



---

## **New Normal in America – Russia Relations (The Tapestry of Truth)**

**Jajnadatta Pattanayak**

Assistant Professor, P. G. Dept. of Political Science, Berhampur University, Bhanja Bihar, Ganjam,  
Odisha, India, Mail Id-jajnadattapattanayak700@gmail.com

**Shishir Kumar Prusty**

Research Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Political Science, Berhampur University, Bhanja Bihar, Ganjam, Odisha,  
India

---

**DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17136308>**

---

### **ARTICLE DETAILS**

**Research Paper**

**Accepted:** 22-08-2025

**Published:** 10-09-2025

**Keywords:**

*History, Nations, National  
Interests, Security  
Dilemma, Interaction.*

### **ABSTRACT**

World politics in today's era is changing its shape more than expected. Throughout history, nations have also changed their interactions according to their favor, suitability, and adequacy. Both are the so-called powerful nations (USA and USSR) during the Pre-cold war, Cold war, and Post-Cold War era, changing their interactions but not compromising their national interests and strategic autonomy. History shows that both are rivals, but despite mutual mistrust, security dilemma, and antagonism, Russia-USA relations have emerged resilient and matured in different matters and issues. This article will highlight how both countries maintain a normalcy relationship in a chaotic and anarchical world order. It will also examine the issue, events, and wars in World War II and the Post-Cold War period. The nature of interaction, of course, differs, but somehow the balance of power in a bipolar world more or less establishes an illusory and visible for peaceful and just world order

---

### **Introduction**

The impact of 'Realpolitik' is now perceived worldwide. In an era where no state can survive in isolation, it is clearly visible that every nation wants to grow engagement with others due to the rise of mutual



interdependence among states. The United States of America and the Russian Federation share a long history in different international phenomena. Their relations remain in the same manner due to ideological differences. However, despite ideological deviations, both understand each other well in establishing a rule-based world order due to rising drift competition for regionalism over the arctic, colonialism in Antarctica, the Middle East crisis, expansionism in Europe, etc. Their nature of interaction remains attached to their own foreign policy, and their behavior also changes accordingly to the changing climate in international relations. Russo–American relations change throughout history, culture, diplomacy, détente, deterrence, etc. Misconceptualisation and immaturity in understanding more or less ruined their relationship. Realists said that to showcase too much power is a natural attitude where the border expansion is an inherent right of a mighty nation. On the contrary, these lead to conflicts and anarchical situations. Both are responsible countries that never fought directly, revealing the maturity level and diplomatic understanding. Even during the cold war, they were not directly confronted with each other. Growing geopolitical competition for global hegemony paved the way for a multipolar world order, directly impacting both countries capacity and understanding of each other.

### **Understanding the context**

The new normal in superpower relations is similar to 'old wine in a new bottle'. America, also called the United States of America, was initially under the clutch of European powers. After that, a sense of independence rose in the hearts and minds of the people, demanding complete independence. The American Revolution became successful, and it began in 1776. The initial state is located in the easternmost part of America, facing acute problems of economic instability, political unrest, foreign interference, etc. All those thirteen colonies decided to create a union by which they could protect themselves from any unpleasant adverse situations. Until the 2nd world war, America maintained neutrality and kept a distance by avoiding bloc politics. However, the geopolitical conditions and milieu prevented it from joining the war, ending the long period of neutrality.

The modern-day Russian Federation, also known as the USSR and Soviet Russia, was created in 1991 after the dissolution of the self-created eastern bloc. During the reign of former emperor Nicholas II, the last ruler of Russia. Due to the rise of anti-monarchical revolution, the introduction of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 completely wiped out the monarchy and the tsar regime. In that time, the society was completely unequally divided regarding resources. So everywhere, a broad spread anti-tsar movement toppled the monarchical form of government, leading to the establishment of the provincial government by the Bolshevik party under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin. It was the first pillar for the establishment



of soviet Russia. After this revolution, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formally established in 1922 with the inclusion of Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, Transcaucasia Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Bloc.

### **Rise and fall of Entente and Détente during Cold War Era**

To dominate and restructure the power equation, some international analysts say that the United Nations was created to be used as a tool to dominate others. So, during 1945-1969, there were different ways of competition; both competed in various sectors to expand their ideologies. It was the period that ended the USA-USSR friendship and brought them into a geopolitical rivalry. The USSR wants to make its own bloc by including eastern European and central Asian countries to spread socialism. At the same time, America also played the game of "containment", as the it expanded more and more towards Western Europe, and there was a threat coming from European countries that all European countries would be under the socialist influence. A strong military organization called NATO was created 1949 to stop the USSR. In 1955, the Warsaw Pact was created with the help of the Soviet Union and the satellite socialist blocs. In other areas, i.e., both are competing with each other in sending satellites and men to space (space age), astronauts to space, especially to the moon, mars, and Venus, the USSR also sent the world's first satellite called sputnik-I, and Uri Gagarin was the first living being in space, the Apollo mission to moon by NASA etc. Other competition in the fields of arctic areas is due to untapped natural resources. Deterrence is a capacity of a country to protect itself in any adversary situation by showing military means, which shows how powerful the country is in terms of military superiority. So to reduce the tension of deterrence between the Russia and America, a new era was started from 1969 to 1979 called the era of "détente". After the introduction of détente, both agreed to reduce their hostile relationship as quickly as possible. As a result, different new agreements were signed. E.g., SALT I AND II, NPT, PTBT, START I AND II are likely more important.

### **Russo-American Relation in Post 1991 Period**

In the contemporary period, various wars have prevailed around the world. Some of the realist thinkers like Kantilla, Hobbes, Machiavelli, and Morgenthau believe that war is unavoidable. War brings destruction and devastation to life and property, yet leaders prefer it as a soft tool to defend national interests. However, wise leaders choose a different path and avoid direct war between these countries. Analyzing the relations between Russia and the USA after the cold war will be interesting. The idea of "new normal" is currently a burning topic of discussion and potential action for both Russia and the U.S, particularly in the context of Ukraine's aspirations for NATO membership, which led to a significant



escalation of conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Strategic hostility, sanctions, proxy wars, and near-zero trust characterize the post-1991 relationship between them. However, nuclear deterrence still prevents direct war, the much-awaited and discussed episode in the international scenario, i.e., confrontation between the U.S. and Russia. There have been several flashpoints in history where both nations were on the brink of nuclear war. Mature leadership in Washington and Moscow has always prioritized controlled competition over total confrontation. In the post-cold war period (1991-1999), capitalist ideology was left alone soon after its disintegration. The U.S. promoted democracy and market reforms in Russia. Russia joined the IMF in 1992. Apart from the IMF, Russian president Boris Yeltsin integrated Russia into other global institutions like the World Bank and G7+1. Important agreement the Nunn-Lugar agreement, officially known as the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, was established in 1991 by senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar. We initiated our U.S. efforts to secure and eliminate weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related materials in the former soviet states. The program provided funds to help not only Russia but also countries like Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to dismantle WMD and related infrastructure. USA conducted its first nuclear test, code-named trinity, on July 16, 1945. The world has already witnessed the application and result of atomic weapons during World War 2. Soon, the USSR developed its nuclear bomb, code-named first lightning (Joe-1), on August 29, 1949. This event marks the beginning of the atomic arms race between the two nations. Several standoffs occurred during the cold war when both countries were on the brink of using nuclear weapons. To erase the tension, start 1 was signed by the u.s. and the soviet union in 1991, setting limits on nuclear warheads and delivery systems. Later, START II was signed in 1993, though it never entered into force. Early 2000s- strategic cooperation and emerging frictions. In the initial years of Putin's administration, Russia aimed to establish strong relations with the USA. Putin was applying a constructive approach with all nations; including the U.S. this was clearly visible post 9/11 attack, when Putin publicly supported the USA war on terror. Treaty of Moscow (2002)/sort the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), also known as the Moscow treaty, was signed on May 24, 2002, and entered into force on June 1, 2003, between the U.S. and the Russian federation, aimed at reducing and limiting strategic nuclear warheads. Under the bush administration, America withdrew from the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) treaty on June 13, 2002. The American administration stated reasons for the withdrawal included the need to develop missile defiance systems to counter threats from "rogue states" and terrorist post 9/11 attacks, which were necessary and inevitable at that time. The withdrawal event contributed to a tense international environment, with Russia viewing U.S. missile defense plans as inherently threatening to its security. Other events like NATO's 2004 expansion in the Baltic region and color



revolutions near Russia's border, such as Georgia (rose revolution), Ukraine (orange revolution), and Kyrgyzstan (tulip revolution), were aimed at establishing western-style democracies. Such a series of events further strains the relationship between the two superpowers. In the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia further strained the US-Russia relationship to a greater extent. The USA condemned Russia's action and supported Georgia's territorial integrity in defending against Russia. U.S. president Obama took a pragmatic approach by initiating the 'Russian reset' policy to improve relations in 2009. This effort aimed for greater cooperation and resulted in achievements like the new start treaty. All the efforts were in vain. A wide range of activities, somehow or other, directly or indirectly, acts as a barrier in the relationship. Both nations were engaged over Syria. Russia supported basher al-Assad; the USA backed the opposition forces. When Assad was in power used chemical weapons to silence the protestors, and major nations criticized the incidents. Later, russia broke the deal for further support, as we have already seen how both countries have clashed through proxy wars in korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, the middle east, and africa. One thing is common in all cases, i.e., both nations want to promote their personal interest by undermining the international interest; they support opposite sides in a conflict, providing military and other assistance to their respective allies. Later, Russia's foreign policy became more assertive under president putin, challenging USA dominance in global affairs. Their stance was clear towards US policies. They were against the promotion of western democracy and capitalism.

### **2014 Onwards**

The downfall of the Russian economy started during this tenure. Basically, Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, including the seizure of Crimea, was a significant catalyst for the downgrade in relations between the two superpowers. Further, American intelligence has accused Russia of involvement and interest in USA elections; generally, Russia indirectly interferes in USA politics. These events have spoiled relations to the lowest point since the cold war. The retaliation by the USA clearly indicated that, besides nuclear weapons, Washington, D.C, possesses economic power in the form of sanctions. The USA has implemented a broad sweep of sanctions focused on isolating Russia from the global financial system. Now the question arises whether sanctions are working. Russia's economy is bleeding, but who cares about the economic status when it comes to national territorial integrity? As of august 2025, three and a half years have passed in the Russia-Ukraine war. Several mediation developments were initiated, but could not freeze the war. From the UAE facilitated prisoners exchange to Ukraine's call for high-level engagement, and finally, the European proposal for a buffer zone. Are sanctions against Russia making a difference? Today, Russia has the most sanctions in the world. The U.S. has already removed Russia from the dollar system ( via a swift ban, a Belgium-based interbank



messaging service critical to processing international payments) and frozen dollar assets. The U.S. has also focused on reducing Russia's ability to profit from the global sale of fossil fuels. The USA Recently imposed a 50 percent tariff on India for purchasing Moscow's crude oil, effective August 2025.

## Conclusion

A standard limitation for all possible attempts at cooperation between the USA and Russia looks highly confrontational nature of their bilateral relations. This confrontation largely stems from their differing perceptions of their desired vision of the world order. Moreover, the perception of Russia as a fundamentally weak state, which is developing in a downward trend, limits any cooperation Washington may have with Moscow. Additionally, U.S. foreign policy limitations are connected with Russia's perceived interconnectedness in U.S. domestic politics. Their relationship is always needed for a just, resilient, and value-based world order. Despite several differences, they must work together, as history says, as the Russo-American tango seems to behave similarly. Hence, cooperation and confrontation are the New Normal situations for both countries.

## References

1. Gaddis, J.L. (2005). *The cold war : A new history*. Penguin Press
2. Leffler, M.P. (1994). *The specter of communism: The United States and the origins of the cold war, 1917-1953*. New York: Hill and Wang
3. LaFeber, W. (2008). *America, Russia and the cold war, 1945-2006*, Boston: McGraw Hill
4. Cox, M. (2018). *The Post-cold war World*. Routledge
5. Service, R. (2009). *History of modern Russia: From Tsarism to the twenty – first century*: Penguin
6. Kennan, G.F. (1984). *American diplomacy , 1900-1950 (expanded ed.)*. University of Chicago press
7. Hanhimaki, J.M. (2004). *The Flawed architect: Henry Kissinger and American foreign policy*. Oxford: University Press
8. Matlock, J.F. (2004). *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the cold war ended*. New York: Random House
9. Sarotte, M.E. Sarotte, M.E (2021). *Not one inch : America, Russia, and the making of post-cold war stalemate* . Yale University Press



10. Parker.(2020). US Foreign policy towards Russia in the post cold war era: ideational legacies and institutionalised conflict and cooperation. Routledge.
11. Stent,A.E.(2014). The limits of Partnership: US-RUSSIAN relations in the twenty-first century, Princeton University Press
12. Peterson,J.W(2017). Russian-American relations in the post-cold war world. Manchester University Press.
13. Smith, N.R.(2019). A new cold war? Assessing the current US-RUSSIA relationship. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot
14. Mcfaul,M.(2018).From cold war to hot peace: An American ambassador in Putin’s Russia. Mariner Books