
COLD WAR 2.0: A CASE OF CONTINUED RIVALRY

Shahzad Nawaz Chand

*Research Scholar of International Sport Development and Politics
German Sport University, Cologne, Germany*

ABSTRACT

The history of the recent world has been dominated by a difficult and a volatile relationship between the U.S and Russia. With the end of Cold War and the age of the Global War on Terror, both U.S and Russia have started to build a relationship with each other. In an up-down trajectory, the relationship has gone through hurdles and has seen events such as the 'Reset' while the Obama Administration was in office and now is believed to be heading towards a 'Cold War 2.0' scenario. The U.S-Russia relationship does not solely rest on the U.S and Russia, but have moved over to NATO and SCO respectively. Both countries have forgone conventional means of struggle to adopt a great game scenario where two blocs are emerging again to roll back the years and perhaps put the world into another era of 'Cold War'.

Keywords: Cold War, US, Russia, NATO, SCO

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history wars have left their mark on the world. From the Peloponnesian war to the Second World War, all battles have been instrumental in changing the course of future. But the biggest discourse in the minds of experts was not a war but ideological struggle. Dubbed as the Cold War, as U.S and USSR never experienced any escalation in the conventional sense, the conflict has molded the world. Its impact still echoes in the borders of Korea, the emergence of independent states from USSR and a new model of pseudo Communist China set on its own uncharted journey. With the end of the WWII, U.S and Russia stood at opposite ideological poles as an 'Iron Curtain' had descended. The World had two blocs, one belonged to the Soviets and the other was spearheaded by America. The Cold War was not just a struggle based on ideology but its battle lines were drawn in the space race, media wars, propaganda, proxy wars, covert operations, insurgencies and nuclear escalation. After decades of struggles that started with the Berlin airlift to the creation

of North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 and the USSR responding with Warsaw Pact in 1955, the Vietnam war, the nuclear arms race and the Cuban missile crises, the struggle finally culminated in the iconic fall of the Berlin Wall.

Since then the U.S enjoyed a unipolar role and took a lead in world affairs. Russia defeated and deflated continued to build from the inside as their economy went downhill. For U.S, one-time allies in the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, the Taliban, carried out attacks on American soil in 2001 and a constant struggle with terrorism ensued, leading to a military response from U.S, also known as the Global War against Terror (GWOT). Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, was one of the first nations to offer help in fighting the Taliban. For Russia, the decision to help U.S in Afghanistan was calculated as Russia had been a target of terrorism in its own backyard in Chechnya. Russia aided U.S with bases in Central Asia and in return, U.S which had been critical of Russia's role in Chechnya turned a blind eye. Furthermore, a Five Point plan was signed between both countries in which Intelligence Sharing, Russian Airspace, Cooperation with Russian allies, Assistance to government in Afghanistan and International Aid was exchanged. The creation of NATO-Russia Council (NRC) further solidified a promising future but it was short-lived as U.S, perhaps misjudging its superiority went into Iraq to force a change of regime. Criticism of American actions in Iraq soon followed as Russia, France and Britain voiced their opposition to the invasion.

The invasion of Iraq was always on the cards as Regime change in Iraq had been on U.S agenda since 1998's Iraq Liberation Act which stated that "It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime" (GPO.GOV, 1998). The regime under Saddam Hussien, believed to have Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) choose not to comply with U.N inspection teams and it was concluded by U.S intelligence that Iraq did possessed WMDs. The UNSC still devising a plan to deal with the situation was red-faced when U.S claiming that democratic solutions had failed and went into action. For Russia and others, it was a step too far as U.S did not take any note and showed its power and might. For Russia this

meant that progress since the GWOT was in vain and the relationship deteriorated. Vladimir Putin reflecting back stated that “We had normal relations with the US but failed to agree on Iraq and things got worse” (RUVR, 2012). It is debated among scholars that many nations were aware of U.S plans to topple the regime, but U.S in a haste opting for direct military action and undermining the international community altogether meant that U.S had gone too far. This act by U.S echoed Charles Krauthammer’s theory of “Unipolar moment” which meant that “the breakdown of the bipolar Cold War system meant that there are no longer any checks and balances on US actions” (Krauthammer, 2002).

Further split came as a result of Russian involvement in the Georgian crisis in 2008. The conflict changed the attitude of U.S and European countries towards Russia. The division between U.S and Russia temporarily decreased when both countries adopted a policy of reviving their relations. This action of goodwill and cooperation was largely initiated by the Obama administration which the Russians welcomed. Dubbed as the “Reset”, U.S and Russia would try to overcome their past and start anew. On paper it was a good deal, Russia would get something in return for cooperating with U.S in Afghanistan, but experts have largely labeled the Reset as a failure (Brookes, 2016). The reason for such ambiguity is largely because of Russia’s annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Such an act was followed by a plethora of sanctions against Russia which still continue to affect Russian economy. U.S responded by passing H.R 93 law in the 114th Congress that dictated U.S policy of not recognizing the de facto sovereignty of Russia over Crimea and its airspace and waters (House of Congress, 2015).

Over to recent times, the conflict in Syria shows the stark difference between U.S and Russia. Russia just like in the past has employed a pro-Syrian stance, while U.S has adopted an anti-Syrian policy. U.S was close to bombing Syria after it had “allegedly” used chemical weapons. With years of conflict and the loss of millions, the war in Syria is reaching its climax, the U.S and Russia have played their respective parts and its impact will likely change the course of the Middle East. Russian support of Bashar al Assad’s regime comes from ensuring Russian interests in the region, which include the Russian naval facility in Tartus, while U.S has always had an ally in the form

of Israel. But as Russia and U.S are continuously spiraling in an endless cycle of struggle, there is another equation at play. Alternative poles of power belonging to Russia and U.S can still turn the tide of world history. The Cold War has long been gone, but the ghosts of Cold War still cast their shadows. For U.S, NATO has undermined Russia not only in the world but also in their backyard. While Russia has is looking over to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to build up an alliance to challenge U.S. This creates a unique situation in which domination of each state is not dependent on direct interaction, but an indirect struggle that might leave a new footnote in the pages of history.

COLD WAR 2.0

The breakdown of the USSR was historical, it was the End of History for some, while some commented that it would usher a Clash of Civilization. While advocates and evidence of both theories can be seen, a new and evolved struggle has emerged. As the abyss between a resurgent Russia and a dominant west grows, the old weapons of Cold War are coming to light. For U.S, NATO has always been a tool to use its influence in Europe, while Russia taking inspiration from the Warsaw pact have forged together with china an alliance in the shape of SCO. This provides an interesting scenario where both nations compete for influence, not directly per se but by using organizations a means to an end. In fact, the most relevant factor when analyzing the future of U.S-Russia relations is how both countries are using organizations to influence their models of foreign policy.

The beginnings of NATO can be traced to the early years of the cold war, following the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, U.S and Russia, once allies turned on each other on the bases of their ideologies. A mutual defense agreement, the treaty of Brussels signed in 1948 was a precursor to NATO, but with USSR implementing the Berlin Blockade and the coup in Czechoslovakia meant that the creation of NATO had to be set up. U.S taking the throne of world leadership from Britain made no delay to set up an organization to contain the spread of communism in Europe and the world. For decades NATO with their member states worked to contain the red ideology and set up different measures to make sure USSR did not get more countries in their fold. NATO's basic principles lay on

‘collective defense’ which meant that an attack on one nation meant an attack on all member states. This policy of ‘one for all, all for one’ was one of the reasons communisms did not flourish. After a series of revolutions and internal policy changes USSR dissolved and the Russian Federation took most of its legacy. Russia has been critical of NATO, with many questionings why does NATO exist when there is no threat of communism, but the questions of world politics cannot be answered in black and white. NATO is much more than a military alliance; its aim is to create peaceful resolutions to disputes that may occur and its political aspirations are to build democratic values and cooperation on security problems.

NATO AND THE RUSSIAN EQUATION

The problem in Russian ranks is not necessarily NATO’s existence, but its objections lie at the enlargement of NATO in Europe. The leadership of Russia has always been critical of NATO, Boris Yeltsin was a vocal critic of NATO’s role in Bosnia and Kosovo. The creation of NATO-Russia Council (NRC) following the 9/11 attacks only delayed the inevitable opposite stance. NRC was set up “to fight against terrorism, crisis management, non-proliferation, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defense, logistics, military-to-military cooperation, defense reform and civil emergencies” (Kriendler, 2013). The basis of NRC was based on Mutual respect and partnership, but George W. Bush’s decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and American adventure in Iraq resulted in the failure of NRC.

Russia rising from the debris of USSR, sees itself as a legitimate power in Europe, especially in its own backyard. NATO has challenged that notion by expanding towards Russian borders. In 1999 NATO celebrated its fiftieth year of existence by extending its membership to Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. This extension of member states by NATO threatens the Russian concept of Near Abroad, which ascertains that Russia has a right of influence over its neighbor states or more specifically Former Soviet Union (FSU). Michael Mandelbaum, an expert on American affairs notes that when it comes to NATO’s expansion there are only two interpretations. The first camp notes that NATO’s purpose is to promote democracy and free market systems and the second camp notes that the extension has

everything to do with countering the threat of Russia (Mandelbaum, 1995).

For Russia, its destiny lies outside as the Russian economy cannot sustain itself completely on its own. Russia being the largest country in the world needs expats to run its economy and contribute to its GDP as Russian fertility rate stands at an average of 1.28 children per women which is insufficient considering its size. Putin addressing this issue stated that “Russia needs a million new workers every year. If we don’t get them, we can forget about economic growth” (Humphrey, 2009). Russia for such purpose looks over to its Russian populations in Kazakhstan, Moldova, the Baltic States and primarily Ukraine. Russia has somewhat managed to safeguard its interests via the Collective Security Organization (CSTO) which include Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Despite that NATO has already penetrated into FSU ranks by getting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as member states. NATO with its 2004 enlargement drive got Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia as members and five years later Albania and Croatia were part of NATO as well. This has highlighted Russia’s lack of power and determination to safeguard its interests, particularly the three Baltic States where a sizeable number of Ethnic Russians reside. Russia would naturally look outside its own border for growth but it has failed to do so mainly because of NATO. NATO’s underlying Article 5 of ‘collective defense’ which translates into ‘all for one, one for all’ makes it difficult for Russia to do something substantial. But Russia has not been a standby watcher in in 2008 Russia did the unthinkable by sending its forces into Georgian territory.

Russian decision to send its troops into Georgian territory has its roots in the early post-Cold War years. NATO since the year 1994 had plans to get Georgia into its ranks. Georgia being a FSU country had de facto portions which had allegiance to Russia owing to the ethnic Russian populations, resulting in the 1992 ceasefire agreement also known as the Sochi Agreement. This post-cold war agreement became the basis of the conflict as relations between Russia and Georgia worsened with time. For Russia, any chance of Georgia joining NATO was unthinkable for Kremlin which looking to safeguard its interests used its ethnic Russian Ossetians to incite violence and unrest. As a result, on August 2007, South Ossetia and Georgia accused each other

of launching artillery barrages. Georgia responded by sending its army into the region and on the next day on 8th August, Russia engaged with Georgian forces. In a five-day war, Russia completely overpowered Georgian forces and blockaded Georgian ports with its Black Sea Fleet. On 12th August, a ceasefire was masterminded by the French president, Nicholas Sarkozy with a 'six-point peace plan'. In accordance with the plan Russian forces moved out of Georgian territory, but it installed safety 'buffer zones' south of Ossetia and Abkhazia. President Medvedev further solidified Russian sphere of influence when it recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and signed joint border protection agreements with them. To this day most of the international community does not recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia's claim of independence, but a limited number of nations continue to do so. Russian defense of its military force in Georgia's separatist regions was to protect Russian minority in South Ossetia. The action to go into Georgia was in accordance with Russian foreign policy to "provide comprehensive protection of rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad" (Sletmoen, 2011).

The decision to move into Georgia has been productive and counterproductive at the same time. While it has for the time being secured Russian interests in Georgia but it has also raised caution signals around neighbor nations. Following the 2008 Georgian crises it was seen that many nations saw Russia as a threat and asked NATO's commitment to draft defensive plans for future aggressions (Traynor, 2010). U.S naturally opposed the actions of Russia and was the forerunner in condemning it. America being Georgian ally had immediate concerns which included stopping the war, limiting Russian tactical gains, standing by the Georgian administration and making sure that Russia paid a price for its actions. Former U.S Vice President, Dick Cheney declared that "Russian aggression must not go unanswered" (The Guardian, 2011). But as it turned out the response was severely constrained, U.S and much of Europe could not muster a substantial strategy to punish as most of Europe depended on Russian energy. Despite failing to help Georgia, in 2009, at the Munich Security Conference, Vice President Joe Biden cleared U.S position on the matter by stating "the United States will not recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. We will not recognize a

sphere of influence. It will remain our view that sovereign states have the right to make their own decisions and choose their own alliances” (Nicho, 2009).

Perhaps the biggest problem in NATO-Russia dilemma is the phenomenon of Missile Defense System. With President Barack Obama holding the torch of leadership in America, Russia and NATO refreshed their state of affairs. Obama had a different version of Europe than of the Bush Administration who had productive talks with the Czech Republic and Poland on the subject of deploying anti-ballistic missiles in their territory. Obama, realizing the concerns raised by his Russian counterparts decided that U.S would not proceed with installation of ABM’s but rather focus on defense against Iranian missile threat (Baker, 2009). The progress on Missile defense system was seen as a promising start to relations between U.S led NATO and Russia but developments in America with the National Security Agency (NSA) and Russian decision to give asylum to Edward Snowden affected relations. Obama canceled the September 2013 meeting with Vladimir Putin and it was thought that Snowden was the reason but Obama cited “lack of progress on issues such as missile defense” as justification. An examination of the Missile defense system reveals that Russia looks at the missiles set up against them. Dmitry Medvedev while in his term as president summed the relationship by saying “Russia’s relations with the USA and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the missile defense area have a long and complicated history” (Rogin, 2011). NATO in its official press releases has always maintained that the defense system is a means to protect against threats and not in any way directed against Russia. NATO talking about the development and ability to acquire ballistic missiles by nations relates that it has the responsibility to ensure that it can protect NATO allies under its collective defense principle. In a 2016 official NATO fact sheet publication it was stated by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg that “NATO ballistic missile defense is purely defensive and not directed against Russia. Geography and physics make it impossible for the NATO system to shoot down Russian intercontinental missiles by the interceptors available for NATO BMD. They are too few, and located too far south or too close to Russia, to be able to do so. They are designed to tackle threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area” (NATO, 2016).

With events such as Russian annexation of Crimea, Washington will try and focus on the Missile Defense to ensure Russia doesn't get any more ground. In fact, on May 2016, U.S deployed a missile defense system in NATO member Romania and there are plans to deploy interceptors in Poland too. It is important to note that not only U.S led NATO has interests in setting up Missile Defense Systems, but even FSU countries such as Poland along with the Baltic states are firm supporters of the idea. It is impossible to predict how this will affect the future but NATO and Russia together have potential to cooperate on similar issues, and they have done so with setting up STANDEX, a technological system to filter out terrorist elements from underground stations of European countries (NATO, 2013). For Russia, NATO enlargement means that there is more potential for disagreements rather than progress. There are experts who believe NATO is heading towards a particular direction with an objective. Alexei Arbatov, Russian expert and the author of *Russian Military in the 21st century* remarks "The root problem is not NATO expansion per se. It is NATO expansion as an Alliance aimed at Russia. If NATO is transformed into a new organization dealing with peacekeeping, and Russia is invited to join, then NATO expansion is not an obstacle to arms control. However, up to now we do not see a serious desire to change NATO. On the contrary, the applicants are trying to join not some new organization but rather the old organization which would defend them from Russia" (Coleman, 1997). This has reflected in NATO's latest accumulation of Montenegro in its fold as the 29th member, Washington praised Montenegro's decision to join the organization despite pressures from the Kremlin. The Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov commented that Montenegro's decision to join NATO was "imposed". The ministry released an alarming statement in response to Montenegro's decision to join in the E.U sanctions against Russia by stating "In the light of the hostile course chosen by the Montenegrin authorities, the Russian side reserves the right to take retaliatory measures on a reciprocal basis. In politics, just as in physics, for every action there is an opposite reaction" (Brunnstrom, 2017). The accession of Montenegro into NATO deals a big blow to Russia as both countries have been traditional allies with orthodox Christian ties that date back to Peter the Great.

THE NEAR ABROAD IN LIGHT OF UKRAINE

When NATO's enlargement is concerned, it is vital to understand Russian concerns from a historical viewpoint. The concept of Near Abroad is not a new one in Russian foreign policy. Russia was invaded in both World Wars from the west. USSR in the build-up to the Cold War tried to make sure that the western front had been secured and became a major problem for Truman. Russia as a revived power is looking towards its past for a pathway to the future by forging a 'Russian identity' in the Newly Independent States. The identity ranges from Ethnic Russian speakers and diaspora across Europe and cultures that are immersed in Orthodox Christian Ideology. Russia looks at its neighborhood through a lens of shared civilizational space with common values ranging from religion to ideology and it was on the basis of such pretense that Russia took action in 2014 when it annexed the Crimean Peninsula, a gift given by premier Nikita Khrushchev when Ukraine was a part of USSR (Calamur, 2014). The overthrow of pro-Russian Victor Yanukovich following the Orange revolution with Petro Poroshenko presented a troublesome equation when Poroshenko toyed with the idea of joining NATO. Russia in order to safeguard its interests wasted no time and annexed the Crimean Peninsula. As it was with Georgia, the international community stamped Russian actions as illegal despite public approval 97% pro-Russian votes by inhabitants of Crimea (CBS, 2014). Russia partly used the historical leverage to some extent but this was not the underlying reason, it was the geopolitical interest in the Black Sea and the Christian divide of Catholic and Unorthodox which inspired the annexation. This historical flashpoint was hardly a surprise to seasoned experts of World Politics, 'Clash of Civilizations' by Samuel Huntington had questioned Ukraine's unity on the Christian divide (Huntington, 1997). Putin with the political unrest in Ukraine used the Shared Civilization card as leverage and enlarged Russian borders. Putin justified himself citing the Russian diaspora in the region and recalled it as "aspiration of the Russian World, of Russian history, to reestablish unity" (Laurelle, 2015).

The shared civilizational space is not a pipe dream but it holds value, especially in the context of Ukraine. Russia's historical lineage lies not in Russia but in Ukraine's capital Kiev, considered the cradle of Russian civilization and is deeply rooted in Russian literature and

lore. The conservative branch of Christianity is a civilizational discourse in which Russia plays a leading role and neighboring states in Europe are more prone to the Orthodox version of the Christian Holy Scripture championed by Russia than to liberal views. Russia will look to use this unique 'European identity' to span its influence across its surroundings and Putin's dream of a 'great Russia' will look to use the divide in its favor. The failure of Russia to forget its past is already represented by its daring actions in Georgia and Ukraine and continues to gather momentum via a pull towards Newly Independent States (NIS) in holding military presence and influence in the Post-Soviet space. Political unrest stagnant for now on Ukrainian territories of Donetsk and Lugansk regions hints at what Russia sees for herself. The so-called 'Russian backed rebels' are seen as Russian attempts to seize more land and Putin by his past remarks has done no favors to discard such allegations when he remarked about Russia and Ukraine as "Big Russia and Little Russia and nobody should be permitted to interfere in relations between us, they have been the business of Russia itself (Marson, 2009). Perhaps the biggest footnote to Russian intentions towards Ukraine was voiced in 2008 NATO summit where Putin responding to the possibility of Ukraine as a NATO member quoted "Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territories are Eastern Europe, but the greater part is a gift from us (Cohen, 2014)".

RUSSIAN ENDGAME?

The 21st century with the age of globalization has made the world more interconnected. From a multipolar to a unipolar world, the current stage has seen a shift where the supremacy of one nation is not evident. States of small stature have made a mark and are leaders in the international world. China with its economy has risen up to the challenge and is becoming a key player in world politics. Whether it is soft power or hard power, things are changing. Russia is collecting itself and dusting off the debris of the USSR. Learning from its past mistakes, Russia with the help of China has mapped out a new strategy not only to limit NATO but to extend its own agenda. The SCO being the brainchild of Russia and China, included just like Russia, a resurgent China and four FSU states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Known previously as the 'Shanghai Five', now with eight members, it was established in 2001 and founded on

the principles of promoting cooperation and dealing with terrorism and cross-border evils. Many experts while analyzing SCO have drawn comparisons with NATO with the way it is set up, some claiming that its existence is a response to NATO's dominance in the world. Normally any organization spearheaded by Russia and China would raise eyebrows in Washington and in 2005 U.S. requested for an observer status in SCO, but it was rejected. This has created an uncomfortable feeling in America as it cannot know what goes behind closed doors of SCO. For U.S., the problem with the organization is how SCO will hinder American interests in Asia. With NATO controlling most of Europe, Russia and China have joined hands and made somewhat a counterbalancing mechanism against NATO. SCO's strength does not necessarily lie on its military might, although Russia and China are both powerful but its main pull comes from its geopolitical influence. Frederick W. Stakelbeck, in his analysis on SCO looks at the potential of the organization to become the most powerful in the world with China and India being respective juggernauts in terms of their economy and population together with Russia as a military and energy powerhouse (Stakelbeck Jr., 2005).

Moreover, Peter Brookes, a senior fellow of National Security Affairs at the Heritage Foundation believes that Russia has a 'big game' strategy behind SCO stating that "Russia may be looking to create a new and improved 'Asian Warsaw Pact', wielding large armies, big economies, nukes and lots of oil/gas" (Brookes, *Club For Dictators*, 2006). Arguments from SCO debunk such views citing the founding principles and articles of SCO. Though members claim otherwise, there have been indications that SCO is building its own bloc. Leonid Ivanshov, the former head of the International Military Cooperation Directorate at the Russian Ministry of Defense expressed "Under conditions of NATO expansion, there is a real threat to national security of Russia. Hence, I am convinced that only SCO could become a real counterweight to expansion on the part of the NATO. In the future, what the SCO needs to do is to admit Iran, India and Pakistan as its members" (Bedeski & Swanström, 2012). SCO's biggest limitation was its member count which was limited to a handful of nations, and this all changed in the SCO summit of 2016 in Uzbekistan, where invitations were extended to India and Pakistan, which turned members in 2017, changing the whole outlook of SCO. This inclusion drive by SCO has changed it from a dormant

organization to one that needs checks and balances in regards to U.S. interests (Amrebayev, 2016).

Although SCO is not mutual defense pact as it doesn't have an article resembling NATO's Article Five of 'collective defense', but SCO members have worked together on Russian sponsored peace missions and counterterrorism exercises. These collaborative actions between nations might be a sign of things to come as more joint ventures will change the organization's outlook on the world and might be seen as a threat. The negative aspects for U.S. of Russia and China coming together have already impacted U.S. foreign reach as Uzbekistan's decision to take out U.S forces from its Karshi-Khanaba Air Base back in 2015 was masterminded by SCO's elite leadership. Such instances are a forecast as nations joining the fold of SCO will hinder America's monopoly on the world. The view from the west identifies the purpose of the alliance is to increase Russian and Chinese interests in the world. SCO as an alliance has only started to show its full potential, it has moved from four phases namely Terrorism (1996-2001), Security building (2001-2004), Comprehensive internal organizational growth (2004-2007), Moving to the consolidation phase (2007-2015) and the current fifth phase of going global via the One Belt, One Road initiative (OBOR) post 2015. All these points echo concerns from the west that SCO is not just an Economic pathway but a reactive body to NATO's eastward expansion and Western influence on the world. For Russia, SCO provides a powerful tool not just diplomatically but also militarily as Russia has always been vary of NATO and America's 'Cold War' mentality.

But there is a dilemma in regards to the diversity of nations in SCO when Chinese and Russian religion, culture and national interests are compared, as to how they will look to map out a strategic partnership without stepping on each other toes, especially when both are looking to increase their relative power. Although U.S did provide a common ground for both nations to work together with its policy of 'Rebalancing the Pacific' but Trump has abandoned his predecessor's policy. Same is the case with Pakistan and India which have never set course for a smooth sailing in all their years, how will SCO try to unify both nations into a collective goal if a question yet to be answered. Hua Chunying, the Chinese foreign spokesperson commenting on the reporters while addressing the accession of Pakistan and India said "I see the journalists from Pakistan sit right here, while journalists from India sit over there. Maybe someday you

can sit closer to each other” (Michel, 2017). If SCO maps out a strategy to bring all nations under a common understanding it will surely strengthen SCO’s role in the world.

For SCO there is possibility of adding yet another nation in its ranks. For years Turkey has had a complicated with Europe. For Turkey, the road to Europe has been relatively long with signing the Ankara treaty in 1963 for association with European Economic Community (EEC), to becoming an E.U candidate in 1991 and optimistic start of negotiations in 2005 where Turkey’s membership in E.U began. Fast forward to 2020, and Turkey is still to become a member and could slip to the other side. Turkey’s disillusionment with Europe is understandable considering the backlash Turkey faced when E.U members casted a suspicious eye over President Erdogan’s authoritative rule that violated Human rights. Turkey which is a NATO member since 1952 has hinted at joining the SCO. Turkey already being a dialogue partner in SCO has good ties with Russia, Kazakhstan, India and Pakistan. Erdogan in regards to SCO membership has stated “Turkey should first of all feel relaxed about the EU and not be fixated, some may criticize me but I express my opinion. For example, I have said 'why shouldn't Turkey be in the Shanghai 5?’” (Sputnik, 2016). This is not the first time Erdogan has voiced such views, in fact when he was serving as prime minister in 2013, he expressed “If we get into the SCO, we will say goodbye to the European Union. The Shanghai Five is better — much more powerful” (Wang, 2016). Whatever the future holds, it will be the first time a NATO country entertaining the notion of joining SCO and Turkey being a powerful military nation could spur a change for both NATO and SCO.

CONCLUSION

U.S and Russia have been locking horns since the start of Cold War; with U.S emerging as victor it become a powerful force with no match. America enjoyed a period of superiority until 2001 and as a response became engulfed in a war that still rages on. This has given rise to new foes and old. From a ‘British Century’ to an ‘American Century’, the world looks ready for a new century with new challengers. China throwing its hat into the ring has turned the unipolar world on its head, and with a revamped Russia has led to experts questioning if American superiority is in threat. Russia and U.S have ‘interacted’ in the years following the 9/11 and it has been an up-down trajectory. But another power play is in motion where U.S

and Russia have moved to unconventional means to lay their cards on the table. U.S enjoying a head start has done well with NATO's enlargement. This has troubled Russia which responded in Georgia and Crimea, but has come with a heavy cost of economic sanctions and embargos. Russia who had to deal with the blowback of the Cold War has been left no choice but to come out and it has done so with Shanghai Cooperation which grows in size and looks outwards. Getting Pakistan and India into SCO and with Belarus, Mongolia, Afghanistan and Iran as potential members, SCO can prove to be a counterweight to NATO. For America, this spells trouble as Russia together with China are looking at a grand strategy which can limit American power. With SCO looking to hoist more flags in the coming years and NATO looking to do the same, the future seems uncertain. The course of U.S-Russian relationship has recently showed signs of experiencing a purple patch with President Trump looking to build a more promising relationship with Putin, something that Obama had trouble doing so. Trump has acknowledged Russian sphere of Influence and looks to domestic problems and making 'America great again'. Trump originally showed little interest towards NATO looking at the economic costs borne by America but has recently made a U-turn and pledged American support to NATO probably heeding words from his advisors. As a result, more the U.S-Russian front is more uncertain than it ever was. For Russia, the wise choice is not to depend on Trump for better ties but to make herself strong. Taking lessons from the past, Russia together with china has forged a strong organization in SCO which grows stronger. With SCO, Russia is maneuvering towards a stronger and better future with more geopolitical influence on the world. This begs the question whether Russian actions will lead to a 'Cold War 2.0' and more importantly if America is ready for a stronger Russia?

REFERENCES

- Amrebayev, A. (2016). Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Risky search for New Balance. *Rajaratnam School of International Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CO16239.pdf>
- Bedeski, R., & Swanström, N. (2012). *Eurasia's Ascent in Energy and Geopolitics*. Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.routledge.com/Eurasias-Ascent-in-Energy-and-Geopolitics-Rivalry-or-Partnership-for-Bedeski-Swanstrom/p/book/9780415681506>

- Brookes, P. (2006). *Club For Dictators: An ugly agenda for Asia*. Heritage Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2006/06/club-for-dictators-an-ugly-agenda-for-asia>
- Brunnstrom, D. (2017). *Russia threatens retaliation as Montenegro becomes 29th NATO member*. Retrieved from Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nato-montenegro/russia-threatens-retaliation-as-montenegro-becomes-29th-nato-member-idUSKBN18W2WS>
- CBS. (2014). *Official results: 97 percent of Crimea voters back joining Russia*. Retrieved from CBS News: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/official-results-97-of-crimea-voters-back-joining-russia/>
- Coleman, F. (1997). The Kaliningrad Scenario: Expanding NATO to the Baltics. *World Policy Journal*.
- GPO.GOV. (1998). IRAQ LIBERATION ACT OF 1998. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- House of Congress. (2015). H.R.93 - Crimea Annexation Non-recognition Act. *Congress.Gov*. Library of Congress.
- Humphrey, P. (2009). The state of Play in Russia's Near Abroad. *Institute for National Strategic Studies*.
- Huntington, S. (1997). The Clash of Civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*.
- Krauthammer, C. (2002). The Unipolar Moment Revisited. *National Interest*, 70, 5-17.
- Kriendler, J. (2013). NATO-Russia Relations - Reset in not a four-letter word. In Routledge, *Understanding NATO in the 21st Century*. Routledge.
- Laurrelle, M. (2015). The 'Russian World'. *Center on Global Interests*. Retrieved from http://globalinterests.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FINAL-CGI-Russian-World_Marlene-Laruelle.pdf
- Mandelbaum, M. (1995). Preserving the New Peace: The Case against NATO Expansion. *Foreign Affairs*.
- NATO. (2013). *Detecting suicide attacks – from research to reality*. Retrieved from Nato: https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/news_104536.htm
- NATO-Russia Council. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.nato-russia-council.info/en/about/>
- RUVR. (2012). Russia-US relations spoilt by Iraq conflict. *Voice of Russia*. Retrieved from http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_12_20/Russia-US-relations-spoilt-by-Iraq-conflict/
- Sletmoen, S. L. (2011). Why Russia and NATO fail to reach a normative partnership.
- Stakelbeck Jr., F. (2005). A New Bloc Emerges. *American Thinker*.
- Stakelbeck, F. W. (2005). An anti-American military confederacy may loom in Asia. *American Thinker*.
- Stakelbeck, F. W. (2005). An anti-American military confederacy may loom in Asia. *American Thinker*.
- Nicho, J. (2009). Russia-Georgia Conflict in August 2008: Context and Implications for U. S . *Congressional Research Journal* .

- Marson, J. (2009, May). *Putin to the West: Hands off Ukraine*. Retrieved from TIME: <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1900838,00.html>
- Baker, P. (2009, September). *White House Scraps Bush's Approach to Missile Shield*. Retrieved from The New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/18/world/europe/18shield.html>
- Traynor, I. (2010, December 6). *WikiLeaks cables reveal secret Nato plans to defend Baltics from Russia*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/06/wikileaks-cables-nato-russia-baltics>
- The Guardian. (2011, August 11). *Russia has taken over half the country, Georgia claims*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/11/georgia.russia8>
- Rogin, J. (2011, November). *Medvedev announces failure of U.S.-Russia missile defense talks; threatens to withdraw from New START*. Retrieved from Foreign Policy: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/11/23/medvedev-announces-failure-of-u-s-russia-missile-defense-talks-threatens-to-withdraw-from-new-start/>
- Calamur, K. (2014, February). *Crimea: A Gift To Ukraine*. Retrieved from NPR: <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/02/27/283481587/crimea-a-gift-to-ukraine-becomes-a-political-flash-point>
- Cohen, J. (2014, March). *Next, Putin Will Seize Donetsk and Kharkiv*. Retrieved from The Moscow Times: <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/next-putin-will-seize-donetsk-and-kharkiv-32600>
- Brookes, P. (2016, April). *Russian 'Reset' a Resounding Failure*. Retrieved from Heritage Foundation: <http://www.heritage.org/arms-control/commentary/russian-reset-resounding-failure>
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2016, July). *NATO Ballistic Missile Defence*. Retrieved from Nato: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160630_1607-factsheet-bmd-en.pdf
- Sputnik. (2016, November). *'Russia, China Would Like to See Turkey in SCO if It Freezes Links With NATO'*. Retrieved from Sputnik: <https://sputniknews.com/politics/201611221047702156-russia-china-turkey-sco/>
- Wang, L. (2016, November). *Will Turkey Join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Instead of the EU?* Retrieved from The Diplomat: <http://thediplomat.com/2016/11/will-turkey-join-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-instead-of-the-eu/>
- Michel, C. (2017, June). *SCO Set to Expand, Adding India and Pakistan*. Retrieved from The Diplomat: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/sco-set-to-expand-adding-india-and-pakistan/>
-