30 days with some of Russia's



largest state controlled banks (including Sberbank and Gazprombank), three Russia energy companies (including Rosneft, Transneft, and Gazprom Neft, although not Gazprom, which has been subject to US sanctions), and three Russian defence companies (OPK Oboronprom, United Aircraft Corporation, Uralvagonzavod); a ban on loans to five major Russian state-owned banks: Sberbank, VTB, Gazprom Bank, Vneshekonombank (VEB), and Rosselkhozbank; an embargo on arms trade between EU members and Russia; a ban on exports of so-called dual-use items, that is civilian industrial goods that can be used as weaponry or for other military purposes; and a ban on exporting certain energy equipment and providing specific energy-related services to Russia's most technology-intensive oil exploration and extraction projects.

In response, Russia imposed its own counter-sanctions. While a range of different counter-sanctions were applied by Russia from March 2014 onwards, the most economically significant sanctions were applied in August 2014, with the one-year ban on imports of fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk, and dairy from all EU countries, as well as additional Western countries, including the USA, Norway, Australia, and Japan. Western governments targeted three sectors with the sectoral sanctions regime devised in the summer of 2014: the defence industry, the oil industry, and the financial sector. Thus far, the effects have not been uniform, with only the financial sector experiencing any significant effects to date.

Sanctions on the financial sector have exerted a more immediate impact on the Russian economy. Access to Western capital markets is now largely closed to most Russian corporations, forcing many Russian firms to repay their external debt ahead of schedule due to the impossibility of refinancing or 'rolling over' their credit lines. Total non-financial corporate (which includes many large state enterprises, such as Rosneft and Gazprom) and financial sector external debt amounted to around \$610 billion in September 2014 (CBR, 2014). At the prevailing exchange rates in December 2014, this amounted to over 60 per cent of GDP. Of this, nearly \$130 billion is scheduled for repayment before the end of 2015, raising the prospect of Russian firms scrambling to secure scarce dollars to service their external debt (CBR, 2014). While this is causing some discomfort for many firms, it is also true that most of the firms with foreign currency-denominated external debt are natural resource exporters who also generate substantial foreign currency revenues, which should enable them to service their debt obligations.

Russia's own counter-sanctions have yet to have any observably positive effects in the form of a significant increase in output in the agricultural sector. This is probably because producers in those sectors that Western producers were most active, such as pork, beef, and dairy products, as well as specific categories of fruit and vegetables, have traditionally been inefficient. Indeed, it was precisely these sub-sectors that proved resistant to accession to the World Trade Organisation in 2012 due to fears that they would not be able to compete with foreign producers (Connolly and Hanson, 2012). This has meant that domestic production has not risen dramatically, as some initially hoped. Instead, exporters from countries that have not participated in the Western sanctions regime, such as Argentina, Brazil, China, Chile, and Turkey, have all benefited by increasing their share of the Russian food market. The prospects for food production in the affected sectors may be brighter: government policies to promote the development of domestic producers through a state-led import substitution strategy are being devised, and may involve an expansion of subsidies and other forms of state support.

The costs associated with the imposition of the agricultural counter-sanctions are borne by Russian consumers. The cost of food forms a large proportion of the typical household budget. As a result, any price rises caused by the food embargo are bound to have an immediate effect on Russian consumers and affecting food and human security in Russia. To date, food prices have risen, nudging Russia's end-of-year consumer price index (CPI) towards double digit levels, with the price of banned products rising considerably faster than average (Rosstat, 2014). However, the embargo appears to be hitting middle-class, urban consumers more than most due to their propensity to consume imported food products to a greater extent than poorer sections of the population.

Finally, the fact that the Russian economy appears to be slowing down at the same time that sanctions have been applied has created the impression that sanctions are *causing* growth to slow. The rapid depreciation of the Russian currency in late 2014 reinforced this perception. However, such an interpretation conflates correlation with causation. The Russian economy was already in the midst of a protracted reduction in the average annual rate of GDP growth before the Ukraine crisis. Western economic sanctions may have exacerbated a pre-existing trend, but the effect has been modest. Instead, the appreciation of the dollar against all major currencies and, more importantly, the precipitous decline in oil prices over the course of the second half of 2014 provide a more accurate explanation for the depreciation of the rouble and

the deterioration in business confidence that was evident towards the end of the year (Connolly, 2015) Western.

The bold show of resilience by Russia in the face of sanctions from the West attest to its ego as a big power and its ability to stand on a self-sustainable platform. This however, leaves its vast population exposed to economic and social dangers which can trigger of human insecurity through widespread poverty and declining standards of living. Thus, the self-proclaimed resurgence of Russia serves only to impact negatively on the security status of East Europe.

#### **4.12. The Ukraine Crisis: Geopolitics at Home and Abroad**

The divisions within Ukrainian state building have now become internationalized. On the one side, the Atlantic community has lined up with the Ukrainian monists, while Russia supports the pluralists. Even though the idea of ‘federalisation’ within Ukraine elicits a sharply negative reaction among the Ukrainian monists, the necessity of some sort of substantive decentralization of authority and responsibility to the regions commands a great deal of support. Just as the idea of greater Europe is tainted by its association with Russia, so too is the idea of Ukrainian federalism, for the same reason. Elements of the European bipolarity of the Cold War years has been restored, with Russia now once again ranged against the rest, although now lacking the bloc of allegedly friendly states in Eastern Europe. This in part helps explain why Russia has been so keen to recreate the functional substitute for the old Comecon states in the form of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Arguably, the Ukraine crisis is ultimately only a symptom of a much deeper failure to establish an equitable and inclusive post-Cold War international order. In the absence of a peace conference, an asymmetrical peace was imposed in Europe. Both NATO and the EU expended considerable effort to mitigate Russia’s alienation. Russia joined NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994; in 1997, the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security was signed, which created a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC); and in 2002, a new NATO-Russia Council (NRC) with greater authority replaced the PJC. However, regular political and military dialogue between the partners at times of crisis, as in 2008 during the Russo-Georgian war, were suspended, only highlighting that these bodies were indeed mitigatory rather than substantive. From the Atlanticist point of view, this was only natural because Russia was only half the former Soviet Union, and in certain respects a failed economy and polity, so it could not be treated as an equal in geopolitical terms. At the same time, it was

only natural that the perceived security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe should be filled by a defensive alliance, which, by reducing insecurity and risks, would in the end enhance even Russia's security.

In the early years of his leadership, Putin was ready to accept these arguments, and worked hard to improve relations with both the EU and NATO, although he, no less than Boris Yeltsin, insisted on Russia's great power status. The puzzle to be explained, then, is why relations with both organizations deteriorated so spectacularly, to the point that today outright military conflict is not to be excluded. All sides undoubtedly bear their share of responsibility, but ultimately it was the failure to grasp the realities of the new geopolitics of Europe and the failure to imagine a different future for Europe that has created the new dividing lines.

In the end, NATO's existence became justified by the need to manage the security threats provoked by its own enlargement. At the Bucharest NATO Summit in April 2008, Georgia and Ukraine were promised eventual membership, although Membership Action Plans (MAPs) were deferred because of German and French concerns that moving to Russia's borders and encircling the country could provoke a dangerous reaction. From Russia's perspective, there was no security vacuum that needed to be filled; from the West's perspective, who was to deny the 'sovereign choice' of the Central and Eastern European states if they wished to enter the world's most successful multilateral security body. The former Warsaw Pact and Baltic states joined NATO to enhance their security, but the very act of doing so created a security dilemma for Russia that undermined the security of all. This fateful geopolitical paradox – that NATO exists to manage the risks created by its existence – provoked a number of conflicts. The Russo-Georgian War of August 2008 acted as the forewarning tremor for the major earthquake that engulfed Europe over Ukraine in 2013-14.

One of the main narratives of the current crisis is that Russia has become a revisionist state. The takeover of Crimea in March 2014 can certainly be interpreted in this light (Allison, 2014). However, the Putinite view is that Russia's actions were a response to the prior breakdown of the system of international law, notably in Western intervention in Iraq and recognition of Kosovo's independence in 2008, and then the breakdown of the Ukrainian state order. The key point is that the Ukraine crisis is both a symptom and the cause of the crisis in international politics. It is also an indication of the inability to establish what would pass for 'normal' relations between Russia and Ukraine in the post-Cold War period. Indeed, relations between

the former Soviet republics throughout the Eurasian region are characterized by distrust and the failure to establish a genuinely new post-Soviet community based on sovereign equality and shared security institutions.

The Ukraine crisis and the drastic breakdown in relations between Russia and Ukraine are thus, in the old Marxist parlance, ‘over-determined’. By this it is meant that there are a multiplicity of causes, any one of which may well have been sufficient to provoke a crisis, but taken together a veritable ‘perfect storm’ that engulfed the two countries and Europe as a whole. Undoubtedly, Putin has now challenged the established system, but it should be remembered that he came to power as one of the most committed Europeans that Russia has ever had as a leader. For a variety of reasons, his attempts to achieve the integration of Russia into European and Euro-Atlantic structures failed, and instead he became increasingly alienated from these institutions. Russia as always was facing fundamental domestic problems, including the second Chechen war, regional fragmentation, and much else. His responses were typically robust, and in many cases accompanied by egregious human rights violations, but overall they were legitimate, although perhaps disproportionate, responses to real challenges, and were recognized as such by the Russian population, as reflected in consistently high opinion poll ratings. These were not simply manufactured through media manipulation (although there was plenty of that as well), but reflected a deep current of popular support for his policies and achievements, which included until recently a spectacular rise in living standards.

Thus, the common trope of arguing that Putin’s lack of connection with reality is to blame for the current crisis results too often in scapegoating, and excuses a more fundamental failure to examine the structural roots of the crisis. These lie in the asymmetrical end of the Cold War and the failure to create an inclusive and equitable system of European security, and this in turn arose from the inability to accept Russia as it is – a great power with legitimate interests in Europe and Eurasia, although accompanied by some profound governance problems. Recognition of this, of course, does not entail a repudiation of values or the occlusion of the sovereignty of neighbors, but it does suggest that a more realist and less ideological approach would have established an environment in which differences could have been resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. Instead, now the very notion of dialogue is discredited, while the practices of diplomacy have degenerated into name calling and sanctions.

All the European and Atlantic powers bear their share of responsibility for this. Further, the breakdown in Russo-Ukrainian relations has long been in the making. On the one side, the consolidation of a distinctive type of Russian political economy and public sphere became increasingly incognizant of the interests and concerns of neighbors. In other words, the Russian power system itself in the Putin years moved away from the riotous, and in many ways damaging, pluralism of the Yeltsin years in the 1990s towards a far more monist system. There remains significant freedom of debate in the public sphere, but the political expression of pluralism is tightly controlled.

In addition, it would be inaccurate to describe the Putin system as ‘nationalist’ in the classic sense, since Russia remains a deeply pluri-cultural society, in ethnic, religious, and indeed in political cultural terms, and any attempt excessively to privilege one community over the others would threaten the stability of the whole. This is why the Putin system has tried to remain so resolutely ‘centrist’, drawing on the power of all factions and communities, but not allowing any to predominate. Nevertheless, reflecting the alienation from the existing international order and the political struggles of the period of contentious politics in 2011-12 accompanying Putin’s return to the presidency, the regime has become somewhat radicalized. This is a radical centrism that is ready to challenge the hegemonic powers abroad, to reshape the political relationships in Eurasia and Europe, and to advance a revivalist conservatism at home (Sakwa, 2014). At the same time, the Ukrainian national project also became radicalized.

The Association Agreement offered by the EU in the framework of the Eastern Partnership proposed a lifeline to break out from the corruption and economic degradation in which Ukraine had been mired for so long. The original idealism of the Maidan protests was based on the profound repudiation of the failures of the past, but idealism was not rooted in a substantive real political constituency. It was not able to sustain a political formation that could institutionalize its idealism. Instead, the protest movement became radicalized, and in conditions of external threat, it took extreme Ukrainian nationalist forms that was then instantiated in the power system created in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2014. In short, the Ukrainian polity assumed extreme monist forms. This monism, as noted above, is reinforced by the monism of the Euro-Atlantic system.

The refusal of the Kiev authorities to negotiate, let alone recognize, the insurgent forces in the Donbass leaves only the military solution in play. The EU and the Atlantic community have

failed to provide a framework for a negotiated settlement, although the brave and important work of certain institutions, above all the OSCE and the UN, should be recognized. The anti-Russian monism of the US Congress has long been acknowledged as a problem (Tsygankov, 2009), and this certainly does not create a benign environment for a settlement of European problems. As for Russia, it is obvious that the Putin administration cannot abandon the insurgents. This would be considered a betrayal that would resonate down the ages. Russia was reluctantly drawn into the Donbass conflict, reflected in Putin's pleas not to stage the 11 May 2014 referendums in Donetsk and Lugansk, but it could abandon the separatists.

#### **4.13. Ukraine Crisis-Centre of Instability in Eastern Europe – Analysing Risk**

The Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, which later spread to the pro-Russian separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts for the declaration of independence thereat triggered off a conflagration of conflict in East Europe. The BBC News Timeline (2014) reported that since April 2014, clashes in Eastern Ukraine between pro-Russian separatists and the Russian military against the Ukrainian Armed Forces had killed over 9,098 and wounded 20,732. The BBC News Timeline (ibid) further reported that armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine had produced upwards a number of 1.38 million internally displaced persons and 300,000+ refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing to neighboring countries. By February 2015: Separatists had broken the Minsk II ceasefire agreement and attacked Debaltseve, a city in the Donetsk Oblast, forcing the Ukrainian army to retreat sending the conflict into a stalemate. All these gory statistics strongly point to a worst case scenario where Russia's resurgence as a big power and its appetite to claim its former territories is posing serious risks in Eastern Europe. The following statistical indicators persuasively support the notion that the Resurgence of Russia as a big power has impacted negatively on security in Europe:

##### **4.13.1. Political Instability**

Following the Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014, freedom of peaceful assembly was generally respected in government-controlled areas of Ukraine. However, these scenario deteriorated drastically notwithstanding that the Ukrainian government had passed legislation to defend freedom of expression. This was followed by President Yanukovich's resignation in February 2014 placating protesters in the process, but the new government continued to struggle to implement aspects of promised security sector and economic reforms. Concerns over minority rights increased ethnic tensions which have become entrenched up to today. The Ukrainian government has repealed previous anti-Russian language laws, but distrust remains. In Crimea,

Ukrainian and Tatar people report that authorities discourage the use of minority languages. X Government corruption is a serious problem in Ukraine. In 2014, Transparency International ranked Ukraine 142 out of 175 countries for their levels of corruption. X I In a 2014 survey, only 4.8% of the respondents believed that corruption had been reduced, 31.8% said it had increased.

An estimated 2.9 million people living in the Crimea and Donbass regions struggle to exercise their economic and social rights.

#### **4.13.2. Militarization and Para-Military Incursions**

The escalated official militarization by both Russia and Ukraine and para-military incursions by the separatists who were allegedly linked to the Russian authorities posed a greater risk of security in East Europe and continues to do so up to this day. While Ukraine's military expenditures accounted for 2.7% of GDP in 2015, it skyrocketed to 5% of GDP in 2016 for military expenditures. Conscription increased Ukraine's army from 130,000 in 2014 to 250,000 by early 2015. Meanwhile, NATO condemned Russia's actions and has expressed its support for Ukraine. In addition to military drills in the area, as a public display of power, NATO has helped Ukraine develop its security capacity. Russia's military budget in 2015 was around \$84.5 billion, an 8.1% increase from 2014. This increase in its budget was met with shocking news by the Ukraine Defense Minister that by July 2015, reports that the separatists' army rose to 40,000-strength from less than half the number in 2014, but such estimates are difficult to confirm. The separatists are armed by Russia with Soviet-era, and more recent, military hardware. Russian soldiers are also found operating in Ukraine.

These statistics serve to reveal the deep rooted culture of violence that engulfs the Eastern European Block up to day. This has a negative impact on security in this region and the source of such insecurity revolves around the reawakening of Russia as a power on the international plane by the turn of the twenty first century.

#### **4.13.3. Political Instability and Militarization- Analyzing High Risk**

Russia's annexation of Crimea and clashes between the Ukrainian Armed Forces and Russian-backed separatists have resulted in many casualties. Though the conflict has, by 2017, since settled into a stalemate, skirmishes continue as both sides intensify militarization. Russia has increased its military budget and continues supporting the separatists in Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine has also expanded its military budget, but at great economic cost. Continued



conscription and economic woes may escalate political unrest. Given the unresolved tensions and growing militarization, a resurgence in violence is likely before the conflict is resolved. Political instability initiated the current conflict and Ukrainians still have little trust in their government.

The current conflict has also exacerbated animosity between ethnic groups. Domestic political stability is contingent on the Ukrainian Government's ability to fight corruption and enact reforms. Failure to do so may result in renewed protests and possibly another regime change. Kyiv must also find a way to resettle the millions displaced by the fighting in Ukraine. Ethnic minorities in Eastern Ukraine, specifically ethnic Russians, must also be adequately represented within the Kyiv Government if reunification with contested areas is to occur.

#### **4.13.4. Voting Patterns and Economic Performance**

In March 2014 during Crimea's referendum, which was held invalid by the United Nations, indicates that approximately 97% of voters were in favour of joining Russia. The majority in the Referenda in May 2014 on the status of the Donbass oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, which also widely regarded as illegitimate by Ukraine and the international community. On the economic front, in March 2014, the IMF announced plans to contribute a financial assistance package of \$17 billion to help stabilize the Ukrainian economy. The EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Association (DCFTA) Agreement, which entered into force on January 1, 2016, open prospects for free trade between Ukraine and the EU.

However, the hryvnia (Ukraine's currency) lost 70% in value since 2013; its current value with a current value sitting at or about US\$11.9. The consumer prices inflation rose to 12.2% in 2014 from -0.3% in 2011). The GDP growth rate, which stabilized 2011-2013, was -6.8%. Russia, Ukraine's main trading partner, decreased by 56% between 2014-2015. Thus, Ukraine's ongoing disputes with Russia have significantly deteriorated bilateral trade relations. The hryvnia's sharp devaluation since 2013, along with the rise in inflation, reflect Ukraine's unstable economy. President Poroshenko faces numerous challenges in the wake of the 2013-2014 Euromaidan protests to gain public confidence. Thus, Kyiv must tackle widespread corruption, restriction of civil liberties, and an unstable economy.

#### **4.13.5. Environmental Stress and Risk Assessment of Ukraine**

The mass soil erosion due to poor land management degrades over 500 million tonnes of arable soil annually, valued at \$5 billion in losses. This is not fully offset by new technology. The

Changing rainfall patterns and higher temperatures indicate high risks of water stress and drought every 3 years. The drought in mid/late 2015 lowered Ukraine's wheat output and net exports. Tensions with Russia have escalated as Ukraine increasingly seeks to align itself with the EU and NATO, challenging Russia's regional security. Ukraine's increased ties with the West may offer sociopolitical and economic stability, but further risk deteriorating relations with Russia. Meanwhile, droughts and high temperatures have had a negative short-term effect on Ukraine's wheat production and exports which threatens its already turbulent economy and causing a real risk of further plunging Eastern Europe into insecurity

#### **4.13.6. An Internal Stakeholder Analysis of the Ukraine Crisis and Insecurity in East Europe**

Despite a lack of international recognition, Crimea has become an autonomous state led by pro-Russian Prime Minister Sergey Aksyonov. Russian-armed militants continue to repress individuals, especially the Crimean Tatars, and reject Kyiv's central control. Xlix The pro-Russian and anti-Kyiv Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) are both fragile and politically unstable. Power struggles, both internally and with other militant groups in the region, along with expanded arms trafficking and pro-Russian sentiments threaten to destabilize the tentative stalemate in the region.

President Putin's concerns about Russia's regional security are further exacerbated by Ukraine's increasing integration with the EU and NATO. With Ukraine's role as a buffer between Russia and Europe in question, Russia has escalated the conflict by supporting pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine and annexing Crimea. The Government continues to oversee the ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine while addressing constitutional reform issues related to the Minsk Protocols' provisions for self-governance in Donbass. The Ukraine Government also continues to face numerous domestic challenges after the 2013-2014 Euromaidan protests, including: combatting corruption; protecting civil liberties; and stabilizing Ukraine's economy. The massive influx of IDPs may disrupt Ukraine's social, political, and economic stability. Various militant ethnic groups, including the Cossacks and Tatars, also continue to fight over competing territorial claims. Liv Local oligarchs such as Ihor Kolomoisky and Rinat Akhmetov continue to threaten Kyiv by sponsoring corrupt opposition parties and rigging elections. All these problems only serve to depend the crisis in Ukraine and cause instability and further threaten security.

#### **4.13.7. An External Stakeholders Analysis of the Ukraine Crisis and Insecurity in Europe**

The USA has coordinated sanctions against Russia and accused it of destabilizing Ukraine. The USA has also encouraged Ukraine's integration with the EU and NATO and expressed support for the current Ukrainian government. The EU remains an important ally to Ukraine through instituting diplomatic and economic sanctions against Russia. While the EU and NATO Solidarity appear progressive, the deepening of such ties only work against Ukraine which remains at the mercy of Moscow who for all intents and purposes, loath and dislike the Brussels- Kiev tango, thus worsening crackdowns on media freedom and hostility against reporters in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine

#### **4.14. Conclusion**

This Chapter has presented the findings of the research and an analysis of the impact of the resurgence of Russia as a super power on security in East Europe. The impact was analyzed through the lenses of the Ukrainian case study given the ongoing crisis that has not been settled. It has also presented a holistic risk assessment of the Ukraine crisis and its potential to endanger the political, economic, social and human security of vulnerable groups such as Internally Displaced Persons, the elderly, the Children and persons with disabilities who find themselves at the mercy of the brutal Russo- Ukraine aggression.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This Chapter presents the conclusions of the study flowing from the findings. It also proffers a raft of recommendations to policy makers in international relations and strategic affairs of Eastern European Affairs on how to deescalate and eventually stop the growing discontent in Russia and Ukraine and the potential conflagration of violence, widespread war and insecurity in that region. The recommendations will be proffered within the framework of refining the EU, USA and NATO policies towards Russian aggression towards Ukraine and its strategic alliance with the separatist movements in Crimea, Donbas, Luhansk and the Donetsk People's Republics. The recommendations will also be proposed within the framework of crucial interventional efforts which have already been adopted by the Minsk Negotiations framework such as: strengthening and improvement of strategic geopolitical relations; review of institutional building and governance thrust; the economy and energy policy; civic society and human rights; humanitarian challenges and judiciary system and reforms.

#### **5.2. Purpose and Overview of the Research-Restating of the Objectives**

The overarching purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which the resurgence of Russia as a world superpower has impacted on security in Europe in general, and its bilateral security affairs with Ukraine in particular. The study has been able to demonstrate that Russia is resurging as a world superpower. This was achieved through outlining the major characteristics and factors which have caused the resurgence of Russia as such. The study was able to locate the factors of Russia's emergency in the historical context of its political leadership and strategic geopolitical developments and that whilst the USA was preoccupying itself in a number of conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraqi and other many Middle Eastern convulsions, and the European Union was busy in its focus to moving its integration process ahead, Russia embarked upon a dramatic process of economic, military and political reform.

Deriving from the above purpose of the research, the study also found out that the coming into power of President Vladimir Putin who helped to commandeer the resurgence of Russia, both on the military and economic fronts strengthened the Russian resolve to take the world by storm. The strategic leadership by Putin coincided with other factors such as the booming energy economics, strategic alliances, military reawakening and a resolute foreign policy as

shall be discussed in the literature review. The purpose and overview of the research was also predicated upon the need to analyse the response of sovereign European states to the resurgence of Russia. The responses of Ukraine, the EU countries, the USA and the NATO were unravelled. This led to a thorough examination of the extent to which the resurgence of Russia as a world superpower has impacted on security in Europe.

### **5.3. Summary of Major Arguments of the Study**

To achieve the foregoing purpose of the research, Chapter 1 provided a general introduction to the study focusing on the problem analysis, justification, objectives of the research, and the research questions. This helped to give context to the topic on the implication of the resurgence of Russia as a super power on security in East Europe with particular focus on the Ukraine crisis of 2014 and subsequent instability.

Chapter 2 of the study presented the foundational theoretical aspects of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower and its impact on security in Eastern Europe, with particular focus on the Ukraine crisis and subsequent instability. It unraveled an in-depth analysis of the resurgence of Russia through the lenses of the various theories of international relations which are relevant to the growing influence of Russia in the world order that manifested in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are mainly the hegemony, realist and power theoretical aspects of the implication of Russia's reawakening on security in East Europe. These theories were ventilated from the point of view of the fast growing international strategic affairs phenomenon of the Military Industrial Complexes that also seem to excite the Kremlin authorities. Constructivism was explored as a theoretical veneer upon which Russia advances its international influence.

Under Chapter 3, a qualitative research design of the resurgence of Russia and its implications on security in Eastern Europe was adopted, based in the main, on a qualitative research approach achieved through the Case Study of the 2014 Ukraine Crisis. Thus, the obvious consequence of this approach was that the sampling methods, the data collection and research instruments, and the incidental data analysis were aligned to the qualitative approaches. The research also employed secondary data analysis through a thorough desktop research which focuses on understanding the implications of the resurgence of Russia as a super power on security in Eastern Europe. This was achieved through an examination of various documentary resources such as journals, media reports, authoritative texts, and timelines from the internet and library research. Foreign policy sources of various states involved in the research were also reviewed.

Using the approaches of research above, Chapter 4 presented the results of the study by focusing on an in-depth interrogation of the Russo-Ukraine crisis and subsequent geopolitical implications on trans-border security in Eastern Europe. The case study of Ukraine was designed in a manner that analysed secondary data and interviews by: diplomats, eminent scholars in European Strategic affairs and international relations, and foreign affairs officials. The study undertook a thorough probe into the subjective experiences and the meanings attached to the experiences of various representatives of States in Eastern Europe and Russia and other international relations analysts and actors in the international affairs of that region. Both explanatory and descriptive approaches were harnessed under the Ukraine case study design model.

#### **5.4. Summary of Major Conclusions of the Study**

Chapter 4 presented an analysis of Russia's expansionist experiment in Ukraine and its implications on security in East Europe. The expansionist experiment of Russia has been expressed within the framework of its resurgence as a world super power and the extent to which that ambition has caused destruction in its tracks and the potential negative implications on security in the said region. Chapter 4 firmly concluded that Russia's reawakening as a world power after the Cold War and its rather traumatic experiences with a more Russo-repulsive EU, USA and NATO enlargement has caused animosity in the Eastern European triangle. This animosity has revolved around serious instability in Ukraine and the Russian annexed and separatist territories of Crime, Donetsk, Donbas, Luhansk and the Donetsk People's Republics respectively.

The Ukraine crisis has spiraled into bouts of civil war and has thrown the whole Eastern European region into a state of uncertainty, panic and even humanitarian crisis. This attendant and unfortunate state of affairs is packaged in the following points of conclusive discussions of the study bordering on the major points of Ukraine and the 2014 Crisis; the Donbas war and Ukraine's security concerns; the west's foreign policy on the Russo-Ukraine aggression; civic society involvement in the Ukraine crisis; governance and anti-corruption reform in Ukraine; Ukraine economic situation and reform; and the Ukraine judicial reform and crisis. These aspects will also be the basis of the recommendations proffered below.

#### **5.4.1. Ukraine and the 2014 Crisis (The Maidan)-Conclusions**

The study concluded that Ukraine has a protracted time tradition of nation building, historically derailed by both external aggressors, principally Russia and a domestic inability to engage in sustainable statecraft. Although many Ukrainians saw the Maidan as a bright and hopeful moment in Ukrainian history, and significant progress on reforms in Ukraine, not enough has been implemented, and the opposition of oligarchs and other vested interests with the potential to hurt the Ukraine population is growing (Abrahams and Fish 2016:17). While Russian Claims that the Maidan was a product of radical nationalism have been concluded to be a Russo-interest-based argument, the entire pandemonium was centered on Russia's unbridled ambition to project its influence in its former territories and beyond.

The study also concluded that the Kremlin uses a Huntingtonian civilizational narrative to justify intervention to halt the development of democracy in East Slavic countries, which are its perceived spheres of influence, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of the incompatibility of democracy with East Slavic culture. This is notwithstanding the fact that the only persuasive argument of the Russo-Ukraine aggression is its realist thrust of wanting to strengthen its geopolitical position in the region. Resultantly, the potential integration of Ukraine and other Russian former territories with Europe is a threat to Russia's interests, and the military conflict in the east is a manifestation of opportunistic Russia's expansionist policies rather than the internal political dynamics in Ukraine. This Russian narrative denies Ukrainians the right to national self-determination and grossly exaggerates the tensions between different groups of Ukraine's multiethnic society.

#### **5.4.2. Ukraine and the 2014 Crisis (The Maidan)-Recommendations**

The stakeholder policy makers in the international arena, especially the West, composed of the USA, EU, NATO, and the affected territories must implement the following recommendations to stem the ambitious expansionist policy of Russia in its perceived spheres of influence. Firstly, the USA should encourage the Ukrainian government to focus on top-priority reforms and avoid political infighting. These key reforms include liberalization and deregulation of the economy, anti-corruption legislation, tax and fiscal reform, as well as electoral and civil service reform. The west should promote the creation of public forums for wider discussion of draft laws on constitutional amendments and reforms.

The west should particularly codify its non-recognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea and increase the financial aid it offers Ukraine for rebuilding infrastructure and supporting social services on the condition that Ukraine makes concrete steps on reforms and anti-corruption measures. There is also imperative need to help Ukraine develop new formats of inclusive cooperation with other non-state actors such as development partners and civic society to promote inclusive governance.

The international community must also take a strong stance on civil liberties within Ukraine, standing up for vulnerable groups like Ukraine's 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and independent journalists under government pressure (Amnesty International Report on Ukraine 2016). There is also need for support towards Ukraine for it to continue the prosecution of current officials for corruption and a lack of professional integrity. This process should include continuing and implementing judicial reforms; and creating properly functional anti-corruption bodies including specialized anti-corruption courts. Moreover, the Ukraine's government should expand the scope of anti-corruption efforts to include businesses, in addition to strengthening the involvement of citizens in anti-corruption efforts and adopting a whistleblower protection law.

Thus, Supporting Ukraine's transition is the best way to counteract the Russian narrative. Therefore, Ukraine and its partners must focus on building a successful and prosperous Ukraine on the territory it currently controls. For the international community, this means maintaining a robust sanctions stance and keeping the stakes and costs high for potential Russian escalation, while simultaneously helping Ukraine grow its economy and reform its political system. This will be able to nip the aggressive ambitions of Russia in the bud and stop the ugly consequences on security in Eastern Europe.

#### **5.4.3. Donbas War and Ukraine's Security-Conclusions**

The study noted that the Ukraine crisis has deescalated between late 2015 and early 2017. However, up today, Ukraine continues to fight a simmering war against the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, which now control over 7% of Ukraine's territory. Without Russian political, military, and financial support, obviously these separatist adventures in Eastern Ukrainian territory would have tumbled down. This therefore, is an eloquent witness of the enduring interest of Russia in Ukraine and other its former territories. This has galvanized nearly three years of conflict in Eastern Ukraine since 2014, caused the death of



more than 10,000 people, and nearly 21,000 injured, and this only reflects available data on the Ukrainian side, with no details of data on the Russian side. The civilian population remaining in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have also been left amidst a raging humanitarian and human rights crisis.

Another set of conclusions is that while major negotiations in the context of the Donbas War are usually held in the format which brings together France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, major players in international affairs have, to Ukraine's frustration, jettisoned its envisaged major role in these negotiations, deferring largely to the leadership of Germany, which held the OSCE Chairmanship in 2016. Germany was therefore also a key player in the "Trilateral Contact Group," a negotiating platform that comprises the OSCE, Ukraine, and Russia. The ceasefire ostensibly agreed to in the Minsk I Agreement, signed in September 2014, had completely fallen through by February 2015.

The Minsk II (Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Protocol, February 2015) Agreement, reached by the 'Normandy Format' heads of state comprising France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine and signed by the Trilateral Contact Group, has been the primary framework within which the Donbas peace-building process has been discussed. Nevertheless, this set of diplomatic engagements have failed dismally and the crisis in Ukraine continues to rage on and has left the Ukraine population, especially those in the East at the mercy of a serious humanitarian crisis and serious insecurity.

Most of the points of the Minsk II Agreement are commonsense provisions related to an immediate ceasefire, which apply both to Ukraine and to the Russian-backed separatist forces. These provisions have been implemented to varying degrees by both sides. While Point 1 of the Minsk II required that an immediate and full ceasefire should have begun in February 15, 2015, the war continued in full force until September 2015, and has continued on *ad hoc* up date. It has been concluded that while Ukraine does not have military plans to retake the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR and LNR), official Russian so-called curators of the occupied territories are trying to both maintain enthusiasm for the movement while at the same time strategically holding back over eager militia members desperate to fight Ukraine (International Crisis Group Report 2016).

Ceasefire violations have been steadily increasing since January 2016. June 2016 saw 69 civilian casualties, double the number from the previous month, and the largest number since the post-Minsk peak of the war in August 2015. Over the winter 2015–2016, nearly all of the very few civilian casualties were caused by unexploded ordnance, such as landmines (International Crisis Group 2016 Report). However, the UN has reported that as a consequence of the dramatic increase in violence, more than half of the summer's civilian casualties were directly the result of mortar fire, cannons, howitzers, and tanks. These attendant problems however, can be addressed by the respective recommendations proffered below

#### **5.4.4. Donbas and War and Ukraine's Security- Recommendations**

The international community has a fundamental interest in Ukraine's future and should play a larger role in the relevant international negotiations. This is particularly important since no signatories of the Budapest Memorandum, who pledged to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and consult with each other if Ukraine's territorial integrity were violated, are present in the Minsk process, other than Russia. The west must be proactive in setting strategic goals regarding Ukraine, rather than reacting to Russian actions. One way to do this would be to engage more deeply with Germany in the negotiations instead of ceding responsibility completely.

It is also key to understand that the Kremlin's reckless behavior toward the west and its allies is calculated to make Russia appear as if it is not a declining power, but a strategic adversary. Russia's primary interest in destabilizing Ukraine is not only to counteract decades of Western-bloc expansion, but to prevent Ukraine from becoming a successful democracy that might serve as an example for the Russian people. Supporting Ukraine's transition to democracy is the best way to undermine this narrative.

Strict conditionality of financial aid remains an effective tool to influence Ukraine's political elites. The IMF's support package for Ukraine is an example of effective conditionality, although the required tight fiscal policies may actually be contributing to the recession in Ukraine. The conditionality of aid should be re-focused on strengthening and legitimizing state institutions rather than dismantling them; for example, Ukraine's economy can recover more quickly if property rights are secured and the judiciary is cleaned up.

As public frustration with austerity and the slow pace of reforms increases, the west should increase the visibility and impact of its assistance. In order for the people to continue to support

Ukraine's pro-Western choice, they must feel that that choice has had a positive impact on their lives. The public is waiting to see infrastructure rebuilt and the education and healthcare sectors reformed. Structural and top-level reforms, though important, can be largely invisible to an impatient public.

Moreover, the international community should help Ukraine in its efforts to provide Russian-language radio and TV broadcasting to Crimea and the Donbas. They should support the building of transmission towers so that 3G cell phone coverage can be provided to the occupied territories. The U.S. should encourage Kyiv to increase engagement with the south-east of Ukraine with a public awareness campaign focusing on bolstering local self-government bodies and minority rights. In every conversation with senior Ukrainian officials, the international community should highlight humanitarian concerns and the need to bring an end to Ukraine's commercial food and medical blockade of occupied territories. The west should insist that all sides, including Ukraine's military and intelligence agencies, respect fundamental liberties, including the right to be free from torture.

#### **5.4.5. Civic Society in Ukraine-Conclusions**

The study also concluded that both during and after the Maidan, Ukraine's blossoming civil society referred to as the volunteer movement, was made up of people from different strata of society. Currently, the civic activists referred to as volunteers are people of different ages, professions, faiths, political ideologies, social origins, ethnicities, and financial situations. These civic organizations have created various horizontally structured organizations that have been functioning effectively for over two years. After the Maidan, the volunteer movement focused initially on assisting Ukraine's armed forces and the volunteer battalions, as well as helping accommodate the influx of internally displaced persons from Crimea and Donbas (International Crisis Group 2016).

Additionally, these civic organizations began facilitating social reforms in various areas including public oversight of the government, documentation of the violations of human rights, and reporting crimes in the areas of armed conflict. In essence, civil society is acting as a parallel state, working in tandem with government institutions. It is no accident that according to sociological studies, the volunteer movement has become one of the most influential institutions in modern Ukraine. Volunteers are now one of the three most trusted groups in the

country, alongside the church and the military. Today, the recently reborn civil society faces a number of key challenges that will influence how Ukraine moves forward.

It is to be noted that while there appears to be space for non-state actors, the continued Russian aggression on Ukraine leaves civil society in an invidious situation to continue to de-escalate the impact of Russian resurgence on security there at. Thus, a raft of recommendations as proposed below can be of utility.

#### **5.4.6. Civic Society in Ukraine-Recommendations**

The first challenge facing civil society is to force the government to undertake democratic reforms and not become a continuation of the old system. Secondly, Ukraine must resist Russian aggression while striving not to become an authoritarian state itself. Finally, the third challenge is to continue rapid development and not lose touch with society at large. The international community on the other hand, should develop new formats of working with Ukraine that give civil society a seat at the table, not just a consultative role. After all, civil society has been an actor equal to or even greater than state institutions when it comes to the democratization of Ukrainian society and dilute the sense of insecurity in the humanitarian affected territories.

Policies which direct aid to only a narrow circle of civic organizations with a certain level of financial management must be expanded in order to include more recipients. It is important to support new grassroots initiatives, including those in the newly liberated regions in the east of the country, which are not technically listed as civic organizations. All diplomatic, legal, and economic means must be used to pressure the Russian Federation to protect members of civil society from persecution in the occupied territories.

#### **5.4.7. Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms in Ukraine-Conclusions**

The study concluded that Ukraine suffers from systemic corruption and can be characterized as a captured state. Although corruption does exist in the private sector, public sector corruption draws the most attention and requires state action. Thus, in a captured state such as Ukraine, the majority of government employees use their positions to serve their private interests rather than the interests of the state or its citizens (Transparency International Report on Ukraine 2016).

A modern state performs several important functions, including providing public goods, correcting market failures, and protecting competition, partially redistributing income and setting up a social safety net. In captured states such as Ukraine, these functions are performed badly, public goods are scarce and low-quality, regulations are used for the enrichment of officials and their friends, markets are monopolized, often with the help of administrative barriers to entry, and usually there are high levels of inequality, with super-rich elites, a thin middle class, and a low-income majority. This has been the case with Ukraine since the Maidan and has created a breeding ground for serious rent-seeking behavior which only further hurts the Ukraine economy and its people during a precarious period of insecurity and humanitarian crisis. However, a set of respective recommendations to checkmate such challenges are proffered below.

#### **5.4.8. Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms in Ukraine-Recommendations**

To increase the efficiency of the joint effort of Ukrainian civil society organizations and the international community, the U.S. should focus on encouraging Ukraine to pursue three key priorities aimed at dismantling the system of corruption such as legislative reform, State Owned Enterprises reform, and privatization and prosecuting current officials for their lack of integrity. This effort should be based on continuing the judicial reform process, reforming the law enforcement system by limiting the powers of the Prosecution office, creating efficient and effective anti-corruption bodies and anti-corruption courts, and managing the system of income/wealth e-declarations.

Increase in accountability of current officials by strengthening the involvement of businesses in the anti-corruption effort; strengthening the involvement of citizens in anticorruption efforts; and adopting laws on whistleblower protection can go a long way to address the predicament created by corruption in the Ukraine. The West and international organizations such as IMF or the World Bank should provide strong political support and, where appropriate, technical assistance to help with the implementation of the above priorities. Keeping in mind that prevention is more important than punishment, it would be good to construct a bargain in which the adoption of reforms and dismantling of rent-seeking schemes is exchanged for the personal safety of corrupt officials, perhaps through a dual-track approach or the adoption of some form of asset amnesty.

Chlorinating Ukraine of corruption will help it to strengthen its institutions and governance, and subsequently inspire an investment climate which will only place Ukraine on the international community, and galvanize its effort to frustrate Russia's expansionist policy. This will also go a long way towards enhancing the security situation in the region and stifle the humanitarian crisis in taking root in the Eastern European triangle.

#### **5.4.9. Ukraine Economic Situation and Reform-Conclusions**

Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe by area after Russia, and sixth largest by population, making it one of the biggest consumer markets in the region (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016). A favorable geographic position establishes the country as a natural transportation link between Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. Ukraine is rich in natural resources, such as iron ore and coal, and is richly endowed with chernozem, one of the most fertile types of soils in the world (ibid).

This study has however, concluded that these advantages, have not translated to financial well-being for Ukraine's people. Structurally, Ukraine is a relatively small, open, and commodity-based economy. In 2015, it ranked 64<sup>th</sup> globally by nominal GDP (\$91 billion) and was 49<sup>th</sup> by GDP at purchasing power parity (PPP). Ukraine's per capita GDP stood at \$2,125 (\$7,971 at PPP) last year, ranking it 135<sup>th</sup> worldwide (118<sup>th</sup> based on PPP). Ukraine's external trade turnover is equivalent to 107% of GDP (World Bank Group Report on Ukraine, 2015). Heavy industry is a key sector of Ukraine's economy due to the country's ample natural resources and the forced industrialization of the Soviet era. Industry accounted for 26% of gross value added in 2015 and has an even larger impact on GDP due to its interdependence with other economic sectors, particularly rail transportation. Agriculture has grown significantly in recent years, nearly doubling its share in gross value added from 7.5% in 2007 to 14% in 2015, one of the highest ratios in the region (ibid).

Despite this mixed bag of Ukraine's economic indicators, a set of respective recommendations on the same may be of utility in making good the situation in Ukraine, especially against a backdrop of solid endowment of natural resources, heavy industry and value addition and beneficiation index standing at 26%.

#### **5.4.10. Ukraine Economic Situation and Reform-Recommendations**

With 3.1 million conflict-affected people still in need and limited humanitarian funding, the international community must take heed the UN Humanitarian Coordinator's plea for more support, since people in need as well as volunteers are traumatized, broke, and stretched to their limits (Walkker 2016: 4.) The west should provide seed funding to encourage Ukraine to develop and implement a coordinated plan to promote and bring about the successful reintegration of the displaced and the return of their full political and economic rights. They should provide development funds and encourage other donors to invest in housing, infrastructure repair, and job training in secure parts of Ukraine, in order to create jobs and housing opportunities for displaced families.

While the Ukrainian exports are still largely dependent on commodities chiefly steel, wheat, corn, sunflower seeds and oil and prices for these commodities have fluctuated greatly, sometimes doubling or halving in a year, which has affected export revenues and therefore the exchange rate, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU could ameliorate this problem. The devaluation that occurred over 2014-2016 should boost exports, but new production also requires an inflow of investment which depends on structural reforms such as strengthening protection of property rights and the rule of law. All these efforts will help to unlock the value of the Ukraine economy and avail benefits to its citizens in a manner that emboldens them to reclaim their pride in the Eastern European region and improve their standard of living, hence mitigating on the possibilities of escalating insecurity in that region.

#### **5.4.11. Ukraine Judicial Reform-Conclusions**

The study concludes that the judicial system in Ukraine is inefficient, opaque, and suffers from extremely low public confidence. In 2013, 16 percent of the population reported that they trusted the courts. By late 2014, that trust was down to 10 percent (Transparent International, 2014). Currently, despite all the other developments in Ukraine, the strength and independence of the judicial system remains under threat. This risk is linked to the rigidly corrupt oligarchic system that has prevailed since Ukraine gained its independence in 1991. Each new government in Ukraine subjugated the judicial system, which then worked in the interest of those governing and ignored the needs of society (Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia Report, March 2015).

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After the 2013-2014 Revolution of Dignity, one of society's most pressing demands was immediate judicial reform, which began only in October 2014. The government was able to enact some positive changes but these have not been sufficient to increase public confidence or accelerate reforms in other sectors. Existing judicial reforms were initiated, developed, and implemented by a top-down command structure stemming from President Poroshenko. This approach provided little opportunity for any public input or for any influence from civil society. Thus, the risk that the changes are only superficial is high, leaving the judicial system dependent on and heavily influenced by other branches of government in Ukraine. In order for judicial reforms to be sustainable and accepted by the people of Ukraine and its civil society, the reforms process must be supported by the international community within the framework of the recommendations proffered below.

#### **5.4.12. Ukraine Judicial Reform- Recommendations**

The west should encourage Ukraine to create public forums and establish a public comment period for draft laws on judicial reform. The public should be notified in advance and by various means of the date, times, and place of these forums. Several forums should be held in each major city in order to ensure participation. Ukraine should conduct an education campaign to make the public well-informed ahead of any judicial reform discussion forums. The U.S. should ensure the participation of foreign experts in public debate and monitoring, as well as public coverage of these discussions. The public should be able to submit written commentary on the reforms by various means, including electronically. After the comment period closes, a summary of the submitted comments should be published for public viewing.

The international community should assist in the systemic monitoring of judicial reforms that is done by several non-governmental organizations in particular, the coalition of NGOs called Reanimation Package of Reforms, the European Business Association, and American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. This will go an extra mile in strengthening the Council for Judicial Reform by providing specialized experts and grant support. This should be done in coordination with the work of the relevant parliamentary committees and members of Parliament, since the process of reforms is currently encumbered by the Poroshenko Administration. The participation of Members of Parliament will also allow society to come to a consensus on reforms faster. The international community must help Ukraine develop alternative dispute resolution tools, in order to reduce the burden on the judicial system and increase public confidence in the justice system.



This will strengthen the legal environment around which business and the citizens of Ukraine operate and help to restore law, peace and order in Ukraine. These can only be the key guarantors of security in Eastern Europe.

### **5.5. Overall Conclusion**

The overall conclusion of this study is that the resurgence of Russia as a world power since the 1990s has had a negative impact on security in Ukraine and its occupied separatist territories and Eastern Europe in General. This is evidenced by the huge humanitarian crisis discussed under Chapter 4 that left some parts of Ukraine war zone; the Crimean Peninsula annexed, the Donbas, Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics raging war, the economy of Ukraine in limbo; thousands of civilian dead; and infrastructure destroyed and a raft of restrictive measures and sanctions imposed against Russia.

While beaming optimism may have been registered in Ukraine and the neo-liberal world by the overthrow of President Yanukovich in early 2014 to give Ukraine a real opportunity to launch necessary political and economic reforms, Moscow, threatened by the possibility that Ukraine's pivot to Europe might serve as an example for the Russian people, sought to maintain Ukraine within its sphere of influence by illegally annexing Crimea and funneling arms and equipment to pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. Thus, in view of the foregoing, the future success of Ukraine as a functional and democratic state is important is predicated upon the support that Ukraine will get from the international community. The prospects of this support however remain uncertain in a world driven by the Westphalia state sovereign based tradition that is heavily rooted in the realist school of thought of state centric maximization of power. It is this path that Russia has taken and it would be seen going forward if the juggernaut of this resurgence that has already been the hall mark of Russia's foreign policy trajectory and has swallowed up Ukraine's territory will be stopped.

Today, Ukraine continues to fight an undeclared war against two small pseudo-states called the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics (LDNR). Kremlin authorities continue to direct the politics and the military operations of the breakaway republics, in addition to distributing minimal social payments and financially supporting the leadership. Framed by the Minsk agreements, the negotiations to end the war are deadlocked over whether political concessions

from Kyiv or security-related concessions from the Kremlin and the LDNR, a durable ceasefire should come first. The international community that must play an important role in keeping Ukraine economically and politically stable appears continues to provide a lukewarm approach of leadership to tackle the Russo-Ukraine aggression and this state of aloofness only put paid to the growing influence of Russia as an ambitious international relations player that want to claim an equal share in the competitive international plane with other emerging powers such as India and China and the traditional big brothers of international politics, the EU and the United States of America.

While the conclusion of this study is that Russia's expansionist policies, buttressed by its growing influence in the international system, is hurting security prospects in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, there is a window of hope for the actors and stakeholders in the international community to mitigate on the crisis. The policy makers in the international community, particularly the USA, EU, NATO and Ukraine itself can work towards the strengthening and improvement of strategic geopolitical relations against Russia; review of institutional building and governance thrust in Ukraine; boosting the economy and energy business in Ukraine; strengthening civic society and human rights in East Europe; solve the humanitarian conundrums caused by sporadic instability in the eastern regions of Ukraine; reform judiciary system; and fight corruption. This will go a long way towards restoring the confidence of the citizens of Ukraine and provide a solid foundation to face Russian aggression which does not seem to deescalate as long as Ukraine still dreams of joining the EU, NATO and integrating itself in the security community of the same.

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## ANNEXURE I

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMINENT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHOLARS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS, AMBASADORS AND RELATED OFFICIALS

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#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My name is **Sibusisiwe Melody**, a student studying towards the attainment of a Master of Science in International Relations (MSC-IR) degree program offered by the department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Zimbabwe's Faculty of Social Sciences. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the programme, I am carrying out a research titled "**The Resurgence of Russia as a Superpower and Implications of Security in East Europe: The Case of Ukraine (2014-2016)**" I kindly request that you assist me in my studies by responding to my questions.

All information obtained will be treated confidentially and the results will be used in an aggregated form without reference to your individual answers unless you authorize otherwise. Furthermore, participation in this study is voluntary and you may decide to exit at any point. If there are some important aspects or areas of interest that you think have been left out, kindly volunteer perspectives on the same. I also request that I record your interview on a voice recorder if you do not mind.

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#### A. INTERVIEW IDENTIFICATION

Respondent Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Period for the Interview:

From.....to.....

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#### B. PROFESSIONAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT

**Profession:** What is your official title? .....

**Sex:**

Female.....Male.....

**Level of Formal Education:** First Degree/ Masters.....  
PHD. ....  
Professor.....  
Other (Specify).....

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#### C. THE STATUS OF RUSSIA IN STRATEGIC STUDIES

1. To what extent are you familiar with Russian Strategic and International Relations Affairs?
  2. What is a superpower in your view and how do you enjoin Russia to that status?
  3. Do you think Russia is resurging to its former status as a superpower, if so, what factors do you think characterize that resurgence?
-



**D. ASSESMENT OF IMPACT OF RUSSIAN RESURGENCE AS A SUPERPOWER ON SECURITY IN EUROPE**

1. Do you think the resurgence of Russia has any implications on security in Europe in general and Ukraine in particular?
  2. Which region and/ countries that you think have been affected by the resurgence of Russia as a superpower?
  3. What has been the response of Europe and Ukraine and their likely reactions in the future pertaining to Russia's actions or omissions as a superpower?
  4. What has been, in your view, the extent to which the resurgence of Russia as a superpower impacted on security in Europe and Ukraine?
  5. How does its relations with America, especially in view of the Trump phenomenon, impacted on security in Europe and other sovereign territories such as Ukraine?
  6. May you paint a clear picture of the status of security in Europe and Ukraine in view of the NATO-Russo relationship?
- 

**E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY IN EUROPE DUE TO RUSSIA'S ACTIONS.**

1. What are your recommendations on how the European Union and Ukraine policy makers can counter Russian expansionism?
2. What interventions can be executed to nip Russian aggression in Europe and Ukraine in the Bud?
3. What can be the role of the United Nations in fostering peace processes in Europe, Ukraine and Russia as a way of guaranteeing the security of the region?
4. What other alternative dispute resolutions do you think may be of utility in guaranteeing peace and security in Europe and Ukraine as a result of actions by Russia?

END

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**ANNEXURE II**  
**RESEARCH AUTHORISATION LETTER**