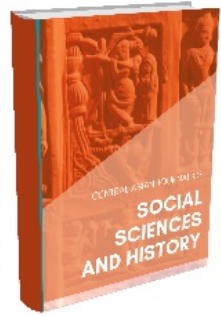




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Russia-Africa Relations: A Reflection on Historical Ties, Current Trends and Emerging Realities

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Abstract:

This work examined Africa-Russia Relations. Historical ties, current trends and Emerging realities. The work relied on secondary data and obtained bulk of tis data from existing literature and documents from Russia's international Affairs council and Africa scholarly related materials. The study adopted qualitative research methods and analyzed the data gathered for the study, using thematic approach. The study first provides a brief historical background, and found that, historical ties provides sense of familiarity, with good economic, political, cultural and military relations between Africa and Russia. The study also found that, Russia seeks to use African platforms to strengthen and project Moscow global influence .However, the paradox is that Russia is offering better deals to Africa as alternatives to offers from the West. These deals comprise of aid and assistance which include military solf and hardwares. Indeed, it is not a demonstration of altruism as it is a strategy to increase influence in Africa and challenge the hegemony of the west in the region. Beside, Moscow has a low profile foreign policy in the region as it cultural value particularly Russia language is yet very popular in the region.

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Introduction

David (1991) noted that although certain major superpowers' rising interest in and control over some critical parts of the globe were waning, interest in gaining geopolitical influence in Africa was growing among some major superpowers and developing global powers. When employing factors from the global development index, the emerging nations are mostly regional powers with robust economies. Russia is one of these new world powers.

Mixed emotions continue to be raised by Russia's expanding influence in Africa. On the one hand, Russia has shown a persistent interest in the continent and has presented herself as able to provide African nations with alternatives to the aid and backing of the Western powers. According to Victor (2020:101), the presence of Russia and other emerging powers like China, Brazil, and India is a good thing for South-South cooperation, increased global solidarity, and other advantages for African nations.

On the other side, there are worries about the developing power's increasing influence and ambitions in Africa. Some claim that Russia supports corruption in Africa, has connections to organized crime, and engages in other illegal actions. One cannot ignore the significance of Russia's increased interest in the continent in a global system that is marked by a rising interdependence. But it's important to understand this argument or these arguments in light of the past, the present, and developing realities.

Theoretical framework

Neoclassical realism and the theory of national interest served as the study's theoretical foundations.

Neoclassical realism

According to neoclassical thinkers, a nation's foreign policy is founded on two main truths. The position of the nation within the global system comes first, followed by her access to material power (source???). Because "systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level," they contend, leveraging such power and competence in foreign policy is difficult. These factors they identified include power capacities, cognitive factors (such as the perception and misperception of systemic pressures, the intentions of other states, or threats) (Reichwein, 2012), and domestic factors (such as state institutions, elites, societal actors within society, and local norms and values). These factors are both internal and external. The approach therefore distinguishes between international constraints and the norms and ideologies that shape foreign policy. Therefore, policymakers may pursue objectives and goals that are affected by moral and normative considerations. Neoclassical realists also contend those domestic norms and values and leaders' views of possibilities and risks on a global scale influence foreign policy (Reichwein, 2012).

According to neoclassical realism, a nation's relative material might is the main factor that determines the scope and aspirations of its foreign policy. However, it argues that the influence of power capacities on foreign policy is indirect and nuanced as systemic pressures must be translated via auxiliary unit-level factors like decision-makers' views and state structure. Thus, a thorough investigation of the international and domestic settings in which foreign policy is developed and carried out is necessary to comprehend the connections between power and policy.

According to the neoclassical viewpoint, nations with similar material capacities but differing structural makeups do not act similarly. As a result, the international system's structure, domestic players, and national values influence state choices. The setting in which foreign policy is established must thus be closely examined in order to analyze international policy from a neoclassical perspective.

Given that Russia's objective is to project her force and capabilities and to participate in high grand strategy in Africa, this thesis is highly appropriate.

Russia-Africa Historical Ties

Russia has long maintained relations with African nations without the influence of colonialism. Russia's ties to Africa historically intensified throughout the Cold War period. Prior to the Cold War, Russia joined forces with the Allies—the United States, Great Britain, and France—to defeat Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany (Oduck, 2010:81). But once the war was over, this friendship ceased to exist. The links of togetherness developed throughout the conflict were instead supplanted by distrust and competition.

The ideological foundations of the two blocs, whereas the political economies of the United States, Great Britain, and France were founded on the principles of Liberal democracy and the market economies, and the Soviet political economy was on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and its belief in class struggle both within and among nations, should be noted as the fundamental cause of the rivalry and suspicion between the then Soviet Union and three Western allies.

The Soviet Union and the West used aid and foreign assistance to acquire influence and mobilized African nations to wage their proxy wars during the Cold War to expand their ideological competition and contestations to the African continent. It's interesting to note that Russia's diplomatic connections with Africa began as a means of advancing communism or socialism. Rosaline and Vadimir (2012:351) cited the following in their statement:

Russia and the Soviet Union engaged with Africa in a variety of ways throughout the Cold War, including diplomatic, economic, and military. As part of the foreign policy goals of the Soviet Union, Russia did aid numerous African governments in these areas and also offered support to the National Liberation fight in Africa.

It is important to note that the Russia-Soviet Union is seen as having contributed to the liberation and decolonization of a number of African nations, notably in Southern Africa, including Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union opened its universities to African students, providing them with educational opportunities and ideological indoctrination. The Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, named after the outspokenly anti-Western prime minister of Zaire, was the educational institution of choice for several famous African leaders. Russian educational strategy that was expanded to Africa during the Cold War aided African leaders including Hifikepanye Pohamba, the former president of Namibia, Youssouf Saleh, the former prime minister of Chad, and Djotodia, the former president and rebel leader of the Central African Republic. (Somar, 2015) However, several of Russia's ideological allies on the continent were concerned about its abrupt pullout from Africa after the Cold War. Cold War contacts between Russia and Africa were unable to continue after the Soviet Union's demise. But historically, Russia had a different connection with Africa than the colonists did. A feeling of familiarity fostered by her historical links to Africa also helped shape more recent developments in her interactions with the continent. With Yevgenu Primakov serving as foreign minister starting in 1996, Moscow adopted a more assured foreign strategy. Vladimir Putin, who was elected in 2000, kept doing this.

The culmination of a number of interconnected circumstances led to the fall of the Soviet Union. One of them, according to Oduck (2010:81), is an overextended political empire that was left behind by

Tsarist Russia. When this empire became too large for her to successfully govern, it had to be dismantled. The geographical flaw consequently led to structural tension that weakened Russia and ultimately led to the breakup of the Russia-Soviet Union.

During the Cold War, Russia and the Soviet Union engaged in a fierce armaments race to counter Western pressure. The non-military economy of the nation fell apart as a result of this development. In order to stop the Soviet Union's economy from further deteriorating and from completely collapsing, Gorbachev launched three reforms: democracy, transparency, and restructuring. However, these initiatives did not address the system's true issues and instead contributed to the system's eventual demise. Since this experience, the Russian Federation became economically weak and was unable to conduct a dynamic foreign policy in Africa since all of its efforts were focused on bringing about political and economic change in the nation.

Russia had severe economic crisis and political turmoil before 2000. "The political vacuum created during and after the Soviet Union break up, led to the re-emergence of a new set of gangsters and oligarchs that formed close alliances with corrupt Russian political leaders with stronghold over the resources of the state and were above the law of the land," wrote Pushpesh (2015) of the situation, in particular the political challenges facing Russia.

Pessimistic folks believed that Communism was ending at the turn of the century. All of this pessimism concerned Putin. Few people knew Putin when Yeltsin named him his successor. Only a small group of people were familiar with him, notably as the capable major and a KGB agent working for the Russian government. How could such a mysterious guy, who served the KGB, a non-democratic institution, usher in the required transformation in Russia? This idea adequately supports the idea that Russia had already fallen apart ten years before Putin's election. Contrary to negative perception, Putin's arrival on the scene altered the story since he genuinely gave Russia a new identity and made it a significant participant on the world arena. Putin did not make many things obvious. Putin made it clear in remarks and actions that the sovereignty and security of Russia are exclusively Russian concerns. Russia is unwilling to engage in discussion on the subject of sovereignty. However, Putin expressed curiosity and showed that he was willing to adjust to Western assistance that did not jeopardize Russia's fundamental principles.

Overall, Putin's commitment and perseverance in rescuing Russia from the verge of chaos are clearly evident. He did indeed seize every chance to further and defend her interests. Additionally, being an oil-rich state, Putin focused on the oil beds and reserves to turn it into a resource-rich state. Putin also confirmed Russia's ownership of an oil-rich bed on Sakhalin (Pushpesh, 2015).

It is interesting to observe that Putin's reform of Russia has successfully transformed Russia into a state to be reckoned with in the post-Cold War age. Formerly considered to be a defunct superpower, Russia has established its authority and is now seen as a significant player on the world stage. In this regard, Wilson's (2014) comment is pertinent. He acknowledged to this reality by noting that: The United States' 2017 National Security Strategy and National Defence Strategy may be the most important testament to Russia's shift from a regional to a great power, trying to regain its influence internationally. Both agreements recognise the resurgence of international strategic rivalry.????(Quotation and page indented)

In addition to becoming industrialized, Russia is now able to provide the fundamental necessities of its populace. With a GDP of \$1.3 billion in 2015 and \$32 million in zero foreign currency reserves as of July 2016, Russia is a significant global actor, according to World Bank Reports (Rosaline and Shubin,

2018: 52).?????. The majority of Eastern Europe and Northern Asia are covered by the huge territory that Russia inhabits. It is a significant nuclear power and the top exporter of oil and gas in the world (British Petroleum, 2017). Russia is one of the five countries that may exercise a veto in the UN Security Council. Russia benefits from participation in groups like the BRICS and the Group of 20 (G20).

Current Trends in Russia-Africa's Relations

After a protracted absence, Russia has returned to the continent. Government authorities and society at large have conflicting reactions to Russia's involvement in Africa. Some analysts believed that the oil boom of the first decade of the twenty-first century reignited Russia's interest in Africa. Riding high on its newly discovered economic might, Russia set out to create a multipolar world in which it could play a crucial role. For a time, the United States and China have been considered as the main competitors among the major international powers for influence in Africa. However, as was already said, Putin is determined to rebalance the world's power in Russia's favor in order to realize his goal of giving Moscow its former stature as a powerhouse. He is committed to matching China's substantial economic presence on the continent and countering America's influence in order to achieve this goal (Janos????).

Given the geographic and economic contributions that Africa can make to the advancement of Russia's national interests, Moscow has a keen interest in maintaining close ties with Africa in order to pursue its global goals.

Russia views Africa as a means of undermining the West's hold on global governance, finding allies for its vision of a multipolar world, and creating business possibilities for Russian firms, especially those barred from accessing Western markets due to sanctions.

Only in the context of Russia's political, economic, military, and security efforts in Africa can the exact status of the division be understood.

(i). Diplomatic/ Political Relations:

Russia maintains around 40 embassies in the continent and has diplomatic ties with every country in Africa (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, visited Cairo in 2005 and 2015. When Putin travelled to South Africa in 2006, he and Thabo Mbeki, the country's president at the time, penned a treaty of friendship and cooperation. Putin travelled to Morocco the same year and met Muammar Qaddafi in Libya in April 2008. Dmitry Medvedev travelled to Egypt, Angola, Namibia, and Nigeria in 2009. During the BRICS Summit, Putin visited South Africa in 2013. Russia's presidents have been to 8 African nations in the last 7 years.

However, a sizable number of important African leaders have also been to Moscow. Twelve presidents of African governments visited Russia between 2015 and 2018, according to the Kremlin's press. The table below illustrates this:

Table 1: African Heads of State Official Visits to Russia since 2015

S/NO	COUNTRY	PRESIDENT	DATES
1.	South Africa	Jacob Zuma	2015
2.	Zimbabwe	Late Robert Mugabe	2015
3.	Sudan	Omar al-Bashir	2015,2017,2018
4.	Guinea	Alpha Conde	2016,2017
5.	Central African Republic	Faustin-Archange Touadera	2018
6.	Rwanda	Paul Kagame	2018
7.	Gabon	Ali Bongo Ondimba	2018
8.	Senegal	Macky Sall	2018
9.	Zimbabwe	Emmerson Mnangagwa	2019
10.	Angola	Joao Lourenco	2018, 2019
11.	Congo	Denis Sassou Nguesso	2019
12.	Mozambique	Filipe Nyusi	2019

Source Russia Assembly Research Services,2019

2019 saw the Duma welcome representatives from many African nations for an international legislative forum, with one day specifically set aside for consideration of ties between Russia and Africa (Russia Assembly, 2019). This diplomatic endeavor is consistent with the most recent iteration of Russia's foreign policy objectives, which aim to "Promote, within bilateral and multilateral frameworks, mutually beneficial and equal partnerships with foreign countries, inter-state associations, international organizations, and within forums, grounded by the principles of independence and sovereignty, pragmatism, transparency, predictability, a multidirectional approach, and the commitment to pursue national

The power structure on the continent must be affected by Russia's disproportionate presence there.

(ii). **Economic Relations:**

It's also clear that Russia and Africa have strong commercial relations. The Russian government has taken steps to strengthen its economic connections with African nations by lowering taxes and providing loan guarantees. To aid Russian companies' operations, notably in Africa, the Russian Agency on Insurance of Export Credits and Investments was founded in 2011. Its function is to shield export loans from political and business risks (EKSAR, 2011). The Russian Export Centre was formed by the government in 2015 to serve as a single point of contact for all financial and non-financial export assistance measures (<http://www.exportcenter.ru/company>).

More than 90 Russian institutions, including ministries, agencies, organizations, and businesses that represented large, small, and medium-sized businesses, came together in 2009 to form the Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa (Afro...)???? In order to strengthen commercial ties between Russia and Africa, funding for African business ventures was provided in 2016.

Russian domestic services and the African Development Bank (2011) assessed the Russian government's investments at \$20 billion and around \$10 billion, respectively. The disparity in the number probably illustrates how difficult it is to pinpoint where big businesses' contributions come from. Beyond resources, Russia and Africa have a strong economic relationship. For instance, the Angolan National System of Satellite Communications and Broadcasting (ANGOSAT) was developed

with the aid of Russian cutting-edge technology and financial resources.

Africa's contribution of Russia's total commerce increased to over \$12.2 billion in 2014 from a little over \$1.5 billion in 2000. However, two thirds of it included North Africa, namely Algeria and Egypt. Nevertheless, it accounts for 2% of all Russian commerce. According to the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa imported roughly \$2.5 billion from Russia in 2017 while exporting about \$0.6 billion to Russia. According to this, the entire value of sub-Saharan trade with Russia in 2017 was close to \$3 billion.

Table 2: Sub-Saharan Trade Turnover in 2017

Trading Partners	Total value of imports (in millions of U.S. dollars)	Share of total imports, as a percentage	Change in imports (2007-2017), %	Total value of exports (in millions of U.S. dollars)	Share total exports, as a percentage	Change in imports (2007-2017), %
China	37,387	16, 42	+62	18,520	8.73	-19
India	13,147	5.77	+57	19,685	9.28	+117
United States	11,741	5.16	-26	14,919	7.03	-136
Germany	13,442	5.90	-5	7,492	3.53	-3
United Kingdom	6,222	2.73	-32	6,479	3.06	-45
Japan	6,178	2.71	-39	5,287	2.49	-36
Russia	2,486	1.09	+97	608	0-29	+45

Source: "Sub-Saharan Export and Imports by Country or Region 2017," World Bank, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/SSF/Year/2017/TradeFlow/Export>

Russian economic engagement in Africa is often dominated by significant state-owned corporations. For instance, Alrosa, the biggest diamond mining firm in the world, has prioritized growing its operations in Zimbabwe and Angola (UN, 2019). In order to explore up to twenty-one assets throughout Africa, the state-owned oil firm Rosneft inked a cooperation agreement with a Nigerian oil and gas exploration business in 2018 (Tsvetana, 2018).

Russian nuclear power corporation Rosatom has operations over most of Africa. In order to explore the possibility of nuclear and non-nuclear collaboration, this state-owned Russian corporation has signed memoranda of understanding with at least fourteen African nations (Sylvain, 2018). These areas of prospective cooperation include medical, agriculture, and hydropower projects.

Simmons (2014) offers information about Rosatom's activity in Africa. He claims that Rosatom is a component of Russia's meager soft power initiative in Africa. There are programs for teaching science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as scientific contests for high school and college students. Rosatom also provides financial aid to Africans who want to study in Russia.

When it comes to assisting African students who lack the financial means to pursue higher education in Europe or the United States, these educational programs might be very significant. So enhancing Russia's reputation throughout the continent.

(iii). Military Relations:

Russia and Africa have had military ties since the Cold War. Ponel in Olawale (2014:61) said that aid from the Soviet Union during the Cold War included the provision of armaments and military hardware via bartering and low-interest, lengthy payback credit agreements. In more recent times, Karen (2014) said that sales of military helicopters, fighter planes, transport helicopters, tanks, weapons, artillery, and ammunition had occurred between Russia and Africa.

John (2015) also noted that South Africa, Algeria, Cameroon, and Cameroon have all inked and executed military-technical agreements with Russia. African and Russian relations are being boosted via exchanges of students, military training, and information between Tshwane and Moscow. Qualified South African air force pilots are receiving additional training in Russia to increase their flying time. In military forums like the Moscow conference on global security, South Africa has also taken part (Russia Defence Web, 2016). According to the Russian Ministry of Defence (2016), Russia and Kazakhstan host yearly international Army Games that aim to boost combat training and build ties between military from other nations. In 2016, there were more than 3000 military participants from African nations. Angola, Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, and Zimbabwe were among the participating African nations. Namibia and Algeria served as observers.

Military ties gave Russia access to many more doors in Africa. Weapons exports to Africa support Russia's larger diplomatic attempts to establish military, political, and security relations and increase its influence in Africa. Africa is an important market for the Soviet and Russian arms industries.

The majority of Russian modern weaponry have been sent to nations in North Africa; Sub-Saharan \$3 billion worth of Russian military hardware has been ordered by African nations (Lora, 2019). According to information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, during the last 10 years, Russia has sent armaments to 18 African nations. Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia are among these nations.

Table 3: Russia's Arms Sales to Africa (Figures are Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Trend Indicator Values (TIVS)/ In Millions

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2009-2018	2009-2013	2014-2018
Angola		27	98	63	63	251	0	251
Burkina Faso					14	15	1	14
Cameroon	27		11			45	7	38
Chad						7	7	0
Democratic Republic of Congo	7					14	7	7
Equatorial Guinea					7	7	0	7

Table 3: Russia's Arms Sales to Africa (Figures are Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Trend Indicator Values (TIVS)/ In Millions

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2009-2018	2009-2013	2014-2018
Ethiopia						54	54	0
Ghana						41	41	0
Guinea						1	1	0
Kenya						20	20	0

Mali				23		23	0	23
Nigeria	58	87		24	24	192	0	192
Rwanda	14	27				41	0	41
South Africa	50					50	0	50
South Sudan		18	4			82	60	22
Sudan		51	51	24		349	224	125
Uganda						629	629	0
Zambia		14				14	0	14
Total	156	224	164	134	108	1835	1051	784

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

In a same vein, Tatiana (2013) disclosed that since 2006, the Russian Military of the Interior's Advanced Training Centre has trained hundreds of peacekeepers from African nations. Russia has participated in UN peacekeeping operations in Angola, the Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, and western Sahara, according to Peter (2014). Russia has also provided troops, military observers, and expertise in these countries. Russia gave the African Union's peace fund \$2 million in only 2012 (Peter, 2014).

Emerging Realities

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, there has been a detailed analysis of changes in Russia-Africa ties, which demonstrates the worldwide fight for influence in Africa. The United States and China have been competing with one another for influence in Africa for a long now. However, Russia has been focusing more and more on Africa as a place where it can exert influence and power in a variety of ways. Russia's resurgence in Africa is a sincere effort to re-establish contact with that continent. In order to reclaim a foothold in Africa, Russia is attempting to revive and expand on the Cold War legacies that provide familiarity. The diplomatic, economic, military, and security developments in Africa support Russia's aim for a more prominent position on the international scene than that of a simply regional power with a sincere interest in the development of Africa.

The reality is that their interests are at the center of every major power influence in Africa. In contrast to the Soviet Union, Russia has nothing in the way of philosophy to give its African allies. This is due to the fact that a common resistance to Western ideology has been a crucial factor in how Russia establishes relationships with several African nations.

According to Ponel (2018), a large portion of Russia's relations with Africa appear to be transactional, motivated by practical considerations, and relatively modest in scale. These relations are typically restricted to the sale of arms, some kind of security assistance, or business deals where Russian companies can benefit from Western companies' restrictions due to government sanctions. This is not to imply that these ties cannot persist, but they are limited by the reality that Russia can only provide a certain amount of resources to keep them going.

Africa really has a significant impact on Russia's long-standing efforts to establish a multipolar global order. In an attempt to lessen the power of the United States and its allies in international organizations, Russia turns to Africa for prospective partners. The United Nations is without a doubt the most important venue for such initiatives. One-fourth of member states are African nations,

therefore establishing strategic partnerships with the continent might be helpful. When the UN votes on important topics, Russia counts on support from its African allies. Consider the General Assembly resolution from 2014 that denounced Russia for annexing Crimea (UN, 2014). 29 African nations abstained from voting, while 6 did not vote at all. When it came to crucial UN votes on Syria and the December 2018 resolution denouncing Russia's militarization of Crimea, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azov, Russia also looked to its African allies for assistance (UN, 2018).

In spite of a call from Congolese opposition figures for an investigation and increased international involvement in the dispute, Russia teamed up with some African nations in Security Council rotating seats in 2019 to thwart UN efforts to examine the disputed election results in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Russia made a conscious attempt to garner support where her interests were concerned by using the African nations. A UK-drafted Security Council resolution that demanded a ceasefire in Libya and denounced the conduct of Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar was rejected in April 2019 by Russia and the African-three (Michelle, 2019). Additionally in April 2019, Russia helped Africa 3 (A3) thwart a UN declaration on the coup in Sudan and forbade other Security Council members from meddling in the domestic affairs of other nations (UN, 2019).

An rising interdependence characterizes relations between Russia and Africa. Nevertheless, this makes sense in light of newly developing realities:

At a time when both Russia and the United States are engaged in aggressive posturing, threats, and counter threats that amount to virtually resurrecting the Cold War, Russia has promised to provide Africa attractive bargains. Both are demonstrating their military might by building up their arsenals, which will have a significant impact on both world security and peace.

All of the main powers' motivations for being present in Africa are the same, including Russia. This explains why their approaches to engaging with Africa don't vary much.

China is more dedicated to shaping international trends and actively participating in international organizations than Russia, and it is more outspoken on forums for multilateral diplomacy. China is becoming more concerned about issues such as energy politics, climate change, and international security. China asserts that it is dedicated to refraining from meddling in the internal affairs of African governments.???

The reality is that, given its history of expansionist tendencies, Russia is unlikely to follow suit. Currently, there are conflicting reactions to Russia's expanding involvement. Russia is unlikely to be able to compete with Western nations in terms of trade and aid, as seen in many North-South Cooperation platforms, such as the EU-ACP framework, which is governed by the terms of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the African Caribbean and Pacific group of countries, and the African Growth and the United States-sponsored op.

Russia has attempted to reassert its footprint in Africa by using the few economic instruments at its disposal. Numerous state- and privately-owned enterprises in Russia find the region's large population, need for reliable long-term energy supply, and wealth of natural resources to be appealing. Russia's goals in Africa are, however, constrained by fundamental geo-economic and geo-political realities. It provides relatively little in the way of genuine needs for African governments. China, the USA, Japan, and the EU, whose assistance and investments in Africa total in the tens of billions of euros (Anna, 2018), far outpace its efforts.

China, India, the United States, and Germany continue to be sub-Saharan Africa's top trade partners, according to World Bank (2017). The World Bank estimates that in 2017, sub-Saharan Africa imported over \$ 2.5 billion from Russia, while its exports to Russia were valued approximately \$0.6 billion. This results in a about \$3 billion overall trade turnover between Russia and sub-Saharan Africa, which is insignificant when compared to the \$56 billion and \$27 billion, respectively, in value of the region's commerce with China and the United States (Ronjeni, 2018).

Russia does not contribute much to Africa's economic growth. The majority of Russia's help takes the form of debt forgiveness, which Russian authorities estimate will cost \$20 billion over a 20-year period. This amount pales in comparison to the \$143 billion in commercial loans that Chinese companies provided to African nations between 2000 and 2017 (China-Africa Research Initiative, 2017).

The fact that many African countries were hesitant to support one side in the conflict in Ukraine when the UN General Assembly decided to suspend Russia's membership in the Human Rights Council demonstrates that Africa has not yet given Russia its complete support. Only 10 of the 54 African governments who participated in this voting supported the resolution, while the other nine abstained and 35 did not participate. This number is substantially lower than the 28 African nations who backed the UN resolution requesting the immediate, unconditional, and full withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine.

It is important to remember from the debate that Russia's involvement in Africa serves both soft power and practical economic purposes. Russia's return to Africa is due to her desire for quick access to important resources and markets as well as other compelling geostrategic factors, such as the deterioration of her relations with the West.

The advantages of the major powers' activities in Africa are correspondingly matched by their deficiencies in other aspects of their relationship, in addition to the aforementioned evident truths. The opportunity to diversify their economic links, which up until recently were mostly with Western powers, may have been made possible by Russia's rising influence in Africa. However, the amount of trade and investment going to African nations has only slightly increased in terms of tangible advantages.

Concluding Remarks

Russia's suffocating influence in Africa inevitably has an impact on the balance of power. Therefore, Russia's objectives and determination to project strength beyond its boundaries include her internal backing for African development and her re-emergence. The fact that Russia's connections with Africa are mostly restricted to certain regions and a small number of nations tends to undermine claims that its return to the continent after a decade of neglect is really humanitarian. Russia acted in post-colonial Africa in much the same way that none of the established world powers, most notably France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, did so impartially and without furthering their own interests. The idea of foreign aid to Africa, which indirectly promotes altruistic behavior as a crucial element of her revitalized links with Africa, is contradictory in this study.

Essentially, Russia's primary characteristics in Africa are based on a clear intention to stay out of lengthy wars, a willingness to delegate dangerous or expensive exploits to non-state players, and an efficient use of resources in pursuit of chances when they present themselves. All things considered,

Russia is committed to balancing China's substantial economic presence on the continent with American influence.

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