

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESURGENCE OF RUSSIA AS A  
SUPERPOWER ON ITS BILAERAL RELATIONS WITH THE  
USA. (2000-2016)**



**BY**

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## **Dedication**

To my mother, Mrs Tendayi Kandawasvika, the greatest woman who ever walked on this earth.  
To my God given children, Tinashe, Tafadzwa and Ashleigh, life will be meaningless without you.

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## **Acronyms**

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
DOD	Department of Defence
GDP	Gross Domestic Produce
ICBMs	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
IMF	International Monetary Fund
HST	Hegemonic Stability Theory
LIC	Low Income Countries
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NMDS	National Missile Defence System
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African Nationalist Liberation Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People Revolutionary Army

## **Abstract**

The study discusses the implications of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower on its bilateral relations with the USA. Russia is seeking superpower status and in the process challenging the global hegemony enjoyed by the US. Within its resurgence, Russia is challenging the unipolarity international system dominated by the US. Among the research objectives, the research sought to understand the underlying factors influencing the resurgence of Russia, the implications of these on its bilateral relations with the US and recommendations that can be given to enhance the bilateral relations between the two rivals. The balance of power theory is utilised in trying to understand the research problem: the implications of Russia's resurgence on its bilateral relations with the US. Since the US is a regional power and Russia a regional power as well, the theory sought to explain how these states have effected these regional capabilities in trying to gain superpower status. The concept of conventional bilateral relations was also utilized as it sought to explain the bilateral US-Russia relations. Qualitative research methods were utilized in the study. Through the utilization of semi-structured interviews and documentary search, this research argues that issues that have necessitated the rise of Russia can be explained under political, social and economic factors. Within the research, it was also recognized that geographical location of Russia has also led to the resurgence of the Federation. The research also established the impact of Russia's resurgence on its bilateral relations with the US. From 2000, USA-Russia bilateral relations have deteriorated. America imposed sanctions on Russia after its military engagements in Ukraine resulting in the US withdrawing from START II and also unilaterally withdrawing from the joint force with Russia in Syria amongst other effects. To normalize these relations however, this research recommends that the US should open diplomatic ties with Russians to engage in bilateral relations and that the US desist from its double standards when it comes to international situations.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The study focuses on the implications of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower on its bilateral relations with the United States of America (USA) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This study thus seeks to analyse the strategic resurgence of Russia towards achieving a super-power status since Russia is labelled a great power. In this study, qualitative social science methods will be utilised thus documentary search and semi-structured interviews will be sources of data. In essence, chapter one introduces the research subject. The background to the problem, research objectives, justification of the study, and statement of the problem amongst other elements will be discussed.

### **1.2 Background to the Problem**

The Cold War period saw an establishment of diplomatic relations between the USA and Russia in the contemporary world. In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and this was arguably one of the first series of events bringing the Cold War to an end. It is within this perspective that America became a sole super-power within the international arena according to Waltz (1994: 12). This can be understood in international politics as unipolarity. To Keohane (1997:7), the international system can be traced from the 1648 Westphalian Treaty that brought about the notion of statehood, then to a state of military multi-polarity (1815-1945) established after the Congress of Vienna, experiencing the First World War and the first international organization in the League of Nations, the world had progressed to one of bipolarity (1945-1989), to the current situation of unipolarity, though it is debatable. In essence, unipolarity in international politics can be understood as the distribution of power capabilities in which one government exercises most of the social, cultural, military, and even economic influence. According to Griplin (1981:50), great power dominance depends largely on military technology power. It is within these military capabilities that a great power seeks and acquires unipolar global dominance.

Russia has lost power since the end of the Cold War and this was signified by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, and also Moscow's granting independence to the former Soviet Socialist's Slav and Balkan states (Keohane, 1997: 22). These power capabilities were in the form of military, social, political and cultural capabilities (ibid, 23) Nonetheless, recovery has begun especially in the military arena. Russia has a defence budget and development research that is

80% of the total defence expenditures of its most future competitor, China (IMF, 2012). This can be compared to the USA's military budget of over \$600 billion dollars. The CN (2017), has also reported that President Trump has suggested to increase USA defence budget by \$54 billion in 2018. According to Webster (2011:12), Russia has unmatched global power projection capabilities. According to SIPRI, in 2015, Russia increased its defence spending by 7.5%. The budget is said to have reached \$66.4 billion dollars. Percentage-wise, Russia is one of the world's leaders in terms of the share of GDP spent on defence, ranging around 7.5% according to SIPRI (2016, 110). In essence, China argued to be a rivalry to the Russia and the United States. The GFP, (2016, 12) reports that China is ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> in military capabilities. China's military is developing ships, submarines, aircraft, intelligence systems and foreign bases in a bid to become a global military power. Russia's Prime Minister, Dimitry Medvedev said on 30 May 2016 that he had approved the new version of the agenda of a development of military-industrial complex in the years 2016-2020. In this regards, Russia is currently upgrading the entire army with new weapons. Politically stable, economically strong Russia, with its rich energy resources and advanced defence industry, can change equilibriums in many regions including East Europe, Caspian Region, Central Asia and East Asia. (Barany, 2008:50). Russia's position on the Pacific Coast of Asia has arguably been reconsolidated in the past decades. This East European great power annexed Crimea in 2013, has joined the G20, G8 and the emerging Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), among other organisations in a bid to consolidate its status within the international system. (GFP, 2016).

More so, on economic basis, after the end of the Cold War, arguably in 1992, Russia has seen a transformation. The first elected president of Russia after the Cold War in Yeltsin implemented a number of radical economic reforms. This came in price liberalisation, mass privatisation and stabilising of the rouble. (Johnson, 2016). Within the period up to Putin's succession to power in 1999, Russia's economy can be argued to have had a stagnant growth. Putin in his economic heroics included reforms such as simplifying the tax system and reducing a number of tax rates. Agricultural land was privatised and business registration simplified. In effect to all this, Russia's GDP grew to 6.9%? Per year. (Johnson, 2016).

Accordingly Waltz (1964:12), maintained that the United States is the only "pole" to possess global interests. According to the Department of Defence (DOD) in 2016, the US defence

expenditure is close to half of world-wide military expenses; a blue-water navy greater to all others collective; a chance at an impressive nuclear-powered first strike over its erstwhile. According to Bergsten (2008:57), the US is the most powerful nation economically, scientifically, technologically, and militarily that builds a coalition to determine the rules of the game and to defend the status quo. It is the world's largest economy, the issuer of its reserve money, and the lending source and recipient of foreign investment.

This study therefore seeks to understand the implications of Russia's resurgence on its impacts on the bilateral relations with USA. Due to the growing influence of Russia in world markets, power capabilities and even societal developments, the researcher seeks to understand the position of America in trying to maintain its position amidst these growing resurgence of Russia. America for long has maintained its hegemonic status but the resurgent policies of Russia however have enhanced the race of global dominance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by power politics and struggles amongst great powers such as the need to control global politics and world markets. In essence, USA has used its political, social, economic and technological resources to retain global hegemony. More so, the USA has used hard, soft and even smart power to achieve global influence.(Clinton: 2013). Hard power has been used through military interventions and invasions, soft power in economic aid and smart power in understanding the situation and use the proper power capabilities.(Nye, 2009).For the USA, sustainability as a unipolar power problems arise through the rise of Russia. To Kremlin, international scholars argue that there is need to regain power and at least revert back to Cold War politics. This is because the Cold War epoch is argued to have brought with it some international respect and recognition on the part of Russia. Washington DC has used its unipolar dominance to influence global politics, and to Moscow, this is unacceptable.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) since 1990 has seen the use of veto by either the USA or Russia for there has been tension in trying to resolve threats to international peace and security. According to Waltz (1992:13), unipolar international system cannot always promote and guarantee international peace, for the reactions of USA and Russia to global trends have seen the escalation of conflict within the international arena. More so, the international system has had

effects with this rivalry between these two great powers. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 did not receive greater attention from the UNSC since no resolution was agreed on. The Syrian crisis seems to escalate for Russia and America have invested greatly within distinct fighting regimes thus no real and meaning resolution has been passed. (Smith, 2016). The USA and Russia have engaged in bilateral treaties to co-exist during the Cold War and multi-lateral treaties in the contemporary times. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) of the 1970s is said to have failed for these two countries were suspicious of each other's military capabilities. This rivalry has escalated into the international stage in which these two super-powers are taking action in trying to have global dominance.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

The study seeks amongst other things to:-

##### General Objective

- To analyse the implications of Russia's resurgence as a superpower power in its bilateral relations with America.

##### Specific Objectives

- Understand the historical overview of US-Russia relations
- Analyse the underlying factors facilitating the Resurgence of Russia as a superpower
- Assess the impact of Russia's Resurgence as a global power on its bilateral relations with the USA
- Recommend solutions to improve USA-Russia bilateral relations

#### **1.5. Justification of the Study**

The study will contribute to literature and in most cases, the resurgence of Russia and its implications on the bilateral relations with America. It is arguably true that so much literature has focused on America's dominance in the so-called 'unipolar' international system. This study, however, seeks amongst the very same objective and add the variables of the threat posed by Russia's resurgence policy on its relations with America. The paper also looks at the role of international organisations like the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) as well as the

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in determining power projections within the globe. This will help think-tanks and policy makers in realising that there has been a shift from self-help within the international sphere to collective security.

## **1.6 Research Design**

A research design is an arrangement of collections relevant to the study. The research utilises both descriptive and explanatory research design. Descriptive research seeks to answer the how question and explanatory research seeks to answer the why question. (Creswell, 2002). The research seeks to describe how America has managed to maintain its unipolar dominance amidst the threat from Russia's resurgence policies. The research also explains why Russia have embarked on a revisionist policy to achieve great power status. Within the research design, interpretive research, case study and narrative research are the methods explicitly utilised in this research

### **1.6.1. Methodology**

Methodology can be understood as procedures one intends to use when conducting a research. The rationale of the methodology in any chapter is for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select and analyse information applied to understanding the research problem. The research utilises qualitative research methods.

### **1.6.2 Sampling Procedure**

It is a process of choosing a sub-group from a population to participate in the study. (Creswell, 2002). Sampling entails the notion of choosing a number of characters for a study in such a way that the persons carefully chosen embody the large group from which they were selected argues Ogula (2005:2). Non-probability sampling was therefore utilised. This is so because it is purposive, for it allows the researcher to rely on their own judgement when choosing members of population to participate in the study. It is convenient for it is made up of respondents who are easy to reach and consecutive for it requires every subject meeting the criteria of inclusion is selected until the required sample size is achieved, according to Brink (1996:134). Target population such as diplomats will be interviewed. More so, security strategists within the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Zimbabwe, are also targets for data gathering. This is so because the respondents have wide knowledge within the research question.

### **1.6.3 Data Collection Methods**

This refers to the process of preparing and collecting data. It mostly consists of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest and helps to answer the stated research questions and test hypotheses. (Creswell, 2002). The researcher utilises both primary and secondary data collection methods.

Primary data collection methods entails that the researcher utilises raw materials in deliberating on the research problem. On primary data collection methods, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, surveys, documentary analysis and case studies.

#### **1.6.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews**

In essence, semi structured interviews are a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes further according to Creswell (2002:44). For this research problem, semi-structured interviews are ideal because they allow the researcher to present pre-determined questions that allows the researcher to prompt.

#### **1.6.3.2 Documentary Search**

The researcher also utilises documentary analysis too, secondary sources of data in specialised journals, newspaper articles and the internet will also be used.

### **1.6.4 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation**

Since data analysis is the process of systematically applying logical techniques to describe and illustrate data, it is an essential method within any research. It is essential to uncover the big issue underpinning the research problem. Data will also be presented through summaries and quotes (poignant of the research finding) among other presentations. Brink (1996:138).

#### **1.6.5 Thematic Analysis**

Information gathered from key informant interviews was analysed thematically using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a research for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the subject under study. Rice and Ezzy (1999:258) argues that thematic analysis involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of data. Qualitative

data may be analysed thematically using thematic analysis in which narrations are grouped into themes focusing on a particular issue which have been constantly referred to by respondents or authors. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data obtained from in-depth and face to face interviews that were conducted.

### **1.6.6 Content Analysis**

The method was used to analyse data drawn from documents such as books, articles, journals. Babbie (1989:106) argues that content analysis is any technique for making inference by systematic and objective identifying special characteristics of messages. Special characteristics of messages in this instance were deducted from the various speeches by the US president, the Russian president and various security analysts such as diplomats.

### **1.6.7 Ethical Considerations**

In social science research, ethical considerations in research are of vital importance. Ethics can be understood as the norms or standards for conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. (Creswell, 1997). It is indeed true that ethics in research help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. This research will abide to anonymity of research participants and to those who actively participate, give detail of their information. The researcher will also acknowledge the sources used to avoid plagiarism, an issue pertaining ethics.

### **1.7 Limitations**

According to Brown (2000), limitations can be understood as those shortcomings, circumstances or effects that cannot be measured by the researcher and that place limitations on the methodology and conclusions. In essence, qualitative research techniques will be utilised. Since the area of study includes America and Russia, the researcher is limited to interview the actual policy makers thus the sample was cut short. Constraints were also faced in undertaking the study in that many of the published information about Russia's resurgence policy is by European scholars who might have biased information in favour of the United States. However, to ensure validity and reliability, objectivity was ensured especially within the research findings.



## **1.8 Delimitations**

Defines boundaries set for the study and refers to choices made by the researcher which limits the scope of the study. These boundaries come in the research problem focusing on Russia and America's relations. The research thus is related only to the implications of Russia's resurgence policies to its bilateral relations with the USA from 2000-2016.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

The chapter outlined the research problem; the implications of Russia's resurgence policies on its bilateral relations with America. The background to the problem can be understood from the lenses of America's bid to remain a global hegemony whilst Russia is pushing for the attainment of superpower status. Qualitative research methods will be utilised and semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data. Delimitations and limitations were also given to ascertain the strength of the research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

#### **2. Introduction**

This chapter analyses the implications of Russia's resurgence on its impact on its bilateral relationship with the USA. The hegemonic stability theory will be used to understand the reasons and motives behind Russia's revisionist policy and the challenges Russia poses to geopolitics. This chapter also makes use of literature from other scholars interested in this subject: the strategic implications of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower on its bilateral relations with the USA. 2000-2016. Missing knowledge in the field international politics in unipolarity, bipolarity and bi-lateral relations between America and Russia will also be provided in trying to understand the research problem. This chapter will define the concepts of unipolarity, trace the historical development of the bilateral relations between these two countries, understand the resurgence of Russia, bilateral relations between America and Russia, diplomatic ties between the two states in relation to the research question.

#### **2.1 Literature Review**

This section reviews on the implications of Russia's emergence on the relationship with America. This section serves to give arguments put forward by different scholars and international organizations and tries to fill in the gap left between on this subject by these respective authorities.

#### **Unipolarity**

In general terms, unipolarity in international politics is the distribution of power in which one state exercises most of the cultural, economic, and military influence. To Ikenberry (1999), a unipolar system is one whose structure is defined by the fact of only one state meeting these characteristics. The adjective unipolar is said to describe something that has a single pole. A pole in international relations is a state that commands an especially large share of resources or capabilities states can use to achieve their ends and that excels in all the component elements of state capability, conventionally defined as size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capacity, military might and organisational-institutional competence (ibid, 20).

Therefore, for the international arena to be called 'unipolar', it has to contain one state whose overall share of capabilities places it unambiguously in a class by itself compared to other states.

Within a unipole, economic forces, military might and social influence are enhanced indicators of power. However, Waltz (2007), understands that unipoles are also associated with certain foreign policy behaviours like actively participating in binding regional institutions. This includes coalitions of the willing, for example the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq; and the respecting the sovereignty of second-tier states who are considered partners within foreign policy instruments. Examples include America's respect of Saudi Arabia and Israel's statehood.

Historical evidence attests to the fact that there were four poles before World War II in 1939. By 1950, only two states measured up. This was the Cold War period. By 1990, one of these two poles was gone and the US remained the sole superpower within the international discourse. Accordingly, Luke (2005) asserts that no other power, not Japan, China, India or Russia, not any European country and not the EU, has increased its overall range of capabilities sufficiently to transform its standing. This therefore asserts that the US is still the global force within the international milieu.

### **2.2.2 Soviet Union-United States Relations (1945-1991)**

During World War II, the United States and Russia co-operated to fight the mutual enemy in NAZI Germany and Fascist Italy. At the end of the end of the War, the first signs of post-war mistrust and hostility began to appear between the two states. As argued by Keohane (2007: 12), this led to the Cold War. To (ibid, 14), the Cold War can be understood as a state of geopolitical tension between the powers in the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc. The Western bloc included the victors of World War II for example the US, Britain, France and most of the founding states of NATO. The USSR, Democratic Germany and the Baltic states who purely followed the communist manifesto comprised of the Eastern bloc. Historians do not fully agree on the dates, but a common timeframe is the period between 1947, the year the Truman Doctrine. The doctrine was a US foreign policy pledging to give Western European nations threatened by Soviet expansionism as announced by President Truman (1945-53). The Cold War arguably ended in 1991, the year the Soviet Union collapsed and the Berlin Wall fell. Why the term Cold? The period is referred to as being "cold" for there was no large-scale military fighting directly

between the two sides, although there were major regional wars, known as proxy wars, and supported by the two sides (ibid, 30).

The First Phase within the Cold War helps understand the historical trends and development of the bilateral relations between America and the Soviet Union. In 1947 the President of America Harry Truman came with the Truman doctrine in which it was a call to help all Western countries against the rising domination of the USSR. In essence, the US began a strategy of global containment in a bid to challenge the USSR domination. According to Schild 92013: 23), the US extended financial aid, economic transformation and military restructuring to the West. The USSR had consolidated control in the East and in maintaining that supported its allies, for example its role in the Vietnam War.

In some instances, these two rival states engaged into bilateral relations especially when matters were of mutual concern. Deterrence can be argued to be a factor that also led to the engagement of bilateral relations between the US and Russia. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) in this research is argued to be the major bilateral relations between these two states. SALT were two rounds of bilateral relations and corresponding international treaties between the US and USSR (US Department of State, 2016). Due to the growing trend of deterrence and the mutual assured destruction (MAD), these antagonistic states especially on the issue of arms control, initiated SALT I and SALT II. The objective of the SALT agreements was to permit the USSR and the US to have equivalent arsenal and strategic forces according to (Burr, 2001: 23). SALT agreements also aimed at maintaining and enhancing the stability in the international arena and if possible, prevent future nuclear warfare between the two states. SALT treaties thus sought to create a stable political environment in which neither party was at a disadvantage or advantage in strategic arms and weapons.

SALT I commenced in Finland in 1969 and the treaty was signed in 1972 (Burr, 2001: 25). SALT I can be understood as a period in history in which the US and USSR negotiated the first and major agreements to place limits and restraints on some of their central and most important armaments (Paterson, 2009: 11). In a treaty on the Limitations of Anti-Ballistic Missile systems for example, the US and the USSR agreed to end an emerging rivalry in defensive systems that threatened the maintenance of international peace and security according to US Department of State (2016). In essence, a number of agreed statements were also made and this helped improve

the relations between the US and the USSR. From 1972-1979, the US and USSR sought to curtail the manufacture of nuclear weapons and some military capabilities. SALT II thus was the first nuclear arms treaty which assumed real reductions in strategic forces. It was a continuation of SALT I talks since the groundwork for diplomatic relations was established. To Smart (2003: 14), “SALT II treaty banned new missile programs, so both sides were forced to limit their new strategic missile types development and construction, such as the development of additional fixed ICBM launchers.” This research therefore argues that the SALT treaties helped ease the tension and arms race between the two rivals and channeled a move to bilateral relations in the future.

The Cold War thus was a period of tension between the US and USSR though no major full-blown war was fought. Deterrence and the assured destruction helped these two states come to terms with each other leading to the promulgation of arms control treaties, in this case, SALT treaties.

### **2.2.3 USA and Russia after Cold War (1991-2000)**

After the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was a new stage of bilateral relations between the US and Russia. In 1990, President Bush of the US proposed cutting US and Soviet groups in Central Europe. In response, the Soviet Union called the initiative “*a step in the right direction.*” Following this initiative, US Secretary of State Baker in February 1990 met with the Soviet leader, Gorbachev in Moscow. During this visit, issues on arms control, making progress on conventional, nuclear and chemical agreements, Soviet emigration policy, German unification and regional issues were discussed ( START Executive Summary, 2009).

Of importance and of relevance to this bilateral relationship is the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the US and the USSR on the reduction and limitations of strategic offensive arms. The treaty was signed on July 31 1991 and entered into force in 1994. According to the US Department of State, START negotiated the major and most complex arms control treaty in history, and its implementation in 2001 resulted in the removal of vast strategic weapons then in existence. For instance, START barred its signatories from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads atop a total of 1,600 inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and bombers.

On economic bilateral relations, there major strands that were made between these two states within this period. The G-7 economic Summit of 1994 was seen as a major step in the

involvement of Russia in geopolitics. Since Russia was invited, President Yeltsin agreed to become a full member once Russia's economy had matured (CNN, 2010). In 1997, Russia became the eighth member and participated as an equal with other members. G-8 comprises of the most powerful economic nations of the world. These include United States, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Canada, Italy and Russia. G8 summits have been seen as a chance to discuss a number of social, political and economic issues. While G8 nations themselves often differ on certain policies and even objectives of this elite organization, their overall agendas and eventual decisions and agreements have a direct bearing on most other regions throughout the world. With Russia's participation, the research argues that it is a major platform in enhancing the diplomatic relations between Russia and the US.

#### **2.2.4 The Resurgence of Russia**

Adelman (2016:13) argues that Russia has established itself as a great power within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Kremlin has re-shifted itself into a force to reckon within the international milieu. Russia's resurgence within global politics has come through courting authoritarian regimes all over the world for example, its influence on the Assad regime of Syria, diplomatic ties in Tehran and ties to Morocco, Egypt and Kuwait (ibid: 15). To this effect, Russia has also become a major player within the global arena due to its military capabilities. Russia is not known for its transparency when it comes to military and national security matters (clandestine policies) and much prefers keeping Washington and the NATO alliance as a whole off balance and unsure. However, the GFP (2017:2), ranks Russia as second in the world and that says a lot on Russia's capabilities.

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Putin then acknowledged the Russian military in the intervention backed Crimean separatist militias. This was after a coup had been undertaken to remove the pro-Russian leader in Ukraine. To the Russians, the intervention was necessary to ensure proper conditions for the people of Crimea to be able to freely express their will after the referendum had 96% votes in favor of joining the Russian Federation (CNN, 2016). To Russia, the annexation of Crimea was due to the fact that the Ukrainian President, Viktor Yanukovich had been ousted from power. A case of the legality of Russia's involvement in Crimea thus poses challenge in international law. Russia and Ukraine are signatories to multiple international treaties which protects and guarantees state sovereignty including the Charter of the United

Nations. The ratification by both parties to these conventions is clear on several ramifications in terms of international law. Concepts such as sovereignty, acts of aggression, declaration of independence, humanitarian emergencies and declaration of independence are discussed and clarified on. (UN Charter, 1945). There has been two interpretations on the Ukrainian crisis. Russian military intervention and presence in the Crimean peninsula aimed to safeguard that proper conditions for the people of Crimea to be able to freely determine their will, argues the Kremlin. However, Ukraine and other nations argue that such intervention is a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty (CNN, 2016). This is an example of military engagement that has put forward Russia's resurgent policies.

The change of paramount important in understanding the resurgence of Russia is its economic situation, or rather economic revival. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the Federal State Statistics Service (FSSS) have all but concluded that since 2000, Russia has undergone an effective macroeconomic revolution. To Siczek (2011:12), from 2000 to 2002, Russia's GDP stood at an impressive 6.4% and this was the best as compared to Western European states. The GDP of Russia from 2006 to 2012 amidst global economic crisis rose by 4%. (ibid: 13). This can be argued to have been the years in which Russia enjoyed economic stability whilst the rest of the world was struggling with economic crisis. The IMF (2016) reports that by 2006, Russian foreign currency reserves reached \$450 billion and were the third largest in the world. Russia's debt has lowered from 100% of GDP to only 4%. (Siczek, 2011). These statistics demonstrates how far reaching the economic recovery has been within Russia.

Adelman (2016) argues that the resurgence of Russia in trying to achieve great power status has been surprising. This is because Russia has withdrawn from Eastern Europe, lost half of its population, lacked in modern consumer, agricultural and high-tech sectors and suffered a 50% drop in the price of oil export. More so, Putin too has been repeatedly pilloried by Western leaders. The CNN (2016) once reported that President Obama in belittling Russia as only a regional power, proclaimed that Putin resembled a bored kid slouching in the back of a classroom. In the same agenda, German Chancellor Merkel scathingly derided Putin's machismo, saying that

I understand why he has to do this, to prove he's a man. He's afraid of his own weakness. Russia is nothing.

A question therefore arises, has Russia resurfaced as a global power, has Russia resurfaced after the Cold War demise or Russia is still a regional player as argued by Western leaders?

### **2.2.5 Russia and America's Bilateral Relations**

Throughout history, there has existed bilateral relations between USA and Russia. The crisis in US-Russia relations has become a serious challenge to global security. Bilateral relations between the US and Russia exist but mostly viewed through the prism of competition between these two rivals argues Pakhomov (2016:4). Russia and the USA have nuclear capabilities, making their relations unique. For example, Russia has RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles that can target anywhere within the US and in comparison, the US has Minuteman III ICBM nuclear weapons that enters the atmosphere at high hypersonic speeds. (Lockie, 2016). This is so because a serious conflict within these two states can affect international peace and security. Of paramount importance is to acknowledge that there is no significant content on the countries' bilateral relations today. It is not only because of the drastic deterioration in relations over the last years; there had not been much content before that.

The question remains, is there enough of this co-operation to attract effective support from leaders in the two countries that can make the relations stronger? According to Pakhomov (2016:12), there has been no efforts from either camp to solidify relations. This is supported by the lack of substance in US-Russian relations. This can be considered from many different angles. Fierce criticism of Russia in either economic and political circles by America, outright Russophobia resulting from the Cold War hostilities, recitations of threats allegedly instigated by Russia's policies, and warnings to Moscow all can be attributed as factors leading to sour relations between the two rivals according to Pakhomov (2016:12). In essence, Russia has been mostly absent from US foreign policy documents for years.

In economic terms, put simply, Russia and the U.S. are free to antagonize each other because they have very little to lose economically from deteriorated relations. According to an analysis from Carl Weinberg of High Frequency Economics (2016), trade ties between the U.S. and Russia are minuscule. In essence, U.S. goods exports to Russia totaled just \$11 billion in 2013, equivalent to less than 0.1% of U.S. GDP. United States goods imports from Russia totaled \$27 billion, just under 0.2% of U.S. GDP. (ibid, 14) The direct financial linkages between the United



States and Russia are also small. According to the Treasury Department (2016), Russians hold \$139 billion in U.S. Treasury securities and virtually no U.S. corporate bonds or equities, at least directly. This means that any trade disruptions between the US and Russia have no direct effect on the Russian direct investment in the United States also appears minimal. To Fortune (2014), “U.S. residents hold \$70 billion in long-term securities and \$14 billion in direct investment in Russia.” All these economic relationships shows that Russia and America have no vibrant economic relations.

### **2.2.6 Diplomatic Ties between Russia and USA**

Despite being global rivals, Russia and America maintain diplomatic ties. This comes in the form of diplomacy and trade relations according to Mark (2016:20). These two countries have competed for political and economic influence, and co-operated to meet mutual global challenges. The coming in of Boris Yeltsin as the Russia president from 1990-1999 saw the warm diplomatic relations between Russia and the USA. (ibid: 23). Economic treaties were signed, military pacts agreed on and even America and Russia would co-relate in international cultural events. The Lisbon Protocol of 1992 in which Russia urged Belarus and Ukraine to denuclearize, Russia’s attendance of the 1992 Washington Summit, the 1994 Partnership for Peace agreement between Russia and the USA can all be argued to be worthy examples of warm diplomatic ties between these two states.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 1999 bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is seen to have soured relations between Russia and USA according to Mark (2016: 29). To Russia, this was an attack against Russia’s influence within the Balkans and a breach to international law. To USA, it was a means of protecting Kosovo from the threats undermining its statehood status. To historians, this was a turning point in the diplomatic relations of both countries since international law norms are argued to have been infringed. The coming in of Putin in 2000 as the new Russian president did not smoothen the relations between the two parties. In trying to re-shape Russian influence in the international arena, Russia invaded Georgia and Crimea and these was argued to have been against international law by America and the Western world as a whole. Russia has also been at loggerheads with the US due to the Syrian crisis. Russia is supporting the Assad regime whilst USA and its allies are against the incumbent government.

In effect, Russia has emerged from the turmoil it experienced after the Soviet Union fell and is claiming a new role in international relations. For example, recent US-Russia foreign policy disagreements including the situation in Ukraine, have taken a toll on US-Russia relations as well as American opinion of Russia according to Archbold et al (2015:7). Americans increasingly see Russia's military power as a threat to the US. Moscow in retaliation also publicly declared that it would respond in kind to the widening of sanctions imposed on Russia over the crisis in Ukraine. To the Russians as argued by Archbold et al (2015: 11), "the economic sanctions imposed was a move to strain relations and pose risk for international peace and stability." In regards to these relationship between the US and Russia, Kissinger (2015:13) has hit out on American and European Ukraine policy. To Kissinger, "the policy ignores Russia's relationship with its neighbor, and has called for co-operation between the White House and the Kremlin on the issue." This argument serves to portray that global trends has left Russia and America's diplomatic relations in turmoil.

### **2.2.7 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework**

This research utilizes the Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) and the balance of power theory in understanding the research question. The conventional bilateral diplomacy concept was also utilized for it helps understand the dynamics underpinning Russia's resurgence and its implications on the bilateral relations with USA.

### **2.2.8 Hegemonic Stability Theory**

The hegemonic stability theory (HST) is a theory of international relations that states that the international arena is more probable to remain stable when sole nation-state is the central world power, or hegemony. Charles Kindleberger (1973) is regarded as the father of HST. To Kindleberger, dominant states foster global order and global events that are at least stable until differential growth in power produces an influential state with the capability to challenge the dominant state of leadership. The theory attest that the larger and clearer the concentration of power capabilities in the dominant state, the more diplomatic and peaceful the international order associated with it will be.

In establishing the value of this theory in this study, one can argue that the economic chaos that was experienced within the globe between WWI and WWII that also led to the Great Depression,

was partially attributable to the absence of a global hegemony with a dominant and well-structured economy. Even though this analysis is coming from an economic perspective, the central idea behind the HST is that international politics relies on the hegemon to cultivate, promote, encourage and enforce the rules of the global system. Kindleberger (1973) defines a hegemon as a state's capability to single-handedly control the rubrics and arrangements of the political, economic and social relations. Since 1945, there has been no major war and a major economic depression. This all can be attributed to the leading role being played by the United States in maintaining a global hegemony.

Strange (2005:7) understands that a hegemon demands power. Power is the ability of one party to affect outcomes such that their preferences take precedence over the preference of other parties. (Strange (ibid). The US is the leading contributor in NATO and UN budgets. According to GIP, America contributes almost 28% of the United Nation's regular budget and almost 40% of the NATO's peacekeeping missions. The US has also been influential in urging states to embrace the *laissez faire* and most Latin American countries have undertaken economic programmes in accordance with the US foreign policy. America still holds the best military capabilities in contemporary times. America thus has managed to influence world politics through the position it holds.

The researcher argues that Russia has a growing influence in East Asia and the Middle East and this has strengthened Moscow's claim towards ascending to superpower status. Russia is militarising and has created a strong economic base in which the livelihood of its citizens has been remarked as above standard. The Ministry of Finance in Russia for example in 2014, projected growth of 0.5% for 2014. The Russian economy grew by a better than expected 0.6% in 2014. Russia has actively decided on the Syrian crisis in which she vetoed every resolution meant to oust Assad, for example Resolution 2209 in which there were propositions for airstrikes against Assad's strongholds, though the move was blocked by Russia. Russia has also proved to be a force to reckon after its annexation of Crimea and Georgia, thereby given European Union inspired sanctions, which called for economic bans on Russia, but still managed to keep tabs with other super powers. In addition, the Kremlin has embarked in an agreement to sell weapons to counter-terrorism for example with Nigeria and this has solidified its position as an influential actor within the international arena.

### **2.2.9 Balance of Power Theory**

The balance of power theory offers a deep understanding in the research question. It argues that the world can either be a bi-polar or a multi-polar system. The balance of power theory in international relations suggests that national security is enhanced when military capability is distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate all others. To Morgenthau (1997: 1), the aspiration for power, dominion and influence on the part of numerous nations, each trying either to preserve or overthrow the status quo, often leads to the need to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies and initiatives that aim at preserving it. In an anarchical state of nature, the balance of power theory describes states as seeking survival as independent entities. Anarchy thus in essence compels states to increase their power capabilities, because security and physical survival cannot be divorced from power maximization. As a result, the competition for power becomes a natural state of affairs in international politics. A clear understanding of balance of power thus suggests that the posture and policy of a nation protecting itself against another nation by matching its power against the power of the other side. States can therefore pursue a policy of balance of power in two ways. Firstly by increasing their own power and this is necessarily seen through engaging in an armaments race or in the competitive acquisition of territory. Secondly states balance power through adding to their own power that of other states, as when embarking upon a policy of alliances (Morgenthau, 1997).

The relationship between the US and Russia can be understood as 'hard balancing'. According to Paul et al (2004: 4), hard balancing is a stratagem often shown by states engaged in intense interstate rivalry. In this case, states thus adopt strategies to build and update their military capabilities. States in the international arena as well often create and maintain formal alliances and counter alliances, to match the capabilities of their rivals. The traditional realist and neorealist conceptions of balance of power are thus mainly confined to hard balancing. To the realists the global arena is at a system of intense balancing for major states have understood that the U.S. power has become too threatening for other major states to tolerate. Hegemony can never be permanent and this is why Russia has become resurgent as a major power.

### **2.3.3 Conventional Bilateral Diplomacy**

Effective bilateral diplomacy is essential to advancing a country's external interests. Bilateral diplomacy is a key building block of international relations. To Berridge (2002:105), the term bilateral diplomacy means nothing more than communication limited to two parties at one time. For instance and of relevance to this study, the Embassy of Russia in Washington DC was established in 1913 to facilitate bilateral relations between the two states. In return, the Embassy of the United States in Moscow is the diplomatic mission of the US in Russia. Diplomatic functions are outlined in Article 3 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961. Among these functions include:-

- a. Representing the sending State in the receiving State
- b. Protecting in the receiving State interests of the sending state and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law
- c. Negotiating with the Government of the receiving state

The conventional bilateral diplomacy as a concept thus will be used in explaining the resurgence of Russia and its implications on the bilateral relations between the US and Russia.

Historical trends attests to conventional bilateral diplomacy between Moscow and Washington. Examples can be attached for in June 2000, President Clinton delivered an address in the Russian State Duma. This address was done in front of the parliamentarians. This was an address in which President Clinton campaigned for the National Missile Defence System (NMD) in which the Russians feared the plan would neutralise Russia's nuclear deterrent. (Chance, 2000). In 2002, conventional bilateral diplomacy between the US and Russia was invoked, this time within an international spectrum. During the Rome NATO Summit, President Bush, the other NATO heads and President Putin agreed to create a NATO-Russia Council that would focus on specific, well-oriented projects. (NATO, 2002). This was where NATO and Russia shared common interests. Among these projects included work on non-proliferation, assessing the terrorist threat, defence reform, military cooperation and civil emergencies.

Bilateral diplomacy can be argued to have soured between the US and Russia during the recent shift of Russia's interventionist policies in Georgia, Ukraine, the assistance to Syria and the recent Tehran-Moscow relations. Zhao (2015) prescribes to the "intensified US-Russo nuclear relationship" and how these relations are leading towards deteriorated diplomatic relations between these two rivals. At the 2015 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June, Russian President Putin clearly indicated that U.S. foreign policy and diplomatic decisions are dragging the world into a new Cold War. This was after the US had disagreed to the new proposed nuclear deal by Russia. More so, Zhao (ibid) reiterates that in a demonstration of Russian resolve, Putin announced at a military equipment exposition that Russia will field 40 new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) by the end of 2015. This research, with the aid of the conventional bilateral diplomatic concept argues that taken together, these verbal warnings and high-profile military deployments indicate that the U.S.-Russia relationship has inched another step closer to a new Cold War in the wake of the Ukraine crisis that began in late 2013. Due to worsening U.S.-Russia political relations, bilateral diplomatic relations at the strategic and security levels can be argued to have deteriorated.

The dynamics of US-Russia relations under the framework of conventional bilateral diplomacy dramatically changed in 2015 as a part of a major shift in global international relations that occurred throughout the year. To Koshkin and Korobkov (2015), the tendency towards shifting from full-on confrontation to partial, but limited co-operation between US and Russia can be observed. The beginning of the US presidential election campaign brought on a spike of criticism toward Russia as both Democratic and Republican candidates had policies to punish Russia. This is evident from the Clinton and Trump's campaigning manifestos. More so, President Putin in May 2015 signed the Law on Undesirable Organizations which targets foreign organizations in Russia. To the Western world and to the human rights activists and various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the move was seen as an attempt to clamp down the activity of Western sponsored groups. (Chance, 2016). A further dig into the worsening bilateral relations between Russia and America was the closure of the American Center in Moscow. To an average policy maker, the move was a simple one but to the Americans it was a move to curb the influence of American culture and history. In December 2015, America broadened the sanctions against Russia for the latter's stance in Ukraine. All these events among others all try to explain the shortfalls of the diplomatic relations between US and Russia.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

As presented in the chapter above, so much has been written on the issue of Russia's resurgence and its implications on bilateral relations with US. Literature traces back the resurgence of Russia after the Cold War, the unipolar system of international politics dominated by America and the diplomatic ties between America and the US. The study made use of the hegemonic stability theory and the concept of conventional bilateral relations in understanding the research problem.

## Chapter 3

### 3. Factors Facilitating the Resurgence of Russia as a Superpower

#### 3.1 Introduction

Arguably in a world full of surprises, uncertainties and varying global trends such as the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, the weakness in the Chinese economy, the battles within the European Union and Brexit, the making of the Iran deal, the slide in the American stock market amongst others, one of the greatest surprises of all has been the sudden rebirth and in large scale the resurgence of Russian power under Vladimir Putin. Since the end of the Cold War, the Kremlin has been on a mission, to attain global power status. Policies including the privatization of land, initiatives, and power projections like the invasion of Crimea, diplomatic and bilateral relations with other states amongst others have been used to achieve this resurgence. Grouped under the political, social and economic facets as argued by the first respondent, it can be argued to be the underlying factors that has led to the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.

**Table 1: Table of Respondents**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Position of the Respondent</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Respondent	Lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe
2 <sup>nd</sup> Respondent	First Secretary of Political Affairs at the Russian Embassy in Harare
3 <sup>rd</sup> Respondent	Teaching Assistant at the University of Zimbabwe
4 <sup>th</sup> Respondent	Political Affairs Official at the American Embassy in Harare

The table sought to describe the position of the respondents within the study. The first respondent is a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe who hold capabilities in contemporary strategic



studies. It was of importance to engage with the respondent since they have vast knowledge in the research subject. The second respondent is the First Secretary of Political Affairs at the Russia embassy in Harare. It was essential to engage with the respondent for their background knowledge on the strategic resurgence of Russia as a global superpower. The third respondent offered varying opinions on the relations within Russia and the US. This is coming from their position as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Zimbabwe. The diplomat from the US embassy in Harare is the fourth respondent and they understand the bilateral relations between the US and Russia.

### **3.2 Factors that have led to the Resurgence of Russia**

#### **3.3 Economic factors**

It is indeed true that for any power to seek global hegemony, it should control the world's economic markets. In light to this, the researcher attests to Marxism as a theory in international relations which gives reference to economic determinism. This means that controlling the means and modes of production is all that is important for a state to survive. Russia as a polity has history with the socialist doctrine propounded by Marx. In the international arena, Marxism can be understood in the framework of *he who controls the world economy establishes a hegemony*. It is therefore important to discuss on the importance of the economic revival of Russia if one seeks to understand the underlying assumptions underpinning the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.

Even though Russia come to embrace the world market, she is on her way to becoming an economic miracle. By and large, the Russian economy has turned some important corners for it to be a dominant factor. In attesting to the economic revival of Russia, the first respondent argues that, the Russian economy has stabilized and manufacturing, thus industrial production has grown steadily since 2000. Before this period, Russia has a weak economy characterized by poor manufacturing. Of importance is the year 2000, the turn of the new millennium for it consolidated the leadership of President Putin and characterized the seismic shift of Russia towards re-orienting itself as a superpower. Even though the economic growth of Russia has slowed down, in general terms, compared to and measured against beleaguered economies of powerhouses such as the United States with a GDP reported of \$18.04 trillion dollars and China of \$11.04 trillion

dollars, Russia has managed to provide steady economic growth. (OPEC, 2016). Within this perspective as argued by the first respondent, Russia's economic growth has been impressive.

When Putin succeeded Yeltsin as a President, there was certainty in a country's leadership. That leadership stability instills confidence and according to the first respondent, that is all what investors need. Urged on by his economic advisors, President Putin began to push for some structural changes in a bid to resuscitate the economy. Noteworthy, were the efforts introduced to create a flat income tax of 13% and reduced business tax of 24% according to The Economist (2016: 11). The Duma was also pressurized to allow privatization of land, both agricultural and urban. The policies of President Putin allows the state governors to interpret the land issue flexibly, region by region (Goldman, 2010: 1). Since land is of paramount importance to Russia's economic growth, improvements in productivity can be noticed and this can be attributed to the privatization of the land policy.

Russia's economic growth can be directed towards its vast reserves in raw materials. As argued by OPEC (2013: 4), the most likely candidate for growth in Russia, as it has traditionally been, remains in the raw materials sector. The first respondent concurs to this fact by arguing that the petroleum industry in Russia is arguably the largest in the world. Russia has the largest reserves and is the largest exporter of natural gas, for example, Russia produces 12% of the world's oil and has a similar share of global oil exports. (OPEC, 2013).

The CSIS (2016: 12) confirms that never in its history has Russia been more prosperous or integrated into the global economy than it is now. Russian economy has managed to establish itself as a very attractive seat for foreign investment. By 2008, as stipulated by the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent, Russian foreign currency reserves totaled more than \$588,9 billion and oil prices broke new records at more than \$147,27 per barrel, while Russian banks acquired foreign debt amounting to \$500 billion. When the US, UK and other Western democracies markets were rocked by the financial crisis of 2008, Russia appeared to be weathering the financial crisis than most states.

### **3.3.1 Russia and BRICS**

The first respondent also attributed to the economic relationship between Russia and BRICS for it is essential in understanding the rising influence of Russia. This becomes an important factor facilitating the rise of Russia as a superpower. In essence, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South

Africa (BRICS) are arguably the leading emerging economies and political powers at the regional and arguably at the international level. The acronym was originally coined in 2001 to highlight the exceptional role of important emerging economies and only included Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC). It was only in 2010 that South Africa was invited to join this elite group. According to the IMF (2011: 8), BRICS economies are rigorously influencing global development especially in Low Income Countries (LIC) and promoting stability in trade and investment and mitigating global depression in the current financial crisis. This is one of the reasons why the study focuses on the effects of Russia's membership within this elite group and its impact on the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.

Accordingly, Russia joining BRICS offers an interesting trajectory for an alternative economic model that ensures job creating growth and different forms of inclusivity and equity within the Russian Federation. According to Kamath (2015), the inclusion of Russia into the BRICS group and Russia's permanent seat in the United Nation Security Council ensures that Russia has a voice in all key global forums. This can be argued to have accelerated reforms in the global financial, development and trade architecture. Financial records within Russia indicate that since joining the elite BRICS organization, Russia has experienced investment booms and there has been a relative period of sustainable growth within Russia.

This research argue that the BRICS block have brought in expertise and technology that has helped in the infrastructural development of Russia. According to D'Angello (2011: 2), these BRICS countries account for more than 50% of overall emerging market in information technology spending. This in-turn provides opportunities for technology transfer. With higher levels of technological innovation in the BRICS membership, Russia has been privy to technology sharing, joint manufacturing, market and research projects, and exchange programmes for skills and training according to Reynolds and Anderson (2015: 1). These technological transfers have brought about realization within Russia that industrialization and engineering is the way to go for the economy to boost.

In general terms, from 2009-2014, the BRICS countries focused and gave great importance to a number of important issues which Russia has used to strategically influence the global politics. As stipulated by the first respondent, the elite group worked out a common stance on certain regional problems. These includes the Libyan, Syrian and Afghanistan problems and the Iranian

nuclear programme. For instance, Russia played an important role in brokering the Iranian nuclear deal and this was a strategic move to have cordial relations with Iran, a rising regional power. One key element of survival within international relations is having the support of regional powers and in this stead, Russia has managed to use this for survival. The BRICS countries have also made common agreement on financial and economic issues, including World Bank and IMF reforms. This has come through measures to ensure that sufficient resources can be mobilized to the IMF to strengthen its anti-crisis potential. There also has been the creation of BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism which provides for extending credit facility in local currency. All these initiatives analyzed, the researcher argues that Russia has greatly benefited in advancing its resurgence mechanisms as a global power. (BRICS, 2016: 11).

### **3.3.2 Russia's Economic Relations with Asian States as a factor leading to Russia's resurgence**

Asia presents itself as an area of influence since economists argues that the vast majority of production emanates from this region. The first respondent argues that Russia's bid to superpower status has been aided by the economic partnership the latter has with Asian states. In regards to this, in Asia, Russia has good relations with China, India and Japan. Russia, according to SIPRI (2016: 13) is China's biggest arms supplier. To effect this relationship, Russia and China has signed a \$400 billion pipeline agreement to export Russian gas to China. (CNN, 2016). China's leader Xi Jinping when he was addressing the BRICS in 2015 predicted that the Sino-Russian relationship could become the number-one relationship in the world. This research argues that this relationship gives Russia a strategic and economic influence in dictating world economies. In addition, India, despite Narendra Modi's Western leanings, continues a strong strategic, political and military relationship with annual visits exchanged between New Delhi and Moscow according to the first respondent. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sees Russia as a potential ally against a rising China and this strengthened by economic agreements, helps in Russia's resurgence(CNN: 2016: 11).

### **3.4 Political Factors**

Much has been said on the political factors that have contributed towards the resurgence of Russia as a superpower. In an interview with a Russian diplomat at the Russian embassy in Zimbabwe (Second Respondent), a variation of political issues underpinning the resurgence of

Russia were discussed. Among the issue include Putin's policy decisions, military reforms, and reaction in Ukraine and Syria among other issues.

### **3.4.1 Putin's policy decisions that have to the resurgence of Russia**

The second respondent believes that the resurgence of Russia in global politics is the result of the Putin's policy decisions as the President of the Russian Federation. To the respondent, first Putin ended the internal wars in Chechen region and established a strong rule of law in Northern Caucasus that had reduced the threat of terrorism. The Chechen issue has always been of strategic necessity to the Russian federation. Putin when he first ran for president in 2000 outlined that his historic mission was to resolve the situation in the North Caucasus. (Japan Times, 2016). To end the fighting, Putin cut a deal with Chechnya's rebel Kadyrov clan. This was the only way stability was to be achieved within this troubled yet important region. When the pact was signed, all twenty-one states within Russia became under the firm control of the Kremlin. To the second respondent, that stability and internal stability enhances the state to focus on other external issues: in this case the resurgence of Russia as a superpower. The peace pact with Putin ensured that the Chechens in exchange for loyalty to the Kremlin, they received power and reconstruction aid. The aim was to co-opt the more religiously moderate Sufis among Chechnya's rebel fighters, marginalize the Salafist jihadists who appear to have fascinated the Boston bombers, and enable the Russian military to declare victory and draw down. Even though skeptics draw conclusion that Putin created a monster in seeking peace and the likes, there has been relative peace in Chechen and this has led the Kremlin to concentrate on international issues. Stability coming in with the Pact with the Chechens as outlined in this research establishes the resurgence of Russia for Chechen is of great importance towards the survival of any Russian governing authority. When analyzed in detail, this has led to Russia's resurgence and within this, rivalry with the US enhanced.

### **3.4.2 Russia role in the International Community**

As argued by the second respondent, President Putin has consolidated Russia's position in the international community after he had put the oligarchs that accumulated too much power in the nineties under control. By definition, oligarchs entails extremely rich rulers with political influence. In the Russian context, oligarchs are the rich and wealthy businessmen of the former

Soviet Socialist Republic who rapidly accumulated wealth through assets and oil reserves during the era of Russian privatization after the end of the Cold War (New York Times, 2013). Putin apparently engaged in a power-struggle with some oligarchs, reaching bargains with them. In some cases, this allowed the oligarchs to maintain their powers, some lost their influence depending with the relations with Kremlin. Stated by the second respondent, Putin in addressing this issue had expelled some in Gusinsky and Berezovsky, arrested some for example the arrest on the powerful Khodorkovsky, kept those that agreed to cooperate for example Friedman, Deripaska and Potanin and allowed those loyal to him to get rich especially the Rotenberg brothers. The overall effect of this stance was increase in GDP and increase in earnings for Russian citizens. Even though the GDP of Russia has gone down in the last 3 years due to sanctions and oil prices the economy is still performing reasonably.

#### **4.3.3 Reform in Security Sectors**

President Putin has implemented substantial reform of the Russian military forces and this by and large has aided Russia's resurgence policies. The Army has gained respect and serving has become prestigious again. The military industrial complex is gained strength and contributes to the economy. The Russian government's published 2014 military budget is about US\$69.3 billion, arguably the third largest in the globe following after the United States and China. Increase in military capabilities indeed postulates the strength of any state and in this case, Russia's intent of becoming a superpower. As of 2016, Russia's military budget ranges around an estimated \$70 billion and outlined by the second respondent, it is higher than any other European nation. SIPRI (2015: 11) establishes that Russia was consistently the world's second biggest exporter of major weapons in 2010-14, increasing exports by 37%. China, Algeria, India, China, Syria and Yemen accounted for almost 60% of total Russian exports. Asia and Oceania received 66% of Russian arms exports in 2010–14, Africa 12% and the Middle East 10%. With all this military might and capabilities, this research argues that Russia is indeed a military superpower. Russia has established strategic military links with Middle East countries and this has to a greater extent helped expand Russia's influence. As argued by Clausewitz (1909), war is a continuation of policy and this has aided Russia's policies within the vast of Middle East countries.

Russia has one of the world's most refined and powerful intelligence services and this by and large is an underlying factor that has led to the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.

Historically, Russia's main rival has been the United States. Modern studies in strategic studies however alludes that that China could be seen as threatening the Americans and Russians. The KGB (now the FSB) as argued by the second respondent implants fear into hearts around the world, let alone inside Russia. As put forward by Goodrich and Zeihan (2009: 3), infiltration and intimidation by the KGB kept the Soviet Union and its sphere under control during the Cold War. No matter the condition of the Russian state either politically or socially, Moscow's intelligence foundation has been its strongest pillar. This pillar of strength has however been enhanced under the Putin administration since 2000. The FSB and other Russian intelligence agencies have arguably penetrated former Soviet Republics and Baltic States leading to the peace pact with Chechen and other oligarchs, and the intelligence agencies have also infiltrated as far as Latin America and the United States. In essence, as argued by the second respondent, the Russian intelligence has infiltrated business, security, military and political realms worldwide. The intelligence system has also boasted of permeating many former Soviet satellite militaries and companies up to the highest level. This research therefore argues that one of the reasons Moscow can run this system of intelligence inexpensively relative to what it gets in return is because Russia's intelligence services have long been human-based. Even though they do have some highly advanced technology to wield, Russian system has always focused on human enterprise. Russia's intelligence services are much larger than most other countries' services and cover most of the world and with this, it can be argued that the intelligence system has helped Russia challenge for global supremacy.

#### **3.4.4 Russia's domestic policies**

One cannot ignore the Crimean crisis and the Syrian crisis if there is a discussion of the underlying political factors that has led to the resurgence of Russia as a superpower. As argued by the second respondent, Russia had to act in Ukraine. This was in response to the Western supported anti-constitutional coup in Kiev in 2014, which resulted in Crimea rejoining Russian Federation. The Ukrainian territory of Crimea was annexed by the Russian Federation on 18 March 2014 (CNN, 2016). The annexation of Crimea was preceded by a military intervention by Russia, which took place in the aftermath of the 2014 Ukrainian revolution and was part of wider unrest across southern and eastern Ukraine. Why annex Crimea?

To the second respondent, Crimea is strategically important to Russia. Crimea offers passage to the Black Sea which is very large with energy deposits and home of the Russian fleet. Also the Black Sea is surrounded by countries like Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine which Russia wants control sooner or later and move its warships even to Middle east easily. Therefore if Russia has control over Crimea, her position in Eastern Europe can be strengthened.

The same can be said under Putin's intervention in Syria. Putin thus acted in Syria to prevent complete collapse of the Assad government that would without a doubt lead to the Islamic State in Syria. After the Syrian crisis of 2011, Russian troops began participating in operations in support of forces of the Syrian regime, a longtime Moscow ally. This long-drawn-out military presence signals Moscow's commitment to play a more direct role in the Syrian endgame and at the very least help the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad preserve what limited control it has over the war-ravaged country argues the second respondent. According to Russian Defense Minister in 2014 after military troops were deployed in Syrian, he stated that "we have always been frank regarding the presence of our military experts in Syria who help the Syrian army in training and learning how to use the equipment. "Accordingly, the second respondent argues that Russia in consolidating its energy base in Europe, it has to control the pipelines that pass through Syria. If Assad is removed by any pro-American leader, Russia will lose its economic balance thus there is need to support the Assad regime in any ways possible. Within this framework, the support of Assad's regime by the Russian government has led to the souring of relations with the US who are seen protecting the rebels in Syria.

### **3.4.5 Russia and the Veto Power**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) primary responsibility is for the maintenance of international peace and security. An amendment of the UN Charter in 1965 increased the council's membership to fifteen and within these fifteen members, five are the permanent members with the veto. Veto power entails the power or right vested in one branch of a government to cancel or postpone any decision or enactment. The United Nations Security Council power of veto refers to the veto power wielded solely by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council enabling them to prevent the adoption of any "substantive" resolution. Substantive matters includes matters such as the investigation of a dispute or the application of sanctions. Russia has been notorious in using the veto power in enhancing its



interests. For example in 2017, Russia vetoed a UN resolution that would have sanctioned the Syrian regime over its use of chemical weapons, drawing angry condemnations from Britain, the US and France. The veto issued by Russia was the seventh time in six years that it has used its permanent seat on the UN Security Council to shield Bashar al-Assad from international criticism. Russia's use of the veto in geopolitics is important for it shows that without Russia's agreement, substantive issues cannot be resolved upon. Russia has also demonstrated that it can protect its allies by the use of the veto when it comes to international issues, for example the case of Syria. Too much use of the veto by the Russians has led to the tension of relations with the US who at most times initiate resolutions which are countered by the Russians.

### **3.5 Social and cultural factors that has led to the Resurgence of Russia**

Russia is the largest country in Europe. Within this perspective, Russia is a multi-national state with over 185 ethnic groups designated as nationalities. However, President Putin has managed to create a society which identifies itself as one. That consciousness and identity helps in nation-building. This research argues that the creation of a united Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union has helped re-build and strengthen Russia to attain superpower status. The third respondent outlined some social and cultural factors that have been addressed to enhance the sustainability of Russia thereby facilitating its resurgence as a superpower. First of all, the Putin administration has referred to the need to respect the Russian culture at all costs. With respect of one's culture as argued by the second respondent, there is universal productivity that comes with it. In 2013, while addressing the Duma (Russian parliament), Putin deliberated on the need to uphold the fundamentals of the Russian culture. Putin said he would at any cost not tolerate disrespect of the Russian culture. In his address, Putin outlined that Russia had better learn from the suicides of America, England, Netherlands, Belgium and France, if Russia had to survive as a nation. From historical trends, the Muslims attacked those countries and to Putin, they will not take over Russia. The Russian customs, norms and traditions are not compatible with the lack of culture or the primitive ways of Sharia Law advocated for by Muslims. At the end of his address, Putin recommended to the Duma that when enacting laws, Russian interests were of paramount importance and that the Muslims since they are a minority, and are not Russians. Putin in essence was responding to the minority migrants who wanted to create a strict Islam doctrine within the

walls of Russia. This has gone a long way in enhancing the survival of Russia against terrorism, which is by and large argued to be emanating from the Islamic fundamentalists.

The Putin administration has brought about social cohesion. Rapoza (2016: 1) argues that trust within civilization, since Russia argues to be a civilization not a state, and that trust towards institutions and decision-makers is a key indicator of a society's ability to fully develop its productive potential. As argued by Huntington (1992), this has led to the clash of civilizations in which the Russians are promoting communism as a civilization whilst the capitalist west has its own ideals. This by and large has led to the tense rivalry between the SU and Russia. In line with this, this research argues that since 2000, there has been social cohesion within Russia and it has gone to great lengths in establishing the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.

The third respondent argues that a number of professionals seeking to leave Russia exceeded 50% in certain segments before 2000. However, to date, there has been stable retention of professional who are key in production and development of the state. Social cohesion thus helps in the creative potential to support economic development in Russia. For example, industrial revolution has taken a productive step inasmuch as the intellectual property patterns have been established. The Putin administration through creating a stable social Russia has managed to accentuate capital flight and enhance domestic consumption (Rapoza, 2016: 2). Through social cohesion, Russia has had the ability to attract foreign talent, which play an additional role in the developing the Russian economy.

### **3.6 Other Factors that has led to the resurgence of Russia**

There other factors that has led to the resurgence of Russia as a superpower that cannot be explained under political, social and economic factors. These include geography of Russia, its relations with China and the capabilities of President Putin. If understood in detail, these factors highlights how bilateral relations with the US have soured.

#### **3.6.1 Geographical location of Russia**

The geographical location of Russia has to an extent facilitated its resurgence as a superpower argues the second respondent. Unlike its main geopolitical rival, the United States, Russia borders most of the regions it wishes to project power into. Russia has in fact a few geographic

barriers separate it from its targets. For example, Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states which hold massive strategic importance to Russia have zero geographic insulation from Russia. Central Asia in which Russia trades in weapons and artillery is sheltered by distance, but not by mountains or rivers. The Caucasus provide a bit of a speed bump to Russia, but pro-Russian enclaves in Georgia give the Kremlin a secure foothold south of the mountain range (putting the Russian-Georgian war in perspective). Russia arguably can project all manner of influence and intimidation there on the cheap, while even symbolic counters are quite costly for the United States. In contrast, places such as Latin America, Southeast Asia or Africa which to an extent are important to Russia do not capture much more than the Russian imagination. As argued by the second respondent, Russia is not a country but a civilization and this is shown from its massive influence within the world, geography being a factor leading to the resurgence of Russia.

### **3.6.2 The Appointment of President Putin as a reason for Russia's Resurgence**

The assumption of Putin as the leader of Russia in 2000 has been argued to be an independent factor that has led to the rise of Russia. To the second respondent, Putin is hardworking, patriotic and nationalist at heart. To Putin, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geo-political mistake of the century. It was in his mandate that Russia had to be rebuilt. As the second respondent argues, Putin does not only want to make Russia great again, but wants to go beyond this and make Russia a superpower. Putin's economic policies, political achievements and social structuring of the Russian Federation can be argued to have led to the rise of Russia. Regional supremacy was retained through invading Georgia and Ukraine and the tax system domestically has restructured Russian economy. As a former soldier in the Russian army, it is quite obvious that Putin is a strategist who has had a considerable influence in the resurgence of Russia. Since Putin came into power, one can note that the bilateral relations with the US have hit its lowest.

### **3.6.3 Russia-China relations**

Russia and China as regional powers have had relations with each other. Analyzed closely, these relations have led to the revival of Russia as a superpower. Within the Security Council, Russia and China have used the veto power together and have absented themselves from substantive issues together. Recently, Russia and China have vetoed the UN resolutions in Syria and this can be attributed to the close relationship between the two and their strategic links in the Middle East.

The Communist doctrine practiced by both nations have to a certain extent led to the upkeep of Russia within the international arena as African, Latin American states and in essence, the Non-Aligned Movement states (NAM) giving reference to the Russian leadership other than the US. With this perspective, Russia has adopted states who look up to it. The Far East policy adopted in Zimbabwe for example explains the influence of Russia within the international arena.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Russia indeed is a superpower and many factors can be attributed to its resurgence. Many factors can be attributed to the resurgence of Russia as a superpower. The political factors in Putin's policies, strengthening of the military and the intelligence, Russia's use of the veto at the UN Security council among other factors have all led to the resurgence of Russia. The economy of Russia is at a high and ever since 2000, the GDP has been gradually growing. Russia is in the elite BRICS, G8, and G20 and has economic ties with Asia. All these attests to the rise of Russia as a superpower. Social cohesion and the consciousness of the Russians also is a factor underlying the resurgence of Russia.

## **Chapter 4**

### **4. The Implications of Russia's Resurgence as a Global Power and its Bilateral Relations with the US**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to understand the implications of Russia's resurgence as a superpower and its bilateral relations with the US. Russia and the US have maintained trade and diplomatic relations throughout history. Under President Putin however, who has considerably led the reformation of Russia to challenge for superpower status, relations between these two rivals has deteriorated. After the Crimean crisis, the official US-Russian relations were handled at the ministerial level as the US embassy in Russia ceded all diplomatic missions. However, this has passed and there is an official relation between these two states. The US has responded to Russia's resurgence in a number of ways. These include the withdrawal from START II, US role in the Georgian and Crimean crisis amongst other incidents. This chapter thus focuses on these varying actions and their implications on the bilateral relationship between these two states.

#### **4.2 History of the Bilateral Relations between Russia and the US**

The US and Russia have had relations during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century for instance the Tsarist Russia sent warships to San Francisco during the American Civil War in 1777 and the US appreciated that according to the respondent. Relations strained during the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 since the Americans were opposed to the Communist Russia for it posed a threat to the Capitalist America. This was so because there was now a competing ideology to capitalism. It was up until 1936 that the US recognized Communist Russia as a state according to the second respondent. This can be argued to have been influenced by the economic woes the Americans were facing thus they had to have economic relations with the Far East. The Americans and the Russians allied themselves during World War II so as to fight the Nazi Germany. After the world war, the two emerged as the super powers thus the coming in of the Cold War. The second respondent argues that the Cold War erupted because the world war was a forced marriage just like the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Zimbabwe African Nationalist Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe.

The US in using nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed the world that they had the superpower status. However, to the second respondent, Russia sent a message outlining that she will not submit to the American hegemony. The Cold War thus erupted characterized with proxy wars in Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe as the Russians supported Joshua Nkomo and his party in Zimbabwe's fight for independence, to Angola and the likes. It was also a period of détente as argued by the respondent. In 1991 however, the Soviet Union disintegrated and America remained as the sole super power. The discussion raised however, is the resurgence of Russia after 2000 and the implications of this on the bilateral relations with America.

### **4.3 US Withdrawal from START II**

The fourth respondent alludes to the withdrawal by the US from the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START) as an impact of Russia's resurgence. In 2002, the U.S. withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to move forward with plans for a missile defense system. START was first signed to limit offensive weapons between the two rivals. However, due to the anarchical nature of the international system and the need for global hegemony, the US had to withdraw. Realists including the 4<sup>th</sup> respondent however argue that the rationale behind this withdrawal was Russia's resurgence influenced by its military capabilities.

The White House gave varying reasons for withdrawing from this treaty. Firstly, the US argues that it is now flexible to explore greater international co-operation on missile defenses. Furthermore, the US outlined that it wanted to create defense and produce them when ready since the Cold War era was now different since non-state actors were major players threatening international peace and security (9/11 attacks perpetrated by Bin Laden). (US Department of State, 2005). To give further impact of this withdrawal from START II on the bilateral relations between the US and Russia, Putin called the decision a mistake. To Putin, the move by the US posed a threat to international security. This research argues that the withdrawal of the US from the START II was a strategic move in trying to keep at guard with the resurgence Russia. Russia since 2000 has had military restructure and within that, the US need to keep up with the Russians. That is the implication of START II towards the souring of the bilateral relations between the US and Russia.

#### **4.4 The Georgian and Crimean Crisis**

The Georgian and Crimean crisis and the events that happened afterwards helps in explaining the implications of Russia resurgence on its bilateral relations with the US. The Russians have throughout time blamed U.S officials for encouraging anti-Russian revolts during the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003 and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004. The Putin administration condemned these actions as intrusions into Russia's geographic sphere of interest. The second respondent argues that the Kiev revolution was organized by the American ambassador to Ukraine. Crimea has always been the Russian territory and America exerting influence in Kiev, was a breach to international law. 96% of the people in Crimea voted to be part of Russia thus the latter had every legal right to invade Crimea. Since America recognized Kosovo as a sovereign state, so the second respondent argues why the US did not recognize the referendum by the Crimean's to join Russia.

The US in response imposed sanctions on Russia after the Ukrainian crisis in 2014. Executive Order 13660 authorizes sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, or for stealing the assets of the Ukrainian people. These sanctions put in place thus have restrictions on the travel of certain individuals and officials and from the US perspective shows continued efforts to impose a cost on Russia and those responsible for the situation in Crimea (US Department of State, 2015).

In essence, the sanctions imposed to Russia by the US and its allies can be understood in three perspectives. The first set of sanctions restricts access to Western financial markets and services for designated Russian state-owned enterprises in the banking, energy, and defense sectors. The second set places an embargo on exports to Russia of designated high-technology oil exploration and production equipment. The third is an embargo on exports to Russia of designated military and dual-use goods. (NATO Review Magazine, 2016). However, these sanctions was a move that further soured the relations between the two states as America kept blaming Russia for infringing on the peace, stability, territorial sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine. These sanctions however have been a further step enhancing the deteriorating bilateral relations between the US and Russia. How can Russia engage in bilateral relations with the US when the latter is constantly imposing economic sanctions on the former?

#### **4.5 Relations within the Middle East**

Since the time of President Carter of the US, America has declared the Middle East region as an area of strategic importance. In terms of geo-politics, the Middle East is the midpoint. As argued by the fourth respondent, he who controls the Middle East controls the world. In essence, the US wants to strategically remove Iran from the map for it poses a threat towards America's interest within the Middle East. However, to get rid of Iran, the US has to have influence in Syria. The fourth respondent argues that America in trying to have influence within the region has created forces like Al Qaeda and ISIS so as to fight Russia's influence within the region. The US supports the opposition groups for example the rebels in Syria so as to remove Syrian influence within the region. Even though Russia is no 'saint', America seems to be a force causing conflicts so as to fight Russia. However, as the 4<sup>th</sup> respondent outlines, every political issue that goes wrong on the international scale is blamed on Russia. This tendency by the US has led to the souring of the relations between these two superpowers.

The fourth respondent argues that the original aim of the Russians is the leadership normalization of the relationship with the U.S. The subsequent situation in Syria, however can be said to be a 'proxy war' between Russia and the US. The two rounds of the Syrian peace talks held in Vienna in October and November 2015 highlighted yet again the deep incongruity over the Syrian settlement between the U.S. and Russia. The main issue of disagreement was of Bashar Assad's political future as argued by VOA (2016: 11). Following the Vienna peace talks over the Syrian issue, Presidents Obama and Putin met unofficially at the G-20 Summit in Turkey and the CNN (2016), reported that an agreement had been made.

However, the bilateral negotiations over Syria were unilaterally suspended by the U.S on October 3, 2016, which was presented as the U.S. government's reaction to a re-structured offensive by Syrian and Russian troops. In retaliation, President Putin signed a decree that suspended the 2000 Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement with the US, citing the failure by the U.S. to comply with the provisions thereof as well as the US unfriendly actions that posed a threat to strategic stability as argued by the fourth respondent. With this 'zig-zag' policy adopted by both states, the Middle East crisis thus presents a credible analysis on the bilateral relations between the two states in which this study argues that it has led to the souring of relations between the US and Russia.



#### **4.6 General Overview**

There has been wide speculations between the relations of Russia and the US and there bilateral relations. The fourth respondent argues that the American ambassador to Russia, Mr. John Tefft is argued to be meeting with separatists and enemies of the state that opposes the Russian government. This official business has led to the souring of bilateral relations between the two states. From the Russian perspective, the normalization of relations with America will be progressive but the Americans on the other hand are not reaching out. The Americans once promised President Gorbachev of Russia that NATO will not in future move towards Russian protectorates but however there NATO forces within the Baltic States and this by and large shows America moving out of its word and this indeed has implications on the bilateral relations between America and the US. With this overview, this research argues that the resurgence of Russia as a superpower and the global trends that comes with this step has led to the tension of bilateral relations between the US and Russia.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Indeed the resurgence of Russia as a superpower has had varied effects on its bilateral relations with the US. After the end of WWII, relations between these two states soured as the international system experienced the Cold War. The Putin era, which is of relevance to this study has seen a souring of bilateral relations between the two states. The invasion of Crimea and the retaliation by the US with sanctions, the bilateral relations within the Middle East and the general perception of Russia by the US as a rogue state has influenced the tension between these two states. Among other events that has led to the souring of these relations, this research takes note of the above discussed points.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5. Recommendations and Conclusions**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study discussed on the implications of Russia's resurgence as a superpower and on its bilateral relations with the US. Chapter one focused on the introduction of the study. It is within this chapter that the major objective of the study: an analysis of the implications of Russia resurgence as a superpower on its bilateral relations with the US was outlined. Chapter two focused on the literature review and theoretical framework. The hegemonic stability theory and the balance of power theory were utilized since they debate on the power capabilities sought by Russia to become a superpower. Relevant literature on the US system of unipolarity, the history between the bilateral relations between the US and Russia among other factors were discussed. Chapter three discussed on the political, economic and social factors that has influenced the resurgence of Russia. The implications of Russia's resurgence on its bilateral relations with the US were the focus of Chapter four borrowing from the factors that has influenced Russia's resurgence.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study**

The research is an analysis of the impact of Russia's resurgence as a superpower on its bilateral relations with the US. The general objective of the study was analyzing the implications of Russia's resurgence as a superpower in its bilateral relations with America. Among other objectives, the study sought to understand the historical overview of US-Russia relations, analyzing the underlying factors facilitating the resurgence of Russia as a superpower and an assessment of the impact of Russia's resurgence as a global power on its bilateral relations with the USA. It was established in the background of the study that Russia and the US have established bilateral relations in contemporary politics during the Cold War. This was because both states were on a period of détente and deterrence was the major attribute that governed their relations. After the end of the Cold War, the relations were on sided since the US dictated most events. However, the resurgence of Russia arguably since 2000 has seen a shift on these bilateral relations as Russia has embarked on its resurgence policies. The study is justified since history and literature has basically focused on America's dominance within the globe. There is now need

to look at Russia as a major player since it has resurfaced within the international arena. Qualitative research methods were utilized and including this, documentary search and semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather information. The research encountered some limitations in bias towards the West and its agenda and delimitations in only focusing with Russia and the US and focusing on the implications of the former's resurgence policies on its bilateral relations with the latter were enhanced.

The study concludes that contemporary trends alludes that the relations between the US and Russia were effected during the Cold War and shifted drastically after the turn of the new millennium. This has been attributed to the coming in of new leadership in Russia with different opinions towards the establishment of Russia as a superpower. The resurgence of Russia has challenged the unipolarity global politics dominated by the US ever since the end of the Cold War. The coming in of Putin in 2000 has arguably led to the full-scale resurgence of Russia. It has come in political, economic and cultural re-structuring. This resurgence however can be argued to have led to the souring of Russia-US relations. The hegemonic stability theory outlined the regional dominance of Russia in Eastern Europe and America in North America. However the tenant of the hegemonic theory in superpower complexes brought into effect the rivalry of the US and America as each state is now seeking global hegemony. The balance of power theory also postulates the research problem in explaining that Russia's resurgence policies might be a move trying to counter the growing influence of the US. The concept of conventional bilateral diplomacy thus come into effect in trying to factor the formal relations between the US and Russia. The Russia-US relations under the auspices of conventional bilateral relations have shifted from periods in history dating from events such as the invasion of Crimea to the Syrian crisis.

### **5.2.2 Factors leading to the Resurgence of Russia as a superpower**

The research concludes that there are so many factors that have led to the resurgence of Russia for her to challenge for superpower status. These factors can be understood from a political, economic and social spectrum. There other factors which are important to discuss independently that has also led to the revival of Russia. From an economic spectrum, Russia's GDP has increased steadily by 7% since 2000. Even after the West was hit by the financial crisis in 2008, Russia's economy was not adversely affected. Russia boosts large reserves in oil and natural gas

and this has gone to greater lengths in facilitating the rise of Russia. Unemployment has declined by at least 15% since 2007 and all can be attributed to the economic revival of Russia. Russia has also joined the elite group of BRICS and this economic partnership has helped in the economic upkeep of the state. To further strengthen their economic revival, Russia has economic ties with Asia and Africa and within this relationship, military weapons and artillery is exported thus boosting Russian economic reserves.

Politically, the study concludes that Russia has built a strong and vibrant political economy. Confidence in the leadership of Putin and Medvedev has seen Russia progress as a unified state. The consolidation of Chechnya, military strides in Georgia and Ukraine, the participation in Syria among other events has seen Russia been integrated into the international arena thereby achieving superpower status. This can also be attributed to the strong military base built by Putin. As realists like Keohane and Nye (1996) argue, a strong political base enhances a state to challenge for regional and even global hegemony. Putin has made it clear that he seeks to enhance Russia capabilities and end the dominance of America.

There also social factors as well that has led to the resurgence of Russia. This research establishes that President Putin has made it clear that unity and social cohesion is the only way Russia can progress as a state. In addressing social cohesion, Putin once shunned Islamic fundamentalism as a rot within the Russian society that needed to be eradicated. There is also a sense of oneness among Russians and within this one can argue that this has led to the progress of Russia as a state. The geographical location, Russia's relations with the Middle East and Asia has all led to the resurgence of Russia.

### **5.2.3 Implications of Russia's resurgence on its bilateral relations with the US**

The study concludes that Russia and the US have throughout history had bilateral relations. Modern history traces the co-operations of these two states from World War I and II relations in the fight against Germany and its allies. During the Cold War however, relations soured and deterrence was the only way that an international war was averted. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, Russia was not a threat to the US and the latter dictated events as it liked. This changed after the coming in of Putin in 2000 and the relations between Russia and the US have considerably deteriorated. The US has sponsored proxy wars against the Russians for example

the Ukrainian crisis. The US has pulled out of START II for it is trying to safeguard itself against the ever expanding Russia. More so, the US has unilaterally withdrawn from the Syrian co-operation with Russia. As established in this research, all these have been implications of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower.

These implications have come in the souring of bilateral relations between the US and Russia. The study concludes that the sanctions imposed by the US and its allies over Russia after the Crimean crisis has even led to diplomatic missions at a time being held at ministerial levels. All that results from Russia's resurgence and it impacting on its relations with Russia. In addition, this study concludes that by withdrawing from START II, the bilateral relations between the US and Russia deteriorated on strategic arms reduction. The US wanted to arm themselves against the possible Russian rearmament and Putin even publicly declared it as "a mistake on the part of the Americans." With that, the bilateral relations of the US and Russia are seen deteriorating.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

#### **5.3.1 Co-operation between the US and Russia**

The first recommendation of this study is that the Americans should reach a hand towards establishing bilateral relations with Russia. Since time immemorial, Russia has been the one to extend a hand for co-operation to America. This can be seen through World War I and World War II co-operation. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, Russia opted to co-operate with the US in addressing political, social and economic issues. However, the US has co-operated with Russia when the latter is at its weakest point. After 2000, the relations between Russia and the US have soured. This is primarily attributed to the rise of Russia as a superpower. The military engagements of Russia, economic resuscitation among others has to an extent threatened the US. America has retreated from START II and other commitments. The US has engaged NATO within the Baltic States and all this is in fear of the rising expansion of Russian forces. The US unilaterally withdrew from the bilateral relations in the Syrian crisis and the question arises: why has the US done that? This research thus recommends that the US should not move away from its international commitment of enhancing international peace and security since Russia is rising again. Co-operation is the only way and from this research, Russia is open to bilateral dialogue and the Americans should do the same.

### **5.3.2 Desisting from Double-Standards**

Desisting from double standards in the US perspective is also a recommendation of the study. This is in relation to the international norms of respecting the use of force. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter stipulates that “all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.” Within this perspective, the US has condemned the military invasion of Crimea and Georgia by Russia as they are against international law norms. However, as argued by the second respondent and as evident in history, the US has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in which in the case of the latter, this was against international law norms. The US invasion did not even satisfy article 51 of the UN Charter which authorizes pre-emptive use of force. Within this perspective, the US should by any means stand in one perspective not to change international positions when it comes to Russia. The US took into perspective the referendum held in Kosovo seeking liberations and acted through NATO intervention but shunned the Russians who acted on the referendum held in Crimea to be liberated from Ukraine. The Russians used force in this stead and the US and its allies responded by imposing sanctions on the Russians (US Department of State, 2015). Therefore this research recommends that for bilateral relations to be effective within the US and Russia, the former should desist from double standards when dealing with international events.

Most states within the international arena are independent. This statehood attributed is found in the Montevideo Convention which deliberates that for a state to gain nationhood, it should be independent. In relation to this, the paper recommends that the US should not forcefully export its democratic ideals on independent states. By doing this, the US has constantly caused conflicts and as a result, this has resulted in the sour relations between the US and Russia. The pro-US revolt of 2004 in Crimea as argued by the fourth respondent was influenced by the Americans. This was so because the Americans wanted a liberal leader within Crimea so as to have strategic advantage Crimea holds and also to thwart the presence of Russia within the region. Due to the US tendency of spreading democracy, Al Qaeda has been created when the Central Intelligence Agency allied with Bin Laden and ISIS has been created when they tried to ally with the rebels in Syria and Iraq. Of importance to the study is that in most instances, the US would be trying to deal with Russia through proxy wars. To maintain international peace and security, this research

recommends that the US understand the differences within states and respects the methods of governance. If this is achieved, probably relations with other states, Russia included will be enhanced.

In addition, the research recommends that Washington should use unilateral measures (arms control and disarmament) to press Moscow about their progress as a democracy. Even though this may seem like more advice to meddle in Russian internal politics, but if Russia wishes to be a member of the international status quo, it should act like one. The Russian government has every right to repress its own people as much as they are willing to stand for. After all, authoritarian regimes are recognized as governments in politics. The U.S. government also has the similar right not to invite such nations into its arms as a friend and trading partner. The research is not trying to dictate internal Russian political arrangements, but since the research focuses on the implications of the resurgence of Russia as a superpower and its impact on the bilateral relations with the US, one cannot be blind to what happens in Russia.

#### **5.3.4 Russia and the veto in the UNSC**

Russia has increasingly used its veto power within the UN Security Council and this research recommends that for relations to be cordial between the US and Russia, the latter should desist from unnecessarily using the veto. Within the UN Security Council setup, the veto power entails the ability of either state with a permanent member status to rule out any proposed substantial measure according to Peters (2009: 12). The Russians are notorious for vetoing any resolution that does not suite their strategic essence. This however has led to chaos at times within the international arena. There has been no universal peacekeeping mission in Syria since the eruption of the Syrian crisis in 2011 and this can be attributed to Russia vetoing the last eight (8) proposed measures by the UN Security Council. How international peace and security be maintained if superpowers veto important decisions? The US have reiterated on the need of Russia not to use the veto power when measures proposed threaten their position within the geopolitics. The US has often used this veto power as well but it is Russia which has become notorious of using this power to block some progressive measures. Therefore, if the veto is not used for selfish interests, probably the bilateral relations between Russia and the US can be maintained.

The Russians blame the US for going against its word on NATO operations and expansions. It was established in this research that the US once promised Gorbachev that NATO will not expand into the Baltic States. However, this has since been proved to be a broken word. This research therefore recommends that the US should halt NATO expansion. If anything, NATO expansion is creating the situation it was supposed to avert, raising tensions in Europe instead of dampening them. Besides, no one has ever really been able to answer the question of what NATO expansion was supposed to prevent. The Russians are likely not going to march over hundreds of miles and attack Poland, allied to the West. As a further step to this, the research recommends that the United States should attempt to make the Russians a more integrated partner in the fight against terror, treating Russia as a potential ally, and throwing the ball back into the Russian court. Terrorism has grown into a threat to the achievement of international peace in which every state in the international arena seeks to achieve. According to Nichols (2009:4), “the US can offer cooperation: If the US can overcome its differences with France and Germany on other issues and cooperate on terrorism, it can certainly do so with the Russians, who have far more to lose if that cooperation is not established.” Therefore for bilateral relations to be achieved between America and Russia, there is need to halt NATO expansion and engage with Russia in this fight against terrorism.



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