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The Russia-Ukraine War: The Second Cold War?

Madeline Levine
Scripps College

THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: THE SECOND COLD WAR?

BY

MADELINE LEVINE

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PROFESSOR JORDAN BRANCH

PROFESSOR NANCY NEIMAN

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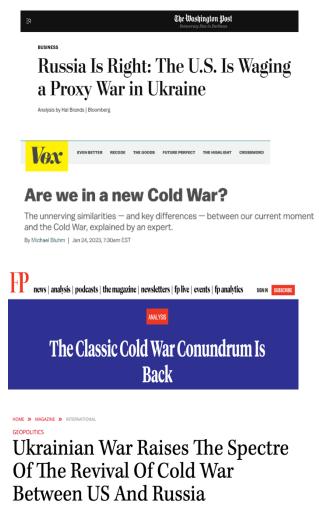
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Introduction

"Whatever international system is being created at the moment, it is not a Cold War. It may turn out to be conflict-ridden and confrontational, but using "Cold War" as common denominator for everything we don't like makes no sense." Odd Arne Westad

Under the guise of a "special military operation," Russian forces invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The immediacy with which the United States rallied support for Ukraine within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ("NATO"), the United Nations ("UN"), and the European Union ("EU") raised speculation: Is Russia-Ukraine the beginning of a second Cold War? Did the Cold War actually end in the 1990s? Is Ukraine the first proxy war in a series of more to come between the United States and Russia?

The Cold War was a decades-long conflict that marked a period of strategic stability between the United States and Soviet Union that destabilized much of the rest of the world. The escalation of ideological tensions between the two superpowers shaped other states' foreign policy and national security measures, regardless of their status as an ally, non-aligned, or tool wielded in one of the many proxy wars fought by the United States and Soviet Union to avoid direct confrontation. It was also a period of significant fear of the risk of nuclear warfare between the two nuclear powers, and the suppression of civil liberties in both states driven by paranoia.

If the Russia-Ukraine War is the beginning of a second Cold War, it will reorganize the international system and divide states between those allied with Russian and the coalition of Western democracies supporting Ukraine. This thesis will identify and analyze the characteristics that distinguished the Cold War from earlier conflicts, how the Russia-Ukraine War compares, and the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war on the global order.

Methodology

In order to determine if the Russia-Ukraine War is the second Cold War, I conducted comparative and qualitative analyses of the two wars. This process involved the collection of public statements by state actors, declassified government documents and government policies, and the review of significant historical events during the Cold War and the Russia-Ukraine War. As a result of this research, I identified a set of criteria for the Cold War, expanding upon the foundational definition of a "cold war" as a conflict carried out through means short of overt military action.

The Cold War lasted from 1947 to 1991 and was defined by five characteristics that perpetuated and/or escalated the conflict. First, the post-World War II's newly-emerging bipolar international order provided context for the Cold War. Second, ideological differences motivated the United States and Soviet Union to enter into a war that spanned nearly five decades and seven continents. Third, proxy wars became the instrument through which the two superpowers engaged in conflict. Fourth, domestic paranoia fueled public support in the United States and Soviet Union for their respective ideologies and ongoing tensions. Last, nuclear weapons raised the stakes of the conflict. These five characteristics combined defined the Cold War.

Literature Review

There is limited academic research on whether the Russia-Ukraine War is the second Cold War. The Russia-Ukraine War – only now approaching its first anniversary – is an ongoing and evolving conflict. Consequently, academics and policymakers have predominantly published articles in popular news sources or international relations magazines in response to current developments. Therefore, this thesis relies on a collection of these articles and editorial pieces to analyze whether the Russia-Ukraine War is the beginning of a second Cold War.

In examining this question, it was important to identify a set of characteristics to evaluate the Russia-Ukraine War against the Cold War. The five criteria – bipolar order, ideology, global nuclear instability, domestic paranoia and proxy wars – are common terms in foreign relations literature. However, because these terms are often used loosely, I will define each for the purpose of this thesis.

- Bipolar order: An international structure in which the majority of global economic, political, and military power is held by two competing states.[1]

- Ideology: A system of beliefs regarding politics, power, and the world at-large.[2]

- Domestic paranoia: The widespread and irrational suspicion or distrust of others.[3]

- Global nuclear instability: The climate that occurs when the likelihood of nuclear warfare increases, resulting in unpredictable or erratic behaviors.[4]

- Proxy war is perhaps the most illustrative criteria of the Cold War, and yet also the most loosely defined term in foreign policy analysis. Further, there is little consensus within the scholarly community about the definition of a proxy war. It has been defined as:

  - "[A]n indirect intervention in another country through alignment with local actors to impact that country's politics."[5]

- "[A]n international conflict between two superpowers, fought out on the soil of a third country . . . Using some or all that country's manpower, resources, and territory as a means for achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies."[6]
- "[O]ne in which one party fights a second party at the request of the third. The condition for defining such a war is the activator's request, without which the proxy would not go to war even though it might have interests in that direction."[7]
- "[A] major power instigates or plays a major role in supporting and directing a party to a conflict but does only a small portion of the actual fighting itself."[8]
- "[A] sponsor country or entity to more easily achieve goals without committing its own forces directly to the conflict."[9]

Given the lack of consensus, this thesis will define proxy wars as a conflict between two actors in which the conflict is initiated or disproportionately escalated as the result of an external power instigating, influencing, or intervening on behalf of one party. This intervention occurs without the commitment of the external power's own forces, and is intended to influence the external power's standing in the international system.

The coalition of states that have rallied in support of Ukraine will be referred to as the "Western coalition" throughout this thesis. This includes: the 30 NATO member states,[i] the 27 EU member states,[ii] the European Commission (which is the executive arm of the EU), Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan.[10] It is important to acknowledge that many of these states are not considered "Western" states. However, the handful of non-"Western" states have close alliances with states traditionally considered "Western." The term "Western coalition" allows for concise reference to this broad coalition and the close alliances between these "Western" and non-"Western" states.

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[i] NATO Member States: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.
[ii] EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The Cold War

The Context: Bipolar Order

"The outcome of World War II assured American global hegemony, with the Soviet Union and the Communist parties it had inspired as the only major challenge remaining." Odd Arne Westad

Global order, as it is understood today, did not develop until the 19th century. Prior to the Napoleonic Wars, the "global" order was merely a collection of independent regional orders. The Congress of Vienna marked a watershed moment for international order. The Congress – a series of diplomatic meetings between European leaders – was responsible for building a new European order after the Napoleonic Wars.[11] This order included the creation of a system of international supervision and intervention to foster lasting peace in Europe.[12] When World War II ended Europe's hegemony, the Cold War began as the United States and Soviet Union raced to fill the power vacuum,[13] and for nearly fifty years, they dominated globally. Competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to see who could be the greater superpower influenced the entire world's foreign policy.[14] The United States and Soviet Union exerted influence through providing economic support to developing or rebuilding countries, involvement in states domestic affairs, and instigating conflicts in different states as part of their global battle for dominance. This bipolar international order continued until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Motivation: Ideology

"Conflicting and unyielding ideological ambitions were the source of the complicated and historic tale that was the Cold War." Timothy White

The Cold War grew out of ideological differences between the United States and Soviet Union after World War II. The two powers became allies during World War II because they had a common enemy, not a common system of beliefs.[15] The United States believed in the development of liberal and free states through the promotion of democratic capitalism which is an "economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods."[16] The Soviet Union believed in the development of unified and equitable states through the promotion of communism which is an economic system "that aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control."[17] It was these conflicting ideologies – and each state's belief that their ideology was superior – that escalated tensions from disagreement into the Cold War.[18]

World War II brought Europe to its knees: starvation was widespread, infrastructure was leveled, and millions were dead. Europe was economically, politically and socially devastated. In contrast, the United States emerged from the war with a booming economy, and the Soviet Union emerged with immense respect for liberating much of the continent.[19] The gap in resources and status between Europe and the Soviet Union and United States created a power vacuum in the world, and set the stage for the United States and Soviet Union to become superpowers.

In February 1945, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, American President Franklin Roosevelt, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met in Yalta to negotiate the anticipated division of Europe after German surrender. At the Yalta Conference, the intentions of the three states quickly became clear: Stalin sought to preserve the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe and

build a geopolitical buffer between Russia and Western Europe; Roosevelt sought Soviet participation in the newly formed United Nations and in the Pacific War against Japan; and Churchill sought free and fair democratic elections in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite these differences, the leaders ultimately came to an agreement on a number of issues including the division of Berlin, and the participation of the Soviet Union in the Pacific War against Japan and in the United Nations as a permanent Security Council member.[20] Stalin also promised to hold free, democratic elections in Poland.

However, three months later, American President Harry Truman and British Prime Minister Clement Attlee began to doubt Stalin's commitment to upholding the terms of the Yalta agreement and newly signed Potsdam agreement.[21] Not only did Stalin fail to hold elections in Poland, he seemed more committed to Soviet expansionism than collaboration after asserting that "whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach."[22] In February 1946, Stalin declared that "war between the East and West was inevitable."[23] He also attributed World War II to "capitalist imperialism" and suggested that such a war might recur.[24] In response, Churchill, deeply wary of the threat that the Soviet Union posed to the post-war world, warned "[f]rom Stettin in the Baltic, to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent."[25]

With Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and East Germany strengthening Russia's communist buffer zone, Stalin set his sights on Poland. Unlike other countries in Eastern Europe, Poland had not embraced communism. Yet, Stalin saw it as critical to expanding the Soviet Union's reach. Stalin finally permitted elections in Poland, seemingly bowing to pressure from Britain and the United States in 1947. However, knowing that Poland would not vote in a communist majority,

Stalin invited 16 non-communist political candidates to Russia, and promptly had them arrested.[26] The Democratic Communist Bloc "won" the election with 80% of the vote.[27]

For the United States and Western Europe, this transgression confirmed their fears that Soviet expansion knew no bounds.[28] President Truman responded in February 1947 by presenting the Truman Doctrine to Congress. The request sought $400 million in military and economic assistance for Greece and Turkey to ensure the two would not become reliant on the Soviet Union for aid. In his speech, Truman emphasized the responsibility of the United States:

> The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world -- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation. Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.[29]

Congress approved the Truman Doctrine two months later. This was a turning point in United States foreign policy, with the superpower shifting from isolationism to interventionism. It also marked the beginning of the United States' overriding foreign policy goal of halting the Soviet Union's spread of communism.[30]

In April 1948, Truman signed into law the Marshall Plan, which took the Truman Doctrine a step further. The Marshall Plan was intended "to prevent the economic deterioration of postwar Europe, expansion of communism, and stagnation of world trade," and "sought to stimulate European production, promote adoption of policies leading to stable economies, and take measures to increase trade among European countries and between Europe and the rest of the world."[31] It allotted $13.3 billion in economic assistance for the reconstruction of Europe. The Soviet Union and its satellite states were invited to participate, but they refused due to distrust and pressure from Stalin.[32]

At the same time, Soviet-sponsored communist parties were consolidating control of governments in Central and Eastern Europe and suppressing non-communist political movements. In June 1948, the Soviet Union retaliated against the implementation of a new currency and economic policy in West Berlin by banning the currency in East Berlin, threatening severe sanctions, and blocking deliveries of food and electricity.[33] While the Berlin blockade was unsuccessful in its objectives, there was a growing concern that Western Europe would not be able to repel a Soviet attack. As a result, the United States, Canada and ten Western European states formed "NATO" in 1949. The mission of the integrated alliance was:

> [P]art of a broader effort to serve three purposes: deterring Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration.[iii]

The integrated alliance included a mutual defense of obligation, that declared "an armed attack against one or more of them… shall be considered an attack against them all." The most immediate impact of the formation of NATO was ideological. It affirmed that the United States would remain in Europe and provide security to combat the threat of communist expansion.[34]

After witnessing the successful integration of NATO forces, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev organized the Warsaw Pact in 1955. The Warsaw Pact was formed to counterbalance the influence of NATO and increase integration of seven Soviet-satellite states in the Eastern bloc. The alliance also included a collective defense article that could be invoked in the event of an attack on any member state.[35] With all NATO members being capitalist and all Warsaw Pact members being communist, "NATO and the Warsaw Pact were ideologically

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[iii] First Secretary General Lord Hastings Ismay quipped that the aim of NATO was "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down" (NATO).

opposed and, over time, built up their own defences starting an arms race that lasted throughout the Cold War."[36]

The Cold War spanned nine presidents in the United States and six premiers in the Soviet Union. The United States' belief in capitalism and Soviet Union's belief in communism transcended individual leaders and defined the global order for 45 years. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could conceive of a world in which capitalism and communism could co-exist.[37] The Cold War became a zero-sum game, with neither state willing to abandon its beliefs to arrive at a compromise; the only possible conclusion to the war was the total victory of one power and total loss for the other.[38]

By the 1980s, the Soviet Union was "beleaguered disengaging from an unwinnable war in Afghanistan…beset by severe social, political and economic difficulties at home," and struggling with unrest in its satellite states.[39] The United States had become the center of the global financial system while the Soviet Union remained economically isolated and weak.[40] Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev understood that the world had changed, and the survival of Russia rested upon sweeping domestic policy changes, recognition of the collapse of communist regimes, and cooperation with Western world leaders; and not in continuing to devote resources to promoting communism at the expense of Soviet isolation from the new international financial system.[41] In the December 1989 Malta Conference, Gorbachev and President Bush announced that the Cold War had ended.[42] In 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved and divided into 15 independent states.[43] Capitalism had won and communism had lost.

The Instrument: Proxy Wars

"They called it the Cold War. But it wasn't cold. I am someone who comes from the third world. In the third world, the cold war wasn't cold. Millions had been killed. It was a proxy war."
Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Though the Cold War was a confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, it impacted nearly every other state. The superpowers never engaged in direct combat because direct attacks would be costly, unlikely to have public support, and risked substantial loss of military and civilian lives. Instead, the United States and Soviet Union each utilized regional conflicts – or proxy wars – to further their ideologies and inhibit the other's ability to do the same. As discussed in the case studies below, these proxy wars globalized the Cold War, allowing the two superpowers to exert their influence in other countries with political instability, divide the globe like a chess board without the risk of triggering a nuclear war, and offered a low-cost alternative to direct conflict that reduced the danger to the lives of United States and Soviet Union military personnel.

The Korean War

The Korean War was one of the most pivotal campaigns of the Cold War. While it did not officially begin until 1950, the United States and Soviet Union played critical roles in setting the stage for the Korean War in the preceding years. In 1945, after Japan surrendered to the Allied forces, the United States and Soviet Union divided Korea at the 38th Parallel and the Soviet Union moved their forces to occupy the north as the United States did the same in the south.[44] Each superpower worked to establish a Korean government that would support its ideological agenda in the territory it controlled. The United States and the Soviet Union also provided significant military support and training which helped build the nascent Korean armies.

"Within months both Koreas had significant armies and conflict between the two was starting to appear more and more likely."[45]

Initially, the United States and Soviet Union discouraged the agitated North and South Korean leaders from a full-blown military conflict: "The United States demanded that its Korean client state show restraint or risk losing the military and economic assistance that it was receiving, and the Soviet Union refused to grant permission for a full-scale attack, without which the DPRK could not proceed."[46] The Soviet Union's position changed, however, in 1950. With the end of the Chinese Civil War and the commitment of Chinese military support, Stalin saw an opportunity for communist North Korea to overtake and subsume South Korea.[47] Hundreds of military advisors from the Soviet Union began preparing offensive plans and newly deployed military artillery and tanks.

In June 1950, North Korean forces crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded South Korea, capturing the capital city of Seoul and seven of the eight provinces.[48] "The Truman administration viewed the invasion as an act of Soviet aggression that must be stopped lest, like Nazi piecemeal aggression of the 1930's, it lead to another world war."[49] President Truman persuaded the United Nations to authorize a "police action" that allowed UN troops, comprised of American and fifteen other countries' forces, to join South Korean troops in defending their border without having to declare war. With significant reinforcements, South Korean and UN forces had success in forcing North Korean forces to retreat. However, Chinese forces entered the fray on behalf of North Korea and caused the fall of Seoul to the communists.[50] In a panic, the United States considered using nuclear weapons, but President Truman rejected this proposal as ineffective because the opposing troops were in such close proximity.[51]

The brutal war continued with the superpowers at a stalemate until President Dwight Eisenhower took office and Stalin died.[52] Concerned that Eisenhower would escalate the conflict into a war with China, the Soviet Union became willing to enter negotiations to end the Korean War. On July 27, 1953, the Korean Armistice was signed by North and South Korea under immense pressure from the United States and Soviet Union.[53]

The intensity and barbarism of the Korean War was a casualty of the Cold War tensions between the United States and Soviet Union. At each significant point in the conflict, it was the intervention, advice, and influence of the Soviet Union and United States that guided and determined the actions of North and South Korea. The bipolar international system enabled the two superpowers to intervene, turning the Korean War into a global conflict between communism and capitalism instead of the conflict remaining a domestic civil war. The civil war between North and South Korea launched the globalization and militarization of the United States and Soviet Union conflict.[54]

The 1975 Angolan Civil War

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, the United States and Soviet Union entered into a détente: a period of relative cooperation and reduced tensions after the Cuban Missile Crisis that allowed for ongoing discussions about nuclear arms control.[55] It was a period characterized by the cordial relationship between President Richard Nixon (1969–1974) and Premier Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982).[56] However, the Soviet Union's decision to become involved in the 1975 Angolan Civil War challenged the United States' commitment to continuing détente.

The Angolan Civil War began as a conflict between two competing liberation movements: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola ("MPLA") and the National Front of the Liberation of Angola ("NFLA").[57] After the Carnation Revolution ended Portuguese

colonial rule in 1974, the MPLA and NFLA competed for dominance in the newly independent state.[58] The MPLA was backed by the Soviet Union, Cuba, Portugal, and Yugoslavia. The NFLA was backed by the United States, Zaire, South Africa, and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola ("UNITA").[59] In 1975, the MPLA took control over the capital city of Luanda and the majority of Angolan provinces and established a new communist Angolan government.[60]

Soon after, Zaire and South Africa, concerned about the implications of having a communist neighbor, initiated a military intervention with covert assistance from the United States. Zaire and South Africa deployed their own forces, and the United States provided military weapon systems to NFLA and UNITA.[61] In response, Cuba deployed military forces to assist the MPLA, and the Soviet Union airlifted weapons systems to Angola. President Gerald Ford requested authorization to provide additional military aid, but Congress denied his request. As a result, South Africa and Zaire were unable to maintain their military support for the NFLA and UNITA.[62]

With the withdrawal of South African and Zairean troops, the MPLA took control of the newly independent Angolan state with the aid of nearly 30,000 Cuban forces and hundreds of Soviet advisors.[63] The intervention of the communist Cuban and Soviet forces determined the path of the new Angolan state, and for the Soviet Union, it was a strategic and ideological success. For the United States, however, it raised concerns that détente was benefitting the Soviet Union more than the United States.

> We've become fearful to compete with the Soviet Union on an equal basis," [Presidential candidate Jimmy] Carter claimed in the televised debates with Ford. "We talk about détente. The Soviet Union knows what they want in détente, and they've been getting it. We have not known what we've wanted and we've been out-traded in almost every instance.[64]

The Korean War and 1975 Angolan Civil War represent two important examples of the many proxy wars fought by the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War. It is important to note that this analysis does not include the Vietnam War or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as case studies for Cold War proxy conflicts. As defined above, a proxy war is a conflict between two actors in which the conflict is initiated or disproportionately escalated as a result of an external power instigating, influencing or intervening on behalf of one party. This is done without the commitment of their own forces and as part of their assertion of influence in the international system, not specific to the conflict itself.

In the Vietnam War, the United States deployed over 2,600,000 American service members and experienced more than 58,000 American casualties in Vietnam.[65] In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union deployed nearly 100,000 Soviet soldiers and experienced more than 15,000 Soviet casualties.[66] Because the United States and the Soviet Union deployed their own troops to fight in these wars, and did not rely solely on the local military to engage in direct combat on their behalf, these wars cannot be considered proxies.

Proxy wars were the instrument through which the United States and Soviet Union furthered their goals of global dominance. The proxy wars were often expensive and enormously destructive to the states fighting the war, but both the United States and Soviet Union viewed these wars as a worthwhile investment in their longevity as superpowers and promotion of their ideologies.

The Accelerant: Domestic Paranoia

"McCarthyism is Americanism with its sleeves rolled."
Senator Joseph McCarthy

The height of the Cold War was defined by intense periods of domestic paranoia. Paranoia sowed distrust domestically, and fueled nationalist sentiments in both the United States and Soviet Union. In the United States, more than 40% of Americans believed communists were a "great" or "very great danger" to the United States in 1954. In 1964, a Gallup survey found that over 76% of Americans believed communists posed a "good or great deal of danger" to the United States.[67] This period of public hysteria and widespread paranoia over communist operatives' infiltration of American political institutions was exemplified by McCarthyism.[68]

McCarthyism was the reflection of the American public's anxieties in Congress. The Senate created the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and Senator Joe McCarthy's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and the House of Representatives created the House Un-American Activities Committee ("HUAC") in 1945.[69] In the Senate, Senator McCarthy wreaked havoc, accusing the State Department, Army, and other federal agencies of having been infiltrated by communists in the early 1950s.[70] In the House, HUAC led a public investigation into the influence of communism in Hollywood, subpoenaing hundreds of actors, directors, producers, and professionals to name communists in the film industry. Many of those interviewed falsely identified their colleagues as communists to avoid being investigated and blackmailed by the film industry.[71] In retrospect, many HUAC committee members later publicly acknowledged that fears of communist threats to national security evoked an instinctual reaction that was not proportional to the perceived threat of communism domestically.[72]

These anxieties also manifested in the federal government with the implementation of the Federal Employee Loyalty Program. Formalized by Truman in 1947, the Federal Employee

Loyalty Program sought to identify and eradicate communist influence in the U.S. federal government.[73] Congress expanded the authority and scope of federal loyalty programs in 1950 to empower heads of eleven "sensitive" departments and agencies to dismiss employees on "security grounds," including personal circumstances like alcoholism, homosexuality, and communist relatives. In 1953, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450 to extend the security risks standards to apply to all civil service positions, to eliminate the defendant's rights to a hearing, and to impose rigorous "moral" tests.[74]

Between the program's implementation in 1946 and 1956, more than five million federal employees were subjected to loyalty screenings in which approximately 2,700 were dismissed and 12,000 resigned.[75] These statistics do not include the tens of thousands of civil servants cleared after facing loyalty investigations and applicants who were rejected on "loyalty grounds."[76] Loyalty programs were replicated in private industries, state and local governments, public universities, and international organizations like the United Nations for all American employees. Loyalty programs became the key drivers of "spreading the great fear" and stifling criticism of the federal government within the United States.[77]

In the Soviet Union, paranoia took the form of suspension of civil liberties, denunciations, and public trials to quell opposition under Stalin.[78] Surveillance became increasingly common in communist Eastern Europe, with neighbors spying on neighbors and reporting suspicious activities to settle their own private scores.[79] Loyalty was crucial to defusing domestic opposition and maintaining the united communist front in the Soviet Union.[80] Judicial proceedings were common, with one of the most public trials being that of satirical writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel in 1966. The authors were charged with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda for their satirical depictions and criticisms of the Soviet Union.[81] Despite their

loyalty to their country, they were sentenced to forced labor in gulag camps for "malicious slander" of the Soviet Union.[82]

If the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism was the fire, paranoia was the gasoline on the fire. The United States and Soviet Union both stoked domestic paranoia to justify the Cold War and their ideologies. The paranoia allowed for the suspension of human rights and civil liberties, and the persecution of those viewed as "other." During the Cold War, paranoia was an effective tool used by government officials to rally domestic support, yet it had profound and lasting consequences on American and Soviet societies.

The Stakes: Global Nuclear Instability

"I want to say, and this is very important: in the end we lucked out. It was luck that prevented nuclear war. We came that close to nuclear war at the end."
Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara

If World War II created the opportunity for the United States and the Soviet Union to become dominant global players, it was the advent of nuclear weapons that solidified their positions as superpowers. Each superpower seized upon the development of its nuclear arsenal to deter the other from escalating conflicts and to assert its dominance internationally. Not surprisingly, the United States and Soviet Union's capacity to cause a nuclear disaster created a global environment of nuclear instability and ushered in a tense future.[83]

The United States' first nuclear test in July 1945 shaped negotiations during the Potsdam Conference.[84] However, it was the meeting between Stalin and Truman that foreshadowed the Cold War, and engendered enduring distrust and escalating tensions between the 20th century's two global superpowers.[85] In this meeting, Truman informed Stalin that the United States had successfully developed "a new weapon of unusual destructive force," unaware that Stalin already knew about the program from Soviet intelligence. Soon after, Stalin accelerated the development of nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union.[86]

On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, and "Fat Boy" on Nagasaki three days later.[87] The bombs killed over 200,000 people, and injured thousands more. The side effects of the radiation caused various cancers and diseases in survivors.[88] The instantaneous and widespread devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki stunned and appalled the world, and established a profound reluctance to use nuclear weapons again.[89] Although Japan's subsequent unconditional surrender and the conclusion of World War II was celebrated by Allied forces, the international community became profoundly

concerned about the future of nuclear weapons.[90] In 1946, the UN General Assembly adopted the body's first resolution establishing a commission tasked with addressing the ramifications of the discovery of nuclear energy, laying the framework for decades of non-proliferation and nuclear policies.[91]

The Soviet Union believed the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki disrupted the balance of international authority, and that the United States would use its hegemonic possession of nuclear weapons to coerce other powers to support the United States' international agenda.[92] In August 1949, the Soviet Union shocked the United States when it tested its first atomic bomb three years earlier than American intelligence estimated. This marked an exponential acceleration of the nuclear arms race.[93]

- 1950-1962: The United States' nuclear arsenal expanded from nearly 350 to 25,500 warheads; and the Soviet Union's expanded from five to 3,300 warheads.[94]
- 1952: The United States tested the first hydrogen bomb; it was five hundred times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.[95]
- 1955: The Soviet Union tested its first hydrogen bomb
- 1957: The Soviet Union tested the first intercontinental ballistic missile ("ICBM") with a range of 6,000 to 9,300 miles.
- 1958: The United States tested its first successful ICBM.
- 1962: The United States had developed 177 operational ICBMs, in comparison to the Soviet Union's 20 to 40 operational ICBMs.[96]

The nuclear arms race came to a head in October 1962, when an American spy plane photographed the development of a nuclear missile site in Cuba.[97] Once operational, the site would be able to launch medium-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of striking the eastern United States within minutes.[98] On October 22, President John Kennedy ordered the implementation of a naval blockade and elevated United States Armed Forces to DEFCON 2 – the stage of military preparedness that occurs in anticipation of direct confrontation.[99] In an address to the American public that evening, Kennedy declared the build-up of Soviet missiles in

Cuba a "clandestine decision . . . [that was] deliberately provocative and [an] unjustified change in the status quo."[100]

When Soviet ships approached the blockade at 10 a.m. on October 24th, the world held its breath. At 10:25 a.m., the Soviet ships stopped "dead in the water" within meters of the blockade line. Kennedy wanted to "give the Russian vessels [every] opportunity to turn back," and ordered American naval vessels to neither stop nor board any of the vessels. Slowly, the Soviet ships turned back.[101] In the following days, the United States published photographs of the Soviet missile sites in Cuba, increased the frequency of reconnaissance flights over Cuba, and publicly condemned the Soviet Union's escalation.

On October 26th, a telegram arrived at the White House from Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev:

> "I see, Mr. President, that you too are not devoid of a sense of anxiety for the fate of the world, of understanding, and of what war entails . . . I have participated in two wars and know that it ends when it has rolled through cities and villages, everywhere sowing death and destruction."[102]

The Cuban Missile Crisis made it clear that neither superpower wanted to authorize a nuclear strike. The two leaders understood that a nuclear war could not be won, and would guarantee their mutually assured destruction.[103] When Khrushchev offered a quid pro quo the next day – the removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba for the removal of American missiles in Turkey – Kennedy agreed to the exchange.[104] However, Kennedy required that the decision remain private to protect the United States' reputation within NATO: "If this leaks into the press, I will deny it. I give my word I will do this, but this promise should not be made public."[105] The next morning, the Soviet Union announced it would withdraw the nuclear weapons from Cuba.[106] The world breathed a sigh of relief for the first time, knowing nuclear war had been narrowly avoided.

The missile crisis alerted the international community, both nuclear and non-nuclear armed states, to the necessity for constraints on the nuclear superpowers. As Kennedy asserted months later, "nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war."[107] Because there was a one-in-three chance of the Cuban Missile Crisis ending in nuclear war, it was evident to the United States and Soviet Union that they must avoid repeated confrontations that would increase the likelihood of nuclear war.[108]

In response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Partial Test-Ban Treaty ("PTBT") was ratified by the United Nations in 1963, outlawing the testing of nuclear weapons in international or territorial waters, the atmosphere, and outer space as well as prohibiting testing nuclear weapons in environments where radioactive debris would cross territorial and sovereign borders.[109] In 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ("NPT") entered into force. Introduced by the United States, Soviet Union, and United Kingdom, the agreement banned the development of nuclear weapons systems in non-nuclear states, and the dissemination or transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states or government actors.[110] The United States and Soviet Union also negotiated the five-year Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty ("SALT") in 1972. The agreement capped the number of strategic ballistic missiles to their 1972 quantities, prohibited the construction of additional ICBM silos, and limited modernizations permitted for submarine-launched ballistic missiles ("SLBMs") and ICMBs.[111] The United States and Soviet Union also negotiated the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty and the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Act.[112]

These treaties, however, did not eliminate the tension between the two nuclear powers. In November 1983, NATO conducted the "Able Archer" exercise to simulate a hypothetical

escalation between the United States and Soviet Union that would result in nuclear strike. The Soviet Union was notified in advance of the drill, and had received no intelligence to lead Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov to believe the Soviet Union was in imminent danger. However, Andropov feared the exercise was a Trojan horse and ordered "Soviet air units in East Germany and Poland [be] on heightened readiness."[113] If any part of the Able Archer unfolded unexpectedly, the Soviet Union would have launched a preemptive nuclear strike, demonstrating how volatile the nuclear climate remained.

The fear of a nuclear attack – intentional or accidental – dominated the Cold War. Despite the understanding that a nuclear war would ensure mutual destruction, both states continued to vacillate between negotiating treaties and increasing and/or modernizing their nuclear arsenals. The United States and Soviet Union also continued to publicly condemn each other, and threaten escalation.[114] This incongruence between words and actions reinforced the nuclear instability throughout the Cold War.

The Russia-Ukraine War

Background

On February 21st, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin recognized the independence of the Moscow-backed separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine, and ordered the deployment of Russian "peace-keeping forces" to the regions.[115] On February 24th, Putin authorized a "special military operation" in Ukraine to "protect people [from] humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime. To this end, we will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine."[116] That evening, Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine.[117] Experts and pundits expected the war would last a few days before Ukraine would be defeated by the former superpower. Instead, Ukraine has withstood Russian aggressions, bombings, and war crimes, and continues to make progress in reclaiming Russian-occupied regions.

Russia has long viewed Ukraine as part of a "Greater Russia" with little respect for its national identity or sovereignty.[118] In 1922, the Soviet Union annexed Ukraine to build its empire. Ukraine became home to significant agricultural and defense production, and provided the Soviet Union with access to the Crimean peninsula.[119] In 1991, when the Soviet Union was in decline, Ukraine held a national referendum in support of independence. Over 90% of Ukrainians voted in favor of independence.[120] When Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union, the Russian republic "recognize[d] the right of [the] states to sovereignty and independence."[121] In the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the United States, United Kingdom, and Russia agreed to "respect the independence and sovereignty in the existing borders of Ukraine" and "refrain from the threat or use of force" against the country. In exchange, Ukraine agreed to denuclearize and transfer all nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil to Russia. In 1994, Ukraine

joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state and became fully

denuclearized in 2001.[122]

While Russian officials recognized Ukraine's sovereignty for decades, Putin has long

viewed Ukraine as "ha[ving] always belonged to Russia" and critical to rebuilding Russia's

former prestige and influence.[123] In 2014, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych refused to

sign the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement. In response, demonstrations

nicknamed the "Euromaidan protests" erupted across Ukraine. The pro-Russian president and his

ministers fled before they could be forcibly removed from office, and within days, Russian

forces seized control of the Crimean parliament and regional airports. A referendum regarding

the reunification of Crimea with the Russian Federation was held with a purported 97% of

respondents voting in favor.[124] On March 21, 2014, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea

through municipal law with minimal international ramifications.[125]

In October 2021, British and American intelligence began receiving reports of Russian

military forces amassing at the Belarus-Ukraine border with the intention of "destabiliz[ing]

Ukraine from within, as well as large-scale military operations."[126] In December 2021, United

States officials announced that Russia was planning on mobilizing 175,000 Russians troops in a

multi-front offensive in Ukraine in early 2022.[127] By late November 2021, Russia had

accumulated over 100,000 troops at the Belarus-Ukraine border for joint "training exercises."[128]

On December 17, 2021, Putin presented a list of extraordinary security demands in exchange for

the withdrawal of Russian forces, which included: the removal of NATO troops and weapons

systems from states that joined the integrated alliance after 1997 (including Poland and the

former Soviet satellite states of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and the Balkan countries); the

rejection of further expansions of NATO (including the accession of Ukraine); and that NATO

not engage in military drills in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, or Caucus countries without the approval of Russia.[129] NATO responded restating the defensive alliance's commitment to an "open door policy," and offered a "pragmatic evaluation" of Russia's concerns. Although Russia postured that its security concerns had not been addressed,[130] Russia understood that its terms were unreasonable, and likely proposed such outlandish terms as a pretext for justifying its invasion of Ukraine.

Notably, the international community did not respond as it did to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea: condemnation was swift, and consequences severe. The United Nations adopted a resolution in early March 2022 that rejected Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces. The majority of states – 141 – voted in favor of the resolution; only Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, Russia, and Syria voted in opposition.[131] A coalition of states, representing approximately 61% of the global gross domestic product ("GDP"), simultaneously imposed crippling sanctions on the Russian economy.[132]

In addition, Ukraine has received significant economic, humanitarian, and military aid. Between January 2022 and January 2023, more than 30 states and institutions in the Western coalition have provided Ukraine with €79.5 billion in financial aid, €12.08 billion in humanitarian assistance, and €65.34 billion in military aid and supplies.[133] In contrast, Russia has garnered limited support: receiving kamikaze drones and the assistance of military advisors from Iran; unfettered access to Belarus lands for Russian forces; artillery and military arms from North Korea; and approximately 40,000 Syrian soldiers.[134]

Despite the increasing casualties and damage of the Russia-Ukraine War, neither Russia nor Ukraine are willing to negotiate. In order to begin negotiations, Russia has made untenable demands on Ukraine: the government must engage in "demilitarization and denazification" of

Ukraine, eliminate all perceived threats against Russia, and recognize Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian regions.[135] In order for Ukraine to begin negotiations, Russia must completely withdraw from Ukraine and face an international war crimes tribunal. As Ukrainian President Zelenskyy stated: "[A] just peace is no compromises as to the sovereignty, freedom, and territorial integrity of our country [and] the payback for all the damages inflicted by Russian aggression."[136] These pre-negotiation conditions have prevented the negotiation of a treaty between Russia and Ukraine, and will likely inhibit future negotiations until these conditions change.

Russia cannot withdraw without facing a humiliating defeat. Ukraine cannot accept anything less than the restoration of its territorial integrity. Consequently, the likeliest conclusion to the Russia-Ukraine War will be when one state can no longer continue the fight.

The Context: Multipolar Order

"Instead, it is a world in which great-power rivalry is not between two superpowers but among multiple players." Shivshankar Menon

The dissolution of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of a multipolar order. Global economic transformation in the 1980s resulted in the expansion of European, Japanese, and Chinese markets while Russia struggled to move from a centralized command economy to a market economy. As the world economy shifted, the United States lost dominance too; Japan became the world's largest creditor; Europe the world's largest market for trade; and China the world's fastest emerging goods manufacturer.[137] The globalization of trade transformed the international order into one that redistributed power between the United States, European Union, Japan, and China in the beginning of the 21st century.[138]

In the Russia-Ukraine War, this is apparent in the multilateral sanctions imposed on Russian industry and aid provided to Ukraine. The United States unified and galvanized NATO, leading calls for sanctions against Russia and increased military, humanitarian, and economic support for Ukraine.[139] The coalition states have imposed sweeping sanctions against Russian financial institutions, oil and energy production and exports, and over 1,000 Russian individuals and businesses.[140] Yet, the states do not move in lockstep; they each continue to make their own decisions regarding what aid they are willing to provide to Ukraine. At a European Union summit in February 2023, Poland and Slovakia signaled their willingness to provide Ukraine with fighter jets;[141] this occurred days after the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany publicly refused to supply fighter jets to Ukraine.[142] This more dispersed global power structure is more stable, and allows for more flexibility than the Cold War in which the United States and Soviet Union dictated and determined a rigid international system with zero-sum certainties.[143]

The Motivation: Putin's Imperialism

"If Russian troops returned to Russia, this war would be over today."
American President Joseph Biden

Ideological conflicts are caused by competing systems of belief. The Cold War was a conflict between capitalism and communism, positioning the United States and Soviet Union in opposition to each other. Some experts have argued that the Russia-Ukraine War is an ideological conflict between the democratic Western coalition and autocratic Russia.[144] On its face, this seems to be a reasonable assertion. The Western coalition is pro-democracy, and Russia is an autocracy. However, a closer examination of the Western coalition and Russia's actions and statements reveal that this conflict is less about ideology and more about Putin's consolidation of power.

In his announcement of Russia's "special military operations" in Ukraine, Putin asserted that Russia's intentions were to "demilitarize and denazify Ukraine."[145] Yet, there was no evidence of the Ukrainian government targeting Jewish citizens, and the international community rejected this patently false justification.[146] Putin then tried a new approach: in exchange for withdrawal of Russian troops, Putin demanded that NATO deny Ukraine's application to NATO and cease further expansion of NATO[147] which he stated was necessary for Russia's national security.[148] When NATO refused to agree to Putin's terms, Putin abandoned these security concerns, and began to make sweeping statements that the West had essentially declared war on Russia.[iv]

[iv] Putin's so-called "security concerns" about NATO expansion were further undercut by Russia's ambivalence to Finland and Sweden's joint application to join NATO in 2022. Speaking to reporters, Putin states that the Kremlin "[does not] have problems with Sweden and Finland like we do with Ukraine," in contradiction to the Kremlin's request NATO cease further expansion.

In May 2022, Putin claimed Russia's invasion of Ukraine was necessary because the West was "preparing for the invasion of our land, including Crimea."[149] In late December 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the TASS News Agency, "It is no secret to anyone that the strategic goal of the United States and its NATO allies is to defeat Russia on the battlefield as a mechanism for significantly weakening or even destroying our country."[150] Putin then claimed that "[t]he West lied about peace, but was preparing for aggression, and today it admits it openly, no longer embarrassed. And they cynically use Ukraine and its people to weaken and split Russia."[151] Russia has repeatedly tried to build an ideological case for its invasion on Ukraine with little evidence to support it. Further, Russia was asserting a risk that had no basis in reality. Indeed, "at no time since the fall of the Berlin Wall has anyone in Moscow had reason to believe that Russia faced the possibility of attack by the West."[152]

The discrepancies in Putin's justifications reveal the truth of the Russia-Ukraine War: Putin is determined to shape a future that looks like a version of Russia's past. Putin's beliefs are grounded in "Soviet frames and narratives, overlaid with a thick glaze of Russian imperialism."[153] Indeed, Putin has described the collapse of the Soviet Union as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century," and he has long desired to rebuild the Soviet Union with Ukraine as one of the crown jewels.[154]

> The issue of Ukraine's exclusion from NATO has been a long-standing obsession for Mr Putin, who bitterly remembers the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union under his predecessor Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s as "a decade of humiliation" in which Bill Clinton's US "imposed its vision of order on Europe (including in Kosovo in 1999) while the Russians could do nothing but stand by and watch."[155]

In an essay that Russian soldiers are required to carry, Putin claims that Ukraine can only be sovereign in "partnership" with Russia; a "partnership" in which Ukraine serves Putin's purpose of regaining power and restoring Russia to its previous superpower status. Russia's invasion of

Ukraine is not a singular event; it is part of a pattern of expansionism. It began with the 2014 annexation of Crimea under the guise of "defending [ethnic Russians] rights and lives" from "far-right extremists" preparing to take office after the removal of Yanukovych. The following year, Russia began financing and arming a Donbas "separatist" movement in Ukraine.[156] In 2021, Putin issued an internal strategy document detailing how Russia would subsume Belarus into a Russian satellite state by 2030.[157] In February 2023, in the midst of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Moldovan President Maia Sandu accused Russia of preparing to overthrow her pro-European Union government to draw the former Soviet satellite state back into Russia's orbit.[158] As Biden has said, "[Putin] has much larger ambitions than Ukraine. He wants to, in fact, reestablish the former Soviet Union. That's what this is about."[159] This is not an ideologically driven war; it is a power grab driven by Putin himself and his radical interpretation of nationalism.[160]

For the Western coalition, economic and military support of Ukraine is driven by a desire to uphold a rules-based global order established after World War II. The rules-based order is a "system [that] is predicated on a set of norms and principles pertaining to global security, the economy, and governance" that included protections for state sovereignty and territorial integrity and supported "to the absence of great-power war for more than seven decades and a drastic reduction in wartime casualties."[161]

This commitment to uphold the rules-based global order is evident in the Western coalition's actions and statements in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As President Biden made clear, the United States wants Ukraine restored to its pre-war status as "a democratic, independent, sovereign, and prosperous" country, and that the United States objective is not "to prolong this war just to inflict pain on Russia."[162] French President

Emmanuel Macron affirmed this statement, saying European states are "doing everything so that Ukraine alone can decide its fate."[163] The European Council also underscored that its support was founded upon "Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty...[and] it's legitimate right to defend itself against the Russian aggression to regain full control of its territory."[164]

The Western coalition's intention is not to implement a new ideology or political system in Ukraine; their intervention is a response to Russia violating the UN Charter. Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter states:

> "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."

Russia's use of force against the territorial integrity of Ukraine undermined the foundations of the modern international political system. As former presidential advisor Fiona Hill aptly described it:

> Russia's president invaded Ukraine not because he felt threatened by NATO expansion or by Western "provocations." He ordered his "special military operation" because he believes that it is Russia's divine right to rule Ukraine, to wipe out the country's national identity, and to integrate its people into a Greater Russia.[165]

Moreover, "Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began with hubris and a zeal to reshape the world order."[166] The Western coalition's response is a rejection of this unprovoked attack on a decades-long agreement on the global order.

The Instrument: Unprovoked War

"President Putin has chosen a path of bloodshed and destruction by launching this unprovoked attack on Ukraine." Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in numerous proxy wars across the globe to avoid direct military conflict. In each of these wars, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union directly committed their own military troops to combat. Instead, in each of the proxy wars, both countries took advantage of political instability within a state, and then supported opposing sides in an effort to gain leverage in the ideological war between capitalism and communism. The Russia-Ukraine War, however, is distinct from the Cold War's proxies.

Russia initially justified its invasion of Ukraine as an imminent security threat. However, as the Russian operation has progressed with minimal gains, Putin has attempted to spin "his framing of the war, claiming the West is waging a proxy battle against Russia with the goal of destroying the country."[167] In August 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov parroted these claims after NATO began supplied Ukraine with advanced weapons systems. Putin has also alleged the United States was "turning the Ukrainian people into cannon fodder. The situation in Ukraine shows that the United States is trying to drag the conflict out."[168] After President Zelenskyy spoke before the United States Congress in December 2022, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov cited Zelenskyy's failure to call for peace talks as evidence that the United States is fighting a proxy war "to the last Ukrainian."[169]

These accusations, however, fail to meet the definition of a proxy war. Ukraine was not in the midst of political turmoil when Russia and the United States became involved, as was the case in Korea and Angola. In fact, Ukraine had a politically-stable democratic government despite opposition from the Russian-backed separatist movement in the Donbas region. Russia

also launched a "hot war," deploying over 220,000 Russian forces to Ukraine to fight on its own behalf.[170] It has suffered over 100,000 military casualties since then.[171] Examining Russia's war on Ukraine against the backdrop of the Cold War proxy wars, it is evident that they have little in common.

Moreover, Putin's assertions that the West is waging a war on Russia fall flat. As discussed above, the Western coalition only became involved to deter Russia from attacking Ukraine, and after the invasion, to support Ukraine in defense of its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Western coalition's support of Ukraine is not driven by the desire to impose its ideology on Ukraine as it was during the Cold War, or to expand NATO, as made clear by the fact that NATO has yet to approve Ukraine's application. Their support for Ukraine is motivated by a commitment to uphold and enforce Article 2(4) of the UN Charter which requires UN member states refrain from the "use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."[172]

Another argument Russia has made is that the Western coalition's military support is analogous to that provided by superpowers in the Cold War proxy conflicts. Ukraine has received significant economic, humanitarian, and military support from the United States and NATO countries.[173] That said, Ukraine has only been given the support that the Western coalition has deemed it needs to defend itself.[174] Early on, it was clear to the Western coalition that "[t]oo little [weapons] could guarantee a Russian victory. But too much might provoke a direct NATO conflict with nuclear-armed Russia."[175] In January 2023, President Zelenskyy's pleas for fighter jets were denied by almost all coalition states. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz refused: "[W]e will not allow such an escalation."[176] President Macron qualified the delivery of fighter jets to Ukraine: they would not be allowed to be used "to hit Russian soil but purely to aid

the resistance effort."[177] The Western coalition's support for Ukraine has been measured to minimize escalation while ensuring that Ukraine can fight another day.[178]

The Russia-Ukraine War is not a proxy war, and describing it as such distracts from what Russia has done:

> When Putin gave the order to attack, he shattered a European and international peace architecture that had taken decades to build. Under Putin's leadership, Russia has defied even the most basic principles of international law as enshrined in the UN Charter: the renunciation of the use of force as a means of international policy and the pledge to respect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all countries. Acting as an imperial power, Russia now seeks to redraw borders by force and to divide the world, once again, into blocs and spheres of influence.[179]

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was not as, Putin has asserted, supported by Article 51 of the UN Charter which provides that "nothing in the present charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations."[180] There was no evidence whatsoever that Ukraine – or the United States – intended to attack Russia. Arguing that the Russia-Ukraine War is a proxy war, as Putin and his allies have done minimizes the gravity of the conflict and attempts to pin Russia's war in Ukraine on the United States and the Western coalition instead of on Russia. During the Cold War, the United States supported and enabled proxy wars to halt the spread of communism: that is not what is happening in Ukraine. But for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Western coalition would not have engaged in, incited or supported a conflict in Ukraine against Russia. The Western coalitions' involvement was a consequence of Russia's flagrant violation of international law.

The Accelerant: Putin's Paranoia

"Washington must not forget that a paranoid and increasingly isolated man rules Russia—one who has already made a series of costly miscalculations." Dmitri Alperovitch

While domestic paranoia exacerbated Cold War tensions, it has failed to take hold in the West. In the United States and among the coalition of Western allies, there are few signs of domestic paranoia: there have been no public hearings or investigations targeting individuals supportive of Russia's invasion. Media coverage has largely sided with Ukraine, though opposing viewpoints have not been censored. However, the same cannot be said of Russia. Since the beginning of the war, the Kremlin has taken action to suppress domestic opposition.

On its face, Russia's paranoid behavior resembles that of the Soviet Union's during the Cold War. The Kremlin-controlled parliament has criminalized the dissemination of "false information" and any criticism of the Russian military operation in Ukraine to suppress domestic opposition.[181] Under these laws, the Kremlin has charged journalists for reporting on anti-draft protests; magazines for publishing information about protests in support of Alexei Navalny; and publications like *Meduza* and *PASMI* as "foreign agents" for discussing corruption in the Russian government.[182] The Kremlin has also revoked the licenses of many independent news sources, like *Novaya Gazeta* and *Ekho Moskvy,* for simply reporting on the Russia-Ukraine War.[183]

Not surprisingly, this legislation has limited public criticism of the Russia-Ukraine War. To the extent any critiques are permitted about Russia's failures in Ukraine, they are levied against high-ranking military officials like the Minister of Defense. When Russian troops were driven from Lyman in November 2022, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov declared that Colonel General Alexander Lapin should be "made to wash off his shame with blood."[184] In the instances where opposition to the Russia-Ukraine War or Putin himself is vocalized, there are consequences.[185] Russia also suppressed free speech from the very early days of its invasion of

Ukraine, arresting Russian protesters "[o]ver 1,200…in more than 50 towns and cities across the country for publicly opposing the attack."[186] In September 2022, public protests against the country's first military draft since World War II resulted in the detention of over 1,300 Russian citizens in Moscow and St. Petersburg.[187] When an opposition leader analyzed evidence of Russian war crimes in Bucha on a YouTube livestream, contradicting reports published by the Kremlin, he was sentenced to ten years in prison.[188]

In examining paranoia in Russia, it is important to acknowledge that it is difficult to gauge levels of paranoia amongst the Russian public. There have been a handful of incidents reported of Russian citizens taking action against their fellow citizens who are critical of the war. In December 2022, an elderly woman was dragged from her seat and thrown to the floor of a bus by passengers for saying Russia had become an empire that sends men to fight in cheap rubber boots.[189] In January 2023, a Russian couple was arrested for criticizing the war in hushed voices in a restaurant after an eavesdropper reported them to police.[190] Whether these incidents are the result of growing paranoia in Russian society, or a consequence of Putin's weaponization of the security forces to support his image remains unclear.

What is clear is that Putin continues to exhibit clear signs of paranoia. In addition to Putin's meddling in the legislative and judicial branches to ensure his rule is upheld, Putin began conducting meetings at a twenty-foot table in the weeks leading up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He would sit on one end of the table, and foreign leaders, dignitaries, and his own military advisers would sit on the opposite end.[191] Though some perceived this distance as a cautionary measure given the COVID-19 pandemic, others saw it as evidence of Putin's growing paranoia and isolation:

"[F]or all their apparent absurdity, the images were apt visual representations of Putin's political position within the Kremlin: fearful about the possibility of betrayal, skeptical of his interlocutors, and isolated from even his most trusted allies and advisers."[192]

Further, after American intelligence agencies leaked details of Russia's military plans and preemptively exposed the Kremlin's misinformation and disinformation campaigns, Putin became suspicious of his own inner circle and military advisers.[193] Not surprisingly, Putin kept his plans for the invasion of Ukraine, including timing and scope, secret from his closest advisers and top officials until the very last moments before the operation began.[194]

Cold War paranoia rippled through American and Soviet society with government officials fueling distrust and fear. Each state infringed upon the civil liberties of its own citizens, and weaponized this paranoia to justify the continuation of the Cold War. In the Russia-Ukraine War, the paranoia is one-sided. Putin is exercising enormous power over Russian citizens and government officials to eliminate any perceived criticism or challenge to his war. Though he has always been paranoid, Putin's elimination of civil liberties and suppression of the media has reached new levels, and is the hallmark of an autocratic leader fearful for his survival.

The Stakes: Nuclear Tension

"The international community should. . . jointly oppose the use or threats to use nuclear weapons, advocate that nuclear weapons must not be used and nuclear wars must not be fought."
Chinese President Xi Jinping

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, concerns about nuclear weapons have mostly focused on proliferation in North Korea and Iran, and the extension of the United States and Russia's SALT agreements. However, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has renewed concerns about the likelihood that Russia will deploy nuclear weapons for the first time in decades, raising the specter of nuclear war. It is generally accepted that when two states engage in direct military conflict – where one is non-nuclear and one is nuclear – a nuclear war is unlikely. However, in an attempt to deter international intervention and limit assistance to Ukraine, Putin has tried to create a climate of global nuclear instability.

Putin's nuclear posturing began hours after authorizing the Russian invasion. In a televised speech, Putin made veiled threats against the West:

> "[T]hose who may be tempted to interfere in these developments from the outside. No matter who tries to stand in our way or all the more so creates threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in history."[195]

In the following days, Putin placed Russia's nuclear missile forces and two Russian naval fleets on "enhanced" combat duty to reinforce the credibility of his warning.[196] If the intention was to goad Ukrainian-allied powers into escalating the conflict by increasing their own nuclear threat levels, Putin failed. The United States and other nuclear-armed states strongly condemned this action, but refused to invoke their own nuclear arsenal in response.[197]

As Russian military forces have faced increasing territorial losses and casualties, Russian rhetoric has become more explicit in its reference to nuclear weapons. In a September 2022 public address, Putin stated:

> "[O]ur country also has a variety of weapons of destruction, and in some areas even more modern than those in NATO countries. We will, without question, use all of the means at our disposal to protect Russia and our people. This is not a bluff. And to those who try to blackmail us with nuclear weapons should know that the 'prevailing winds' can also blow it in their direction."[198]

The remark was denounced by global leaders, and President Biden acknowledged the seriousness of Putin's threat: "[For the] first time since the Cuban Missile Crisis, we have a direct threat of the use [of a] nuclear weapon if in fact things continue down a path they are going." However, the United States' National Security Council and the Pentagon also confirmed that there had been no action by the Kremlin to prepare Russian nuclear warheads for use in Ukraine.[199]

In late October 2022, Russian officials began invoking nuclear rhetoric and discussions of defending Russia's "territorial integrity." Russia's nuclear doctrine permits the use of nuclear weapons in the event of "aggression against the Russian Federation with conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is threatened."[200] In an interview, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov affirmed that all Russian-occupied territories are "inalienable parts of the Russian Federation, and they are all protected" with the same level of security as the recognized Russian state.[201] This declaration suggests that Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine would be defended under Russia's nuclear umbrella, increasing the risk of Russia justifying nuclear use under its own doctrine. In January 2023, Russia's former president Dmitry Medvedev threatened that: "The defeat of a nuclear power in a conventional war may trigger a nuclear war. Nuclear powers have never lost major conflicts on which their fate depended."[202]

Most recently, in retaliation to Biden's unannounced visit to Ukraine on February 21, 2023, Putin announced the suspension of Russia's participation in the New START agreement that entered into force in 2021. The treaty limits the number of nuclear warheads the United States and Russia can deploy, and requires international inspections of both states' nuclear

facilities. In this speech, Putin also declared the elevation of Russian military systems to "combat duty" and threatened to resume nuclear testing.[203] Putin continued this rhetoric in a subsequent speech, announcing that Russia would "pay increased attention to strengthening the nuclear triad" and deploy new Sarmat multiwarhead intercontinental ballistic missiles later in the year.[204] This speech occurred after CNN reported that Russia had carried out an unsuccessful test on the Sarmat ICBM earlier on February 22.[205]

In the continued evocation of nuclear weapons, Russia has created the perception that it would be willing to authorize a nuclear strike. Such a strike could occur if the Kremlin perceives an imminent threat to Russian security consistent with its nuclear doctrine. It could also occur if Russia is poised to face a humiliating defeat in Ukraine. The latter scenario is of greater concern because Putin has expanded Russia's nuclear doctrine to include Russian-occupied territories and has become more explicit in his rhetoric as Russia faces continued losses. However, for Russia, "threatening to use nuclear weapons is of greater utility than actually doing so." A nuclear strike would not strengthen Russian ground operations in Ukraine. It would unify the international community, and invoke outrage from even the states that have refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A nuclear strike would render Russia a pariah state with crushing military, economic, and political consequences.[206]

Russia's nuclear rhetoric has also had little impact on Ukraine's resolve: Ukraine is already in a fight for its survival and will continue to fight regardless of Russian threats of a nuclear strike. As for the Western coalition, public officials have refused to invoke their own nuclear capabilities in response to Putin's nuclear rhetoric. States possessing nuclear weapons have not confirmed that they would be willing to use nuclear weapons in retaliation to a Russian

nuclear strike against Ukraine. This has prevented further escalation, and minimized nuclear instability globally.

       During the Cold War, the fear of a nuclear attack was perpetuated by the United States and Soviet Union's vacillation between negotiating treaties, publicly condemning each other, and expanding their nuclear arsenals. Here, Russia has attempted to manufacture a climate of nuclear instability to deter international intervention and aid to Ukraine. However, while Russia's threats have made the international community cautious, it has not created the same level of nuclear instability that existed during the Cold War nor has it deterred ongoing military support for Ukraine.

Conclusion

"History did not end, as some predicted, with the Cold War. Nor, however, is history repeating itself . . . . [W]hat we are witnessing is the end of an exceptional phase of globalization, a historic shift accelerated by, but not entirely the result of, external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine." German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

On the first anniversary of the Russia-Ukraine War, Ukraine has defied the odds and forced Russian forces to retreat in some regions. Backed by widespread domestic approval, careful strategic and tactical planning, and a steady stream of international aid and military equipment, Ukraine is committed to defeating Russia and reunifying Ukraine, and has emerged as an influential player in the international community. In contrast, Russia is becoming a pariah state. After tying the fate of Russia to his personal agenda, Putin's political survival is now dependent on Russia's success in Ukraine. If Russia emerges without any territorial or security gains – after sacrificing thousands of Russian soldiers and its economy – Putin will be unable to evade a coup d'état or mass protests to remove him from office. Yet, Russia continues to make grave strategic errors: it has depleted its munitions, lost or destroyed nearly half of Russia's tanks, and drafted convicts as soldiers to counteract the historic exodus of nearly one million Russians.[207] With each passing day, Russia's position is weakening as Ukraine's is strengthening.

That said, it is unclear when the Russia-Ukraine War will conclude. Negotiations are not on the table; and neither side is willing to surrender. The conflict could become a war of attrition in which the Russia-Ukraine War will end when one state can no longer continue the fight. The two states could reach a satisfactory negotiation allotting specific portions of Ukraine to Russia in exchange for the withdrawal of Russian forces. Or, in the face of an imminent defeat, Russia could deploy a weapon of mass destruction and trigger the beginning of the third World War. What we know is the Russia-Ukraine War is an existential conflict for both states' survival.

In considering whether the Russia-Ukraine War is the beginning of a second Cold War, it is important to acknowledge that it is difficult to draw conclusions when comparing this one year conflict to the nearly half-century Cold War. The information available on the Russia-Ukraine War is limited by the relatively short time-frame and evolving nature of the conflict. It is possible the Russia-Ukraine War will become a Second Cold War: that it will become an ideological conflict between Western liberalism and Russian illiberalism; that the paranoia present in the Russian security forces will permeate into Russian and Western societies as the conflict continues; and that the vast majority of states that are non-aligned and uninvolved in the Russia-Ukraine War will be forced to take sides with either Russia and the West.

However, presently, the Russia-Ukraine War does not meet the criteria for the second Cold War. The Russia-Ukraine War is driven, not by an overt ideology such as communism or even illiberalism, but by Putin's desire to reclaim the superpower status Russia once held. The Russia-Ukraine War is also not a proxy war for the Western coalition; it has neither instigated nor escalated the conflict. The coalition has simply supported Ukraine in its right to defend its sovereignty. The paranoia beginning to appear in Russian society is similar to the Cold War Soviet Union, but that same domestic paranoia has not taken hold in the Western coalition. Finally, Putin's escalation of nuclear rhetoric and nuclear preparedness was not met with escalation by the Western coalition. Instead, the Western coalition's response was measured, and did not respond with nuclear threats or by increasing their defense readiness levels.

While the Russia-Ukraine War is not a second Cold War, that does not make it any less significant. The war is about more than Ukraine; the world understands that "Putin's appetite for expansion would not stop at the Ukrainian border."[208] If Ukraine is victorious, it will bolster the validity of the rules-based global order. It would signal to revisionist powers that the world will

not tolerate attacks on another sovereign state or violations of international law. A Ukrainian victory would also mark the defeat of Putin's Russia. Russia would become a pariah state, likely stripped of its influence in international governing bodies and scrutinized for years to follow. The collapse of Putin's regime would result in intrastate disorder in the contest for new leadership, creating political and social unrest. It would also have global ramifications as Russia's interference in the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe would crumble. It would also create opportunities for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine to seek integration into the European Union, and for Belarus to shed its pro-Russian dictator, Alexander Lukashenko, and hold free and fair elections.[209]

If Russia is victorious, it will dismantle the rules-based global order, and would signal that revisionist powers – or any power – could attack another sovereign state or violate international law with limited consequences. A Russian victory would permit the continuation of Putin's expansionist agenda into Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus which would likely trigger the expansion of European states' defense capabilities as well as around the world. It could also lead to a second arms race that would incentivize non-nuclear states to pursue their own programs. In short, a Russian victory would mark the end of the rules-based order and mark the beginning of an uncertain future.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine instigated an international re-ordering of alliances. Sweden and Finland, which have been historically neutral in interstate conflicts, applied to join NATO.[210] Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have taken neutral stances on the Russian invasion or begun distancing themselves from Russia.[211] Despite Russia and China's "no limits" friendship, Chinese President Xi Jinping condemned Russia's threats of nuclear use as unacceptable.[212] The Russia-Ukraine War also unified the EU and NATO after a period of

relative decline following the Cold War. Where Putin expected this invasion to divide the member states and fragment the coalitions, the two organizations have risen to meet the current threat with remarkable force and unity. The Western coalition barred Russia from participating in SWIFT, an international financial network, and inhibited its ability to sell gas and oil abroad. Private international businesses have permanently closed stores and operations in Russia, further depleting the Russian economy of income.

However, the Russia-Ukraine War has also exposed the weaknesses in the new global order. The global order disproportionately favors a small handful of states and alliances, at the expense of growing economic and demographic powers in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean.[213] These secondary states are dependent upon this rules-based global order to ensure their sovereignty, but seem less willing or able to confront challenges to the global order. This was evident in March 2022, when 45 states abstained from voting to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the UN General Assembly.[214] Later that month, the Economist's Intelligence Unit found that two-thirds of the world's population live in states where the government has yet to condemn or institute sanctions against Russia.[215] As German Chancellor Olaf Scholz writes, "The world's democracies [and leaders] will need to work with these countries to defend and uphold a global order that binds power to rules and that confronts revisionist acts such as Russia's war of aggression."[216]

Expanding the global order, however, requires that the world's dominant powers partner with historically less influential states in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean. These partnerships must provide the less dominant states with real positions of influence in international governing bodies. For instance, they should either eliminate the position of permanent member on the UN Security Council, or ensure equitable regional representation

among permanent members. Dominant powers must also address the very real economic and security concerns of the less dominant states. It is only with a more robust global order that the world will be able to face the rising challenges of climate change, global health crises, the rise of fascism, and violations of sovereignty. If these less influential states are to invest in and defend the global order in the face of crises like the Russia-Ukraine War, they must know that the international community is equally invested in their stability and sustainability.

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