

Chapter 5

The Russian–Ukrainian Conflict: Catalyst for the Resovietization of the East

Isidore E. Agbokou

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1225-9311>

Centre d'Etudes Diplomatiques et Stratégiques de Paris (CEDS), France

ABSTRACT

Thirty-three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, one thing is obvious: The resolution of several international crises still depends on relations between the West and Russia. Like it or not, this geopolitical situation is a fact which, however, Americans and Europeans have not been duly taken into consideration since 1989. This crisis, which has not stopped, experienced a more expansive phase on February 24, 2022: it is the Russian special military operation for some leaders in Ukraine, Russian interventionism for others, and the war in Ukraine for still others. It is particularly notable in the soaring prices of raw materials essential for the functioning of industries. The Ukrainian crisis has revealed the fragilities of the dependence of certain States and Unions on raw materials, but also certain military fragilities. A critical situation therefore prevails, and many hypotheses remain perceptible given the existence of several scenarios and possible balances. This insight analyzes the current geopolitical situation between blocs and considers a possible vision of the blocs by 2050.

INTRODUCTION: THE ROAD TOWARD THE RESOVETIZATION OF THE EAST

Thirty-three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, one thing is obvious: The resolution of several international crises still depends on relations between the West and Russia. In Libya, Syria, Iran, Ukraine, and perhaps even the Balkans, relations between Moscow and Western countries always seem to be good or bad. Like it or not, this geopolitical situation is a fact which, however, Americans and Europeans have not been duly taken into consideration since 1989. A series of actions testify to this, in particular the European Union's (EU) neighborhood policy in 2003 and the Eastern Partnership in 2004, with the corollary of the accession of the countries of central Europe (Poland, Croatia, Hungary, and Romania) and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) to the EU. In addition, in 2009, the EU launched the Eastern Partnership to address six former Soviet republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8521-7.ch005

Moldova, and Ukraine), with the aim of mooring them to the EU both economically and politically. The initiative provided for the negotiation of six new separate agreements, the famous Association Agreements (AA) which would unleash so much passion in Kyiv, in order to replace the old partnership and cooperation agreements, which were about to expire. On the other hand, the Eastern Partnership seems to have been created essentially for two reasons: To counterbalance the EU's Mediterranean policy and to strengthen the EU's democratic and free trade influence beyond its new eastern border, faced with a Russia perceived, since the Georgian crisis of 2008, as increasingly aggressive and less and less democratic. In response, in 2010, Moscow decided to relaunch its customs union project from Moscow to Astana, via Minsk and Kyiv. This goal would clearly and explicitly arouse fearful U.S. opposition to Russia's ambition to resovietize Eastern Europe.

This is the permanent confrontation between capitalism and communism.

This perception that Russia has of its own relations with the Western world was further accentuated when, in 2013, the EU offered the AA to Ukraine with special economic advantages, including a clause that prohibited their signatories from adhering to the customs union project proposed by their main trading partner, namely, Russia. Admittedly, the abovementioned agreement was never signed, but a series of actions followed, including the annexation of Crimea by Russia and its corollaries. This crisis has never stopped; rather, it entered a more expansive phase on February 24, 2022: It was the Russian special military operation, for some leaders in Ukraine, Russian interventionism, for others, and the war in Ukraine, for still others. This diversity of viewpoints has given rise to blocs, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its allies, Russia and its allies, and neutral countries, like most African countries.

Moreover, this very tense situation, although it is considered a military operation *par excellence*, hides an economic dimension that risks dragging the world economy into a certain economic and financial crisis. Indeed, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is already revealing its economic repercussions, particularly the soaring prices of raw materials that are essential for the functioning of industries. Besides, this situation is not without repercussions on the production chain and may ultimately be noticed in the shopping basket, which had already been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This scenario triggers an increased risk of growing poverty in the world, and especially in developing countries. Beyond the economic and financial consequences, it is also necessary to take into account all the serious political effects that could modify the world's economic trajectory forever.

Indeed, political configurations and considerations have always influenced economic policies within states and unions around the world. Thus, the Ukrainian crisis has revealed the fragilities of the dependence of certain states and unions on raw materials, but also certain military fragilities. Proof of this is Germany's decision to increase its military investment for the next few years. The world is thus preparing to experience a change in its economic and military trajectory similar to the situation after the Second World War, where each country seeks to reposition itself economically and militarily, but also to create alliances and unions. Therefore, a critical situation prevails and many hypotheses remain perceptible, given the existence of several scenarios and possible balances.

In view of all these elements, the legitimate question of knowing the real motivations for the formation of these groups led to this study. In this chapter, the author attempts to analyze the current geopolitical situation between the major world blocs through the geographical, economic, political, and military characteristics of the different countries. The chapter presents a possible futuristic vision of the NATO by a projection effect of current data (reference 2022) on the horizon 2050. It allows to predict the physiognomy of the blocs based on scenarios with hypotheses of the possible movements of the

26 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-russian-ukrainian-conflict/327804

Related Content

Identifying Forward and Backward Linkages From China's Infrastructure Investment in Africa

Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi (2021). *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* (pp. 1-31).

www.irma-international.org/article/identifying-forward-and-backward-linkages-from-chinas-infrastructure-investment-in-africa/272582

The Wisconsin Spring

James Jorstad, Jo Arney, Kerry Kuenziand Cecilia G. Manrique (2014). *Handbook of Research on Political Activism in the Information Age* (pp. 190-211).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-wisconsin-spring/110679

China's Shifting Labour-Intensive Manufacturing Firms to Africa: A Particular Focus on Ethiopia and Rwanda

Ezihuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi (2021). *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* (pp. 1-36).

www.irma-international.org/article/chinas-shifting-labour-intensive-manufacturing-firms-to-africa/285550

From an Emperor to the Derg and Beyond: Examining the Intersection of Music and Politics in Ethiopia

Zenebe Beyene (2019). *Music and Messaging in the African Political Arena* (pp. 1-21).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/from-an-emperor-to-the-derg-and-beyond/220119

The States as the Main Actors of the World Politics

Irakli Kervalishvili (2022). *World Politics and the Challenges for International Security* (pp. 1-23).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-states-as-the-main-actors-of-the-world-politics/298854