

## Geopolitical Security Concerns: A Catalyst for Russia's Reengagement of Africa in Relations

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v5i4.1053>

| Matthew T. Taiwo<sup>1</sup> | Akin Ademuyiwa<sup>2,\*</sup> |

<sup>1</sup>University of Lagos, Lagos

<sup>2</sup>University of Ibadan, Dept.  
of European Studies, Ibadan

\*[akin.ademuyiwa@gmail.com](mailto:akin.ademuyiwa@gmail.com)



This work is licensed  
under a Creative Commons Attribution-  
ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

### ABSTRACT

Russia, also in the garb of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, had a record of a long-standing relations with Africa, the relationship that incidentally took a cold turn at the instance of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, as Russia prioritized stabilizing its domestic issues as the successor of the Soviet's legacy. The emergence of the 21st century came with the post-Cold War security threat to Russian geopolitical space especially from its cold war rivals and hostile bordering states thus, prompting the conscientious efforts by Russia to review its foreign policy towards African alignment. The new Russia-Africa relations have generated a lot of interest by researchers, who have addressed the issue from a wide range of views, some of which included political, ideology, technical and economic. Cognizant of the geopolitical security concerns, which is observed as the primary basis for its new African relations, this research aims to examine Russian reengagement of Africa in relations adopting geostrategic theory. Data are gathered from secondary sources. The research is qualitative and framed within the scope of Russia-Africa security relations from 2014, following its annexation of Crimea, which marked a new phase of hostility between Russia and some North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allied countries. To achieve its strategic goal in Africa, Russia needs to pursue a comprehensive cooperation in other areas of direct investment that could offer African countries reciprocal paybacks that meet their national interests farther than concentrating on military aspect to achieving a personal goal.

### KEYWORDS

Russia-Africa cooperation; security threat; national interests; strategic goal; foreign policy

### INTRODUCTION

The current prevalent 21<sup>st</sup> century Russia hobnobbing with Africa is not novel as far as Russia-African relations are concerned. Such fraternizing can be traced back to, first, its pre-Soviet days, and, later, the Soviet era that was characterized by competition of superiority between the US and Soviet Union amidst their scrambling for influence in Africa. Russia, then as an empire, had its first relations with some African countries such as Morocco (1897), Tunisia (1869) and Ethiopia (1898) during its confrontation with the Ottoman Empire, the present day Turkey. However, a new phase of communication was the official relationship with Egypt and Ethiopia in the 1940s. The USSR engaged many African countries in significant multifaceted relationships at military, political, economic and technical levels, among others, following the Second World War. This phase of intensified relationships was aided by the agitations of the European colonial territories for independence. The Soviet Union gave a military support to Egypt during the Suez crisis in

1956-1957, military-technical assistance and finance to National Liberation Movements in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1980, had its presence in Congo in 1960 for military assistance to resist the secession plan of Kataya province, Nigeria in 1967 for military and humanitarian aid intervention during the civil war, Angola and Mozambique in the 1995 to 2000 civil war and interference in Ethiopia-Somalian Ogadan war in 1977-1978, to mention a few. Russian relations between the aforementioned countries were not limited to military confines. It also espoused economic and technical aspects. Ajaokuta steel construction was a project contracted to the Soviet Union on a bilateral accord, Angola and Ethiopia then were beneficiaries of Soviet economic aid. The list is not exhausted.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 ushered in a natural shift in the Soviet-Africa relations; the legacy that Russia, as the successor of the USSR could not sustain because of the domestic issues that required prime attention to, first, achieve the national stability.

The Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and the backlashes, mostly from the European continent and the US, that the act generated gave Russia a cue for a review of its foreign policy for its alertness to security threats from hostile countries among whom the West and the US in particular became the suspects. The global space had been polarized on ideological lines and competition for super-power status between the US and USSR during the Cold War era. This consciousness reverberated from the popular condemnation of Russia's annexation of the Crimea, a country that is internationally recognized as Ukrainian territory, such that, the seemingly thawed hostility between them assumed a renewed upsurge.

Russia's geopolitical interests are multidimensional, varying from economic, technical, and political to military, but all could only be achieved in a secure environment that is void of external threats to its national security. So, a guarantee of Russia's border protection which requires the cooperation of the neighboring state demands prime attentions. And even then, that some of the neighbouring states that were formerly members of the Soviet Union, including the Balkans and Baltic, are tilting towards aligning with the European Union (EU) or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) under the influence the US, the Russia's perceived arch-enemy. With the overwhelming isolation or existential threat that besieges its territory, Russia determines to advance its post-Soviet relations with Africa from peripheral to a more substantive closeness. This impulse prompted its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 with an objective to forestall Ukraine's aspiration for European Union membership, a venture which presumably would expose Russia to external insecurity by NATO expansion to its regional enclave.

This trajectory informed President Putin's anticipatory actions to tackle the dangers of relying on neighbouring states for its border security. Thus, he gives credence to the importance of Africa in his foreign policy in order to checkmate the western efforts to segregating it from the world stage, and to woo the alliance of Africa to influencing decisions at the international platforms to sustain its perceived legacy of a super-power status.

The paper attributed Russia's policy towards Africa as a reactivity to security threats against its geopolitical cum geographical space with a purpose to add to the body existing knowledge in the same area of subject. The work would go farther than identifying the problem but also will suggest a workable solution to address the problem.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Cognizant of the geopolitical security concerns, which is observed as the primary basis for its new African relations, this research aims to examine Russian reengagement of Africa in

relations adopting geostrategic theory. Data are gathered from secondary sources. The research is qualitative and framed within the scope of Russia-Africa security relations from 2014, following its annexation of Crimea, which marked a new phase of hostility between Russia and some North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allied countries.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Soviet-African security policy in retrospect and the need for Russian security policy review***

The Soviet-African policy transcended a sheer opportunity of exploitation. It was nurtured by reasonable objectives part of which is to establish the presence of the Union on the African continent, promote certain military interest, assert Soviet's claim to global super-power role and gain the backing of the African countries, being the region with the highest voting capacity in the United Nations, on Soviet undertakings in the international forum (*Soviet Policy and Africa: National Intelligence Council Memorandum: Released 2001*).

During the Soviet era, Joseph Stalin made an overture, as a part of Soviet general policy to engage Africa in relationship as with the other non-American and Europe to equip them with anti-colonial doctrine to enable them fight against colonialism and western imperialism (Bassou, 2023). It was unfortunate that the revolutionary idea that Soviet projected failed to fall according to plan as the African Revolutionary crusaders, though literally advocating African revolutions, were practically not enthralled by the Soviet's anti-colonist doctrine, but comfortably relating with the imperialists whom they criticized (Basso, 2023). So, there was no significant imprint of the Soviet military cooperation with Africa around 1920s of the Soviet regime. During the wave of independence across African countries that were still under colonial rule, African revolutionaries were organizing into liberation movements in order to agitate for liberation from the colonial domination. The Soviet Union under the rule of Nikita Khrushchev saw an opportunity to reengage Africa in relationship using the movements as a smokescreen by offering them military and diplomatic assistance to equip them to achieve independence from colonialism with the hope of turning the countries to Soviet satellites after independence (Bassou, 2023).

The Soviet exploited the need to compensate for its waned influence in the Middle East to compensate for its failed relationship with Egypt from 1971, and by the Camp David Accord of 1978. (*Soviet Policy and Africa: National Intelligence Council Memorandum: Released 2001*). On the other hand, some African countries and insurgent groups were coveting military assistance and support from the Soviet Union, doubling with their disposition to enduring large-scale combat involvement by communist states in Africa (*Soviet Policy and Africa: National Intelligence Council Memorandum: Released 2001*).

The liberation movements such as the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), African National Congress (ANC), South-West African National Union (SWANU) in Namibia, South African Communist Party (SACP) in South Africa, South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), Zimbabwe AfriNational Union for Total Independence and People's Union (ZAPU) in Zimbabwe and Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) all enjoyed the Soviet military aid at one time or the other (Bassou, 2023). The Soviet assistance to some of these liberation movements subsisted farther than independence attainment as its military ties especially in the aspect of military training, and arms supply to Egypt, Libya and Algeria persisted.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union came with its own security challenge which altered the security architecture of Russia. The Russian Federation has got to protect its geographical territory as a unit sovereign state but which can only be guaranteed with the

cooperation of the bordering countries.

Russia is bordered by fourteen countries – Norway, Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan North Korea, China and Mongolia. Eight of the countries states namely, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are former republics of the Soviet Union.

Following the disintegration of the S.U., Russia has been apprehensive about the mutual trust or loyalty of many of the neighboring states, those it began to suspect as closer enemies for their ill disposition to relating with Russia. So, its strategic plan to protect its new inherited perceived superpower image motivated the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This outfit was conceived to be the conglomerate platform for the former Soviet members, though as independent sovereign states with mutual respect relationship, and to replicate the role of the WARSAW Pact in the heydays of the USSR. The members of the organization, upon its formation declared their commitment to the fraternity that existed between them to cooperate on both internal and external policies.

Notwithstanding their cooperation agreement which encompasses different areas of national interest of the each member state, territorial defense against both internal and external forces became the priority on the Russia's scale of preference.

The CIS Collective Security Council agreed on a triad memorandum which include, "Collective Security Concept, the Declaration by the Collective Security Treaty States and the Basic Guidelines for Developing Military Cooperation" among the member states.

Unfortunately, Russia's post-Soviet national security and global image was challenged by some of the former Soviet Union republics. The Baltic States comprising, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, right from the disintegration of the S.U. had assumed a hostile standing against Russian Federation. Regardless of the fact that, the CIS is conceived to cooperate on mutual respect and equality among them as sovereign states, the Baltic States declined the membership of the organization with disdain. To make the matter worse, aside the three Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania), Finland, Poland and Norway bordering Russian at the Western flank chose the Russia's perceived arch-enemies- the West and U.S, as their allies, thus making Russia vulnerable to security threat at the Western borders. The six countries found a new relations in NATO and so became its members.

The CIS at its formation won the allegiance of thirteen out of the disintegrated fifteen members of the Soviet Union except the three Baltic States. There was later an upturn of the situation when Georgia and Ukraine pulled out of the community in 2008 and 2014 respectively. Georgia exit was spurred by Russia's alleged interference in its national affairs by supporting the South-Ossetia aspiration for secession from Georgia.

Similarly, Ukraine followed suit in 2014 in reactiveness to Russia's annexation of the Crimea, impliedly demeaning the sovereign status and territorial integrity of the country. The exit of the two countries opened Russia to an external threat from the Eastward border.

It is worth noting that Ukraine, however, means much more to Russia than an ordinary neighbouring state that shares a border with it. Being one out of the three Slavic states that constituted the S.U. – Russia, Belarus and Ukraine- there was strong affinal relationships and consanguinity among them. Besides the fact that the three Slavic are the closest in affinity to Russia, Ukraine is the second largest former Soviet Republic next to Russia, and where the Russian Black Sea fleet is harboured.

The Black Sea is historically and strategically important to Russia's national and geopolitical security. It is a region that empowers Russia to project its military power towards other regions including, the Mediterranean and serves as a gateway to Eurasia and North Africa (Kimora, A. & Wezeman, 2018; Kayser, nd.). It is strategically an important

area for Russian Navy to ensure its military security.

The Black Sea has recently been a center of attraction where geopolitical interests of the Russian perceived enemies- the European Union, the U.S and NATO now intersect. This instance is reinforced by the increase in NATO's expansion towards a Russian border by a way of incorporating and attempting to accept countries that surround the Black Sea into the organization – an organization that Russia identifies as its major external threat. Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine are contiguous to the Black Sea (Kimora, & Wezeman, 2018). Bulgaria and Romania are already members of the NATO and Ukraine taking the process of ascension as its member.

America's obsession in bringing Ukraine into NATO and making it a bulwark of Russian border appeared as a nudge that gave Russia a cue to review its foreign security policy, a part which tilts towards Africa.

### ***New Russia-African Relations***

Though, Russia has had a long relationship with Africa, the streak of its rapprochement took a new strength after its annexation of the Crimea in 2014. Russia's annexation has been alleged as a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and an attempt to redraw the international territorial order, and as such, has garnered backlashes and condemnation from many countries in the United Nation via its General Assembly votes. As with a lot of countries the world over, Russia expedited the revival of its old relations with Africa and to reengage them in superficial relationships aiming to assume a new vigour that could neutralize the freezing economic sanctions placed on the state by some western nations as a punitive response to its war against Ukraine beginning in 2022. This renewed vision, triggered by the punitive measures melted against it by some of the European countries tend to connote an existential threat to Russia Federation Ogunnoiki & Nwediba, 2024; Kalila, 2019). President Vladimir Putin of Russia confirmed the catalyst for Russia's current foreign (security) policy in his address at the meeting with senior staff of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Moscow on the 14 June, 2024. He decried the NATO unlimited expansion project towards the regions bordering Russia's borders, and their hegemonic syndrome to determine the world order. According to him:

*They (the West-led US) responded to our justified questions with excuses, claiming that there were no plans to attack Russia, and that the expansion of NATO was not directed against Russia. They effectively forgot about the promises made to the Soviet Union and later Russia in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the bloc (NATO) would not accept new members.*

Putin reverberated a justification for his strategy to counter the horrendous move by the western countries to encircle Russia, using countries bordering Russia, including Ukraine, as proxies to achieve the goal.

The renewed Russo-African rapprochement has been notable during the regime of a Russia's past president Dmitry Medvedev, who toured a few African countries comprising Egypt, Nigeria, Namibia and Angola in 2009, and Algeria in 2010 to enhance economic interests and bilateral agreements with them. In the effort to consolidate the renewed relations, President Vladimir Putin has also visited some African states at different opportunities between years 2005 to 2018. He visited Egypt in 2005, Morocco, 2006, Algeria 2006, Libya, 2008, and South Africa in 2006. He repeated his trips to Egypt in 2015 and 2017, and South Africa in 2013 and 2018 (The Africa Report, Aug. 19, 2019). South Africa supposedly reciprocated Russia's overture by becoming the first African countries to be a member of the BRICS, an international organization comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa from its inception.

A foreign Affairs Minister, Sergey Lavrov also travelled to Congo Republic, Egypt, Uganda, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Eswatini, Mali, Mauritania, South Africa, Sudan and Kenya at the interval of year 2022 and 2023 to reinforce bilateral relationships with the countries (Reuters, 2023; Aljazeera, 2023).

Russia tried to advance its relations with Africa with the launch of Russia-Africa Summit, the first of its type being held from 23- 24 October, 2019 in Sochi, Russia. It was an unprecedented event in the history of Russia-Africa relations, targeted at developing cooperation across the areas of priority including security. Russia's veracity on consolidating the revived relations with Africa also saw the convening of the Second Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia held on 27-28 July, 2023. In the "Declaration of the Second Russia-Africa Summit", items 32-40 in sub-section, "Security Cooperation", underscored the joint benefits of Russia-Africa security cooperation to counter new challenges and threats.

In the Africa rapprochement, Russia, under President Vladimir Putin seeks to reinvigorate its relevance in the global stage by creating a multi-polar world that would loosen the dominant Western global influence. Beyond that reasoning, Russia aims to have a zone of influence that links Africa, the Middle East and Europe in order to access the western Mediterranean ports to mitigate NATO's activities on the southern flank borders (Siegel, 2023). Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia are African countries that are located in the Mediterranean region. During the Soviet era, the USSR took advantage of the Mediterranean to enhance the projection of its military power capability by stationing most of its naval fleet in the Sea with the cooperation of Syria and the North Africa. Its presence in the basin allowed it to defend its Black Sea borders from NATO's naval threat (Kimora & Wezeman, 2018). Thus, Russia discovers the prime importance of reengaging these regions fitting to aid its aspiration to establish its naval bases. Access to strategic waterways, such as the Red and Mediterranean Seas would accord Russia and Africa a more projecting geopolitical influence in the Middle East.

Giles (2013) noted that, a part of stimulus for Russia's reengagement with Africa is the notion of cooperation in Africa between the BRICS countries. He suggests that Russia-Africa relations offers Russia an opportunity to keep surveillance on the activities of other BRICS member states in Africa, and the prospect of creating a cohesive block to counter the US and western influence.

DIIS Report underscored some provocations behind Russia's path to reviving relations with Africa. The report presupposed that the Federation seeks to expand its influence across Africa; to reassert its perceived global military status, aspire for geopolitical influence and economic interests, and woo political supports in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Political friendship in an organisation of the UN type is strategic to security ideal of any country including Russia. So, garnering of support from allies goes a long way in determining the behavior of voters when a concrete resolutions are to be made in the international community. Though, the results of votes cast at the floor of the UN do not have binding forces, it offers heavy impact and reflects global position on crucial issues. Africa has the highest voting capacity in the UN, being the bloc that has the largest numbers of countries numbering fifty four. So, Russia revived relations with Africa is a calculated exploit to influence decisions on the international community platform in the favour of its national and geopolitical security.

Blank (2024) suggested that Russia has been aspiring to gain influence across the Sahel regions and establish foothold throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa. There have been a growing indications of Russian friendliness with the Sahel regions from

the instances of the intermittent military coups that swept across the region in the recent times. There were coup d'états in Mali in 2020 and again in 2021, ushering Colonel Assimi Goita to power in the country, Chad 2021 with General Mahamat Idriss Deby as the head of the junta, Guinea 2021 with Lieutenant-Colonel Mamady Doumbouya as the head of state, Niger Republic 2023, with General Abdourahamane Tchiani as the head of state and Burkina Faso 2022, with Captain Ibrahim Traore as the military head. Though, there are no overt Russia's facilitation of the military takeover in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, there are, however, strong indications that Russia has had an in-road to establish a foothold in these regions by embracing the military regimes of Mali and Burkina Faso. In addition, it gives security assistance, diplomatic support and information operations support to them (Stronski, 2023).

All these overtures have been made by Russia by employing different tactics involving military assistance, trading, media war via propaganda and promissory cooperation in security, politics, economics, culture, humanitarian, science and technology.

### ***Russia's African Engagement Strategies***

Russia deploys various strategic means to reengage African countries in relations. One of its strategies is opportunistic in that it exploits its track precedent, as a non-colonialist power, to wage anti-colonial propaganda war against the Western colonial powers, especially, Britain and France, and condemning their centuries' long dominance and exploitation of African resources. Many African countries have been subjected to political instability for several decades from the insurgent groups, bandits, terrorists and Jihadists. The promises of intervention by the foreign powers such as America and French that occasioned the basis of their military presence in the African countries that are affected has conspicuously failed to combat the menace. The ineptitude of their troops to achieve political stability in the region turned out as an opportunity for Russia to demean the capacity of the western colonial powers in containing insecurity, most especially, in the Sahel. Russia provides liberal security assistance that would guarantee the national defence of a lot of African states – Nigeria, Mozambique, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Angola and Mali. This feat is facilitated by the sale of weaponry comprising air defence system, fighter jets and helicopters, and armoured tanks to them (Reva, 2024). Russia qualified as the major arms exporter to Africa constituting about 40% of the gross arms delivered alongside the US, China and France. Egypt, Angola, Algeria, North Africa and Central Africa are importers of Russian arms (Reva, 2024).

Russia, as of 2023, have established military technical cooperation with about forty three African countries to be training their military personnel and other law enforcement officers in Russian military academy (Caprile & Pichon, 2024).

The Private Military Companies, one of which is the popularly known Wagner Group have been used for mercenary operation by Russia to give security assistance to some African countries pledging to combat insecurity fueled by terrorists in the states. Though, there were initial controversies about the connection of Russia to the military mercenaries and also Russia's denial about it, an evidence surfaced crystal clear after the death of the Wager group, Yevgeny Prigozin, was announced in 2023, preceded by the company's mutiny against Russian Defence Ministry. The Deputy Minister of Defence and Andrei Averyanov (a Major General in the Russian Military Intelligence Agency) reiterated Russia's unwearied commitment of its military operations in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali and Niger Republic (European parliament briefing).

Daily Sabah, a Turkish daily newspaper, August 4, 2020 reported "Russia's new Africa ambitions" of which Russia considers Africa a top priority to achieve military cooperation

agreements. It pointed to the spiral movement of Russia's military agreements from only four before 2015 to twenty one in 2015 (Agnieszka, 2020), plus the agreements to build six military bases in the Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan .

Besides the military cooperation, Russia also engages in trading, mining by concession to Wagner groups, energy market, and nuclear cooperation with about twenty countries including Egypt and Nigeria, where nuclear plants are in the pipeline of agreements to be built, to join South Africa where Russian technology nuclear power plant has already been operational. (European parliament briefing).

Russian Federation advanced an unprecedented relations with Africa beginning from year 2019 by convening the 'First Russia-Africa Summit' that was tagged – Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum. The event was held from 23-24 October, 2019 in Sochi under the motto "For Peace, Security and Development" where priority interests of participating countries to cooperate across security, politics, economics, culture, humanitarian, science and technology were outlined. With this, Russia aims to engage Africa in a seamless mutual cooperation in the summit which was co-hosted by President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt and attended by the fifty four African states; forty three heads of state and representatives from the remaining eleven African countries.

The Second Russia-Africa Summit was held at St. Petersburg on the 27-28 July, 2023 to continue and consolidate on the strategic foundation of the first summit and, to reaffirm the principles and objectives agreed upon in the earlier summit (Declaration of the second Russia-Africa summit, 2023). The second summit gathered forty nine African states – seventeen heads of state and thirty two representatives.

The security aspect of the declaration adopted the creation of a joint security mechanism to combat terrorism in Africa among other myriad military, arms race and business accords (Declaration of the second Russia-Africa summit, 2023).

Russia also has adopted the strategy of misinformation and calumny campaigns against Western colonial escapades and exploitation of African resources by French and European Union. They promote chauvinism, ethnic confrontation and demeaning the United Nation with the aim to muster the trust of African countries deriving from their non-colonial history.

## **CONCLUSION**

Russia, since its empire era, had been in relationship with Africa on various bilateral interests, though not in a deep sense of it. The relationships continued in the Soviet period but circumstantially took a cold turn occasioned by the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, as Russia concentrated on addressing its domestic issues aiming to first ensure the internal stability as the successor of the Soviet States. Lack of trust may be the security threats to its geopolitical space following the post-Cold War relationship between Russia, the West and the U.S. engendered the conscientious efforts by Russia to redefine its foreign policy. Thus, it sought to bend towards African alignment in order to woo new allies.

Russia's strategies in reengaging Africa in relations are both opportunistic and calculated. It has adopted the means of military cooperation through which it assures African states where insecurity abounds via insurgency, banditry, jihadism and terrorism of security intervention by deploying military mercenaries, supplies of arms and training of African military personnel. Besides the military cooperation, Russia has also engaged Africa in areas of trading, mining by concession, energy market, nuclear cooperation and

building of Russian technology nuclear power plants.

In its calculated strategy, Russia also has embarked on de-popularizing its rival counterpart- the western states and the U.S. by criticizing their activities on the shore of Africa through misinformation and calumny campaigns.

Russia's reengagement with Africa took an unprecedented height beginning from 2019 with the initiative of the 'First Russia-Africa Summit' that was tagged – Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum. The event was held from 23-24 October, 2019 in Sochi, Russia under the motto "For Peace. The Second Russia-Africa Summit was held at St. Petersburg on the 27-28 July, 2023 to continue and consolidate on the strategic foundation of the first summit and, to reaffirm the principles and objectives agreed upon in the earlier summit.

Nevertheless, Russia's goal of competing superpower status with other superpower rivals is a difficult task to maintain judging from the index of its economic capability. It is not a so strong economy that has the clout to compensate Africa in terms of reciprocal benefits. The index of Russia's trade exchange from 2013 – 2023 showed a value of US\$ 26.4 billion, with Egypt being the largest trade partner sharing about 16% of the total volume. Even, with the increase of Russia's trade volume with Africa since the 2019 Russia-Africa Summit, its capacity still falls far less than the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of the European countries that invested in Africa. The World Investment Report (WIR) of 2023 indexed European investment in Africa led by UK holding a stock of US\$ 60 billion, France US\$ 54 billion and Netherland US\$ 54 billion from 2012 to 2022.

According to Statista Research Department, July 30, 2024 and August 14, 2024, China's FDI in Africa valued about US\$ 4.23 billion in 2020 alone while the US' FDI revealed a volume of US\$ 69.03 billion in 2023 respectively.

In 2022, Africa's imports from Russia's was less than two percent (Reva, 2024; Pichon, 2024) compared to China's eighteen percent and the EU's twenty five percent (Reva, 2024). Russia's import from Africa valued also less than one percent in 2022 in comparison to the EU's thirty three percent, China's 12.18 percent and the U.S.' five percent. However, Russia arms supply to Africa from 2018 to 2022 was about forty percent, exceeding those from the U.S, Europe and China (Reva, 2024).

The exchange trade movement as reflected above implies that Russia may be perceived by Africa as more a beneficiary of its relations with Africa than sharing equal benefits, and such that may result to African countries looking elsewhere for a better relations that would give their national interests utmost priorities. For Russia to achieve its African goal, it has to be cognizant that geosecurity agenda is capital intensive project that could be propped by a strong and stable economy. Thus, it should consider pursuing a more healthy economic competition and cooperation with its European counterparts to mitigate its security risk.

In its relations with Africa, it is suggested that Russia should be more concentrated on a long-term based capital investment, advance trade agreement on essential commodities, and provide humanitarian aid via grant and loans to African countries to secure a sustainable friendliness that could guarantees its defence aspiration.

## REFERENCES

- A security strategy for the Black Sea. (December, 2023). *Scowcroft Centre for Strategy and Security*, 1-32. Atlantic Council.
- Agnieszka, P. (2020). Russia in Africa: Is great power competition returning to the continent?. *Research report*, No. 15, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.23661/bp15.2020>
- Bassou, A. (2023). Military relations between Russia and Africa, before and after the war

- in Ukraine. *Atlantic Council Africa Center*, 1-11. <https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/military-relations-between-russia-and-africa-and-after-war-ukraine>
- Blank S. (2024). Moscow expands military influence in Africa. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 21 (41). <https://jamestown.org/program/russia-increases-influence-operations-in-africa>
- Caprile, A. & Pichon, E. (2024). Russia in Africa: An Atlas. *European Parliament Briefing*, 1-11. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS\\_BRI\(2024\)757654](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2024)757654)
- Concept of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation 2013. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation. No. 229. March 31, 2023. The ministry of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation. [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/fundamental\\_documents/1860586](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586)
- Giles, K. (2013). Russian interest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press.
- Kalila, A. (2019). Russia's Great return to Africa? *Russie. Nei.*, 114, 1-30. Notes de l' Ifri. <https://www.ifri.org/en/papers/russias-great-return-africa>
- Kayser, S. (nd). Geopolitics of the Black Sea. *Research Article*, 1-7.
- Kimora, A. & Wezeman, S. T. (2018). Russia and Black Sea Security. *SIPRI*, 1-20. <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/russia-and-black-sea-security>
- Ogunnoiki, A., Ani, I., & Iwediba, I. (2024). The Trajectory of Russia-Africa Relations: Highlighting Continuity and Discontinuity. *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Political Science*, 9(2), 86–105. <https://najops.org.ng/index.php/najops/article/view/243>
- Reva, D. (2024). Russia's growing influence in Africa calls for more balanced partnership. Institute for Security Studies. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/russia-s-growing-influence-in-africa-calls-for-more-balanced-partnerships>
- Soviet policy and Africa. National Intelligence Council Memorandum, Released May 2001.
- Vladimir Putin. (14 June, 2024). Speech at the meeting with senior staff of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Moscow. [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1957107](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1957107)