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## TOPIC: THE CHALLENGES OF RUSSIAN CONTEMPORARY ENGAGEMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN STATES 1991-2019

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### **Biography of the Author:-**

Dr. Njuafac Kenedy Fonju is a holder of a Doctorate / Ph.D in History with specialisation in the History of International Relations obtained from the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon in 2012. He has been lecturing since 2007, as a Part-Time Lecturer (2007-2015), Assistant Lecturer (2015-2017) and presently a Senior Lecturer in the University of Dschang, Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, Department of History and Archeology since November 2017. He delivers lectures in the History of International Relations and Political History in the Post-Graduate and undergraduate levels. Dr. Kenedy has been lecturing courses such as Africa in International Relations, China from the Communist Revolution to Market Economy, Communist World in International Relations, Inter-American Relations and Black Problems in the Americas, Conflict Resolution and the Culture of Peace, Issues and Challenges of the Commonwealth of Nations and Political Elites in Colonial Black African Countries, the Politics of empowerment of Minorities in the World since the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and History of Political Thought since Machiavelli. He is also lecturing Introduction to Bilingualism, Introduction to language and Nation-Building, the History of Bilingualism in the World, National and International Business in Bilingualism in the Department of Bilingual Letters of the University of Dschang. In addition, He also delivers lectures concerning scientific English in the Departments of Physics and Earth Sciences in the Faculty of Sciences of the same institution. His broader research interests include emerging powers and their foreign policy strategies and strength in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century specifically China and United States as hyper-economic powers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the Super Stars of Asia. He is the author of seven scientific articles focusing on Asia, China, Eastern Europe, U.S.A, Africa and the Challenges of international terrorism in the World with two scientific international communication papers presented and have also edited two books on the African Gulf of Guinea He has also served as the Divisional Secretary of the former Cameroon National Elections Observatory of Lebialelem Representation, Elections Supervisor, Election Monitor, and Trainer of Trainers of Polling Stations Delegate from 2002 to 2007. He was also appointed Secretary of Alou Council Tenders Board for the Awards of Public Contract in the municipality from July 20, 2016 to April 2, 2019. Presently, he is a Municipal Councilor of Dschang Urban Council since February 9, 2020 Municipal Elections in Cameroon, spokesman of the Municipal Group, appointed Referral in the implementation of Bilingualism (English and French) in the Dschang Municipality and recently, Rapporteur of the Commission of National, International Decentralised Cooperation of Development and Communication within the forty-one (41) Councillors of Dschang Council since December 2020.

### **Abstract:-**

This paper deals with the challenges of Russian relations with thirty years of Russo- Southern African relations between 1991 and 2019, following the closure of several diplomatic services and questionable engagements of nuclear extension in the region with a hiding agenda of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Her incapacity to continue running some of her embassies in the region was due to lack of financial resources which resulted from the collapse of the Cold War and disintegration of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) into Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991. The devastated Russian economy could only left her behind unrealistic foreign agenda that was perfectly destroyed by Mikhail Gorbachev's hasty declaration of Glasnost and Perestroika as new international norms which facilitated the United States of America (U.S.A) to re-gain a unique prominent position as the Policeman of the World. This meant that Russian engagements with SubSaharan African countries were now in a handicap and dangerous stance towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. What then constituted Soviet Union's lateness of foreign policy initiative towards Africa's, challenges of the 1990s and new patterns of Russian relations and initiatives of exploiting natural resources and setting up of nuclear agenda in Southern African States are the main concerns of this study. With the adoption of a historical approach, the scrutiny of specialised sources concerning this question enabled us to come out with finding that, contemporary Russian attempt to aggressively reinforce relations with specific Southern African countries pave the way forward of Great Fear in case of any nuclear war in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. That Southern and Central African leaders of Sub-Saharan Africa should be aware that the previous Cold War Super-Power competition was over but it took a new form in the face of a unique Hyper- Power position dominated by the United States in the Post-Cold War era which the crumbled Russia is recently

*bend to correct some of her mistakes through deeper penetration of main strategic zones of Africa as a means of preparing and multiplying her networks of attacks and defense in the Atlantic and India Oceans. This engagement with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is very pertinent after thirty years of the collapsed of USSR and new orientations in international relations and international political economy with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century United States and China Hyper-economic positions in the global economic system with U.S Hyper-Power position in international politics as a unique policeman of the World.*

**Keywords:-** *Challenges, Russia, renewed interests, engagements, nuclear energy, Perestroika, Glasnost, PostCold War, new international order and Great Fear, Hyper-Power, unique policeman.*

## INTRODUCTION

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Transvaal Republic established diplomatic relations with Russia and from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Soviet Union withdrew its Ambassador after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and by 1961, and relations with South Africa became deteriorated. This was because South African white Apartheid regime considered the USSR as an enemy as she supported Communists regimes in the African Continent both financially and militarily. For example, the South African Communist Party (SACP) operating under the direction of the COMINTERN, was a strong supporter of the African National Congress (ANC). South African white politicians routinely denounced the ANC as a devious communist plot to overthrow the government. The Soviet Union withdrew its Ambassador after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. After South Africa became a republic in 1961, relations were very cold. In 1961 the ANC and the SACP created a joint military wing, known as the "Spear of the Nation." South Africa considered the Soviet Union an enemy because it financially and militarily supported communism on the African continent. Pretoria severed diplomatic ties with Moscow in 1956, because of its support for the SACP. During 1956-1986, as part of the long South African Border War (1966-1990), the Soviets supplied and trained combat units from Namibia (SWAPO) and Angola (MPLA) at the ANC military training camps in Tanzania

In 1986 Gorbachev rejected the idea of a revolutionary takeover of the South African government, and advocated a negotiated settlement. Diplomatic ties were re-established with Russia in February 1992, after the Soviet Union was dissolved. The South African government evoked the term *rooi gevaar* to refer the political and military threat posed by the Soviet Union's support for the guerrilla wings of anti-apartheid movements such as SWAPO and the ANC. The ruling political party known as Nationalist Party under its Afrikaner President P. W. Botha and his successor F. W. de Klerk won an uncomfortable majority of 122 out of 166 seats in the May 1987 national elections in the all-white South African Parliament. There was one glimmer of light in the darkness according to John G. Stoessinger in 1990 concerning the question of Namibia's negotiated independence. In December 1988, South Africa finally agreed to grant independence to Namibia in exchange for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from neighbouring Angola, under the supervision of the United Nations. In April 1989, a 4,650 member UN Peacekeeping forces was installed when South African police clashed with infiltrators from the SWAPO. It was unlikely; however, that this incident was going to scuttle a process that had been painstakingly worked out in a succession of World Capital over a number of years and Namibia independence was just a matter of time that was realized in 1990 and the end of Apartheid. All these also coincided with the collapse of the USSR and putting Russia in a very difficult position in her relations with African and global affairs.

### 1. Kremlin Late Foreign Policy Initiative Towards Africa's and Challenges of the 1990s

This section deals with the late Kremlin foreign policy initiatives during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century developed by Nikita Khrushchev in the 1960s and those of Mikhail Gorbachev confusing stance in the late 1980s, unstable policy initiatives and financial incapacities in the moderation of Russian diplomatic activities in the region and diplomatic challenges of the Russian Federation during the 1990s.

#### 1.1. Foreign Policy Agenda of Nikita Khrushchev Towards Africa

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Joseph Stalin made Africa a very low priority, and discouraged relationships or studies of the continent. However, the decolonisation process of the 1950s and early 1960s opened new opportunities, which new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was eager to exploit the advantages of the independent African countries. To fortified those ambitions, Kremlin developed some major long-term policy goals as a guide to Communist attachment with Africa as follows: The first was targeted towards gaining a lasting presence on the Continent, second, gain a voice in African affairs, thirdly, undermine the presence of Western European / North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) influence, especially by identifying capitalism with Western imperialism. After 1962, it fought hard to prevent communist China from developing its own countervailing presence. At no time was Moscow willing to engage in combat in Africa, although its ally Cuba did so. Indeed the Kremlin at first assumed that the Russian model of socialized development would prove attractive to Africans eager to modernize. That did not happen and instead the Soviets emphasized identifying likely allies and giving them financial aid and munitions, as well as credits to purchase from the Soviet bloc. Although some countries, such as Angola and Ethiopia, became allies for a while, the connections proved temporary while Russian influence greatly diminished in 1991<sup>8</sup> following the disintegration of USSR. But right in the 1960s, the then U.S President put forth series of everlasting challenges in terms of foreign assistance to Third World Countries. The results of the Kennedy Round, concluded in 1967, were less than hoped for, but nonetheless impressive challenge the Communist World hoping to dominate Third World Countries with inconsistent support. The Russian down fall and incapacity to maintain her Cold War ambitions were destroyed by Gorbachev.

#### 1.2. Mikhail Gorbachev Confusing Stance in the Last Decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Disintegration of the Soviet Union

In June 1988 Mikhail Gorbachev convened the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) where he strongly criticized leading party conservatives like Ligachev, Andrei Gromyko and Mikhail Solomentsev. In reaction, conservative delegates attacked Gorbachev and other reformers. According to Brown, there had not been as much open discussion and dissent at a party meeting since the early 1920s despite the deep-seated opposition for further reform, the CPSU was still hierarchical; the conservatives acceded to Gorbachev's demands because he was the CPSU General Secretary. The 19th Conference approved the establishment of the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD) and allowed for contested elections between the CPSU and independent candidates. Organized parties were not allowed. The CPD was elected in 1989; one-third of the seats were appointed by the CPSU and other public organizations

to sustain the Soviet one-party state. The elections were democratic but most elected CPD members were against any more radical reform. The elections marked the highest electoral turnout in Russian history; no election before or since had a higher participation rate. An organized opposition was established within the legislature under the name Inter-Regional Group of Deputies. An unintended consequence of these reforms was the increased anti-CPSU pressure; in March 1990 at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, the party was forced to relinquish its political monopoly of power, in effect turning the Soviet Union into a liberal democracy.

The CPSU's demise began in March 1990, when party elements were eclipsed in power by state bodies. From then until the Soviet Union's disestablishment, Gorbachev ruled the country through the newly created post of President of the Soviet Union. Following this, the central party apparatus played little practical role in Soviet affairs. Gorbachev had become independent from the Politburo and faced few constraints from party leaders. In the summer of 1990, the party convened the 28th Congress. A new Politburo was elected, previous incumbents except Gorbachev and Vladimir Ivashko, the CPSU Deputy General Secretary were removed. Later that year, the party began work on a new program with a working title, "Towards a Humane, Democratic Socialism"<sup>13</sup>. According to Brown, the program reflected Gorbachev's journey from an orthodox communist to a European social democrat. The freedoms of thought and organization, which were allowed by Gorbachev, led to a rise in nationalism in the Soviet republics, indirectly weakening the central authorities. In response to this, a referendum was held in 1991, in which most of the union republics voted to preserve the union in a different form. In reaction to this, conservative elements within the CPSU launched the August 1991 coup, which overthrew Gorbachev but failed to preserve the Soviet Union. When Gorbachev returned after the coup's collapse, he resigned from the CPSU and operations were handed over to Ivashko. The CPSU was outlawed on 29 August 1991 on Soviet territory, extended its further ban on 6 November on Russian soil by Yeltsin and Gorbachev resigned from the presidency on 25 December; the following day the Soviet Union was dissolved. On 30 November 1992; the Russian Constitutional Court not only upheld this decree, but barred the CPSU from ever being refunded. It accepted Yeltsin's argument that the CPSU was not a true party, but a criminal organisation that had ruled the Soviet Union as a dictatorship in violation of the Soviet Constitution. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russian adherents to the CPSU tradition, particularly as it existed before Gorbachev, reorganised themselves as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Today there is a widespread flora of parties in Russia claiming to be the successors of CPSU.

A number of causes contributed to weaknesses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), loss of control and the dissolution of the Soviet Union during the early 1990s. Some historians have written that Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of "glasnost" (political openness) was the root cause, noting that it weakened the party's control over society. Gorbachev maintained that *perestroika* without *glasnost* was doomed to failure anyway. Others have blamed the economic stagnation and subsequent loss of faith by the general populace in communist ideology. In the final years of the CPSU's existence, the Communist Parties of the federal subjects of Russia were united into the Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). After the CPSU's demise, the Communist Parties of the Union Republics became independent and underwent various separate paths of reform making up of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In Russia, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation emerged and has been regarded as the inheritor of the CPSU's old Bolshevik legacy into the present day. Therefore, the Continental Africa entered another new and challenging phase of relations with the later.

### **1.3. Unstable Policy Initiatives and Financial Incapacities in the Moderation of Russian Diplomatic Activities in the Region**

By 1990 the offensive had fizzled out in the Soviet Union relations with Southern African States both ideologically and financially broken. Moscow cut military aid, suspended credit lines, wound down diplomatic

<sup>12</sup> Brown, Archie, "*The Gorbachev Era*". In *Suny, Ronald Grigor (Ed.). The Cambridge History of Russia. 3. Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp.11-13.*

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Representations, closed cultural centres and ultimately withdrew political support in almost all former supported regimes due the fever of Glasnost and Perestroika. When rebel forces advanced towards Addis Ababa in 1991, Moscow stood idly by as the Derg regime – its former poster child disintegrated. Over the course of the next two decades, post-Soviet Russia showed little interest in the sub-continent and only in the late 2010s did the Kremlin once again display the ambition to play a greater geopolitical role: sub-Saharan Africa reemerged in Russian political discourse and trade and diplomatic traffic picked up. Simultaneously, Moscow revived alumni associations of Africans who studied in the Soviet Union and launched initiatives to lure more students to Russia. The Wagner Group a, military enterprise connected to the Russian state – also expanded its radius of action south of the Sahara

The relations with African countries are becoming increasingly important not only for the Russians, but also for the Africans, who need no longer choose between the American and the Chinese way of development. Even though the US and China did not view Russia as a competitor in the recent past, taking into account the events of the past few years the situation has changed. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century demonstrated three different Russia to the world: the Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Russia and the Russian Federation. Although some differences in regional and politically, Russia has always been and named a great power in world politics. Russia and the African states have had relations for more than a century. The sectarian centric contact to Africa which started with Ethiopia in Tsarist Russia era continued in the Cold War years, the Soviet Union was the ideological role model, ally and supporter for many African states seeking self-determination and freedom against the Western colonialist states Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced an era

of dramatic political transform and uncertainty in the global policy area. A country that was once a superpower in a bipolar world began to raise a suspicion its place in the international system. The end of the USSR left Russia in a state of economic, political, and social chaos, marked by declining economic output and increasing inflation, foreign debt, and budget deficits. The end of the Soviet Union disrupted the ties of Russia with African countries. The relations with Africa turned into one of the last places among foreign-policy priorities. In 1992, Russia locked nine embassies and four consular offices doors and most cultural missions and centers disappeared on the **continent** After 1992, due to financial reasons, embassies in Maseru (Lesotho), Niamey (Niger), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) Liberia, São-Tomé and Príncipe, Togo, Somalia, and Kanet were closed<sup>21</sup>.

The Soviet policy toward South Africa had deep ideological and geopolitical underpinnings. The oppression of the black majority vividly illustrated the evils of the capitalist system, and the anti-apartheid struggle became a mainstay of Soviet propaganda. Throughout most of the Cold War, Soviet activism in Africa was a low-risk way for the Kremlin to challenge Western standing in the developing world and to compete ideologically and geopolitically with its chief Communist rival, China. Based on these motivations, the Soviet Union provided extensive financial, military, and intelligence support to the ANC beginning in the 1960s According to a declassified 1986 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) document:

*The Soviet Bloc provides virtually all the military assistance received by the ANC . . . [and] supplies virtually all the military equipment to the MK and the 500 Cuban and East German instructors present in Angolan training camps provide training to MK recruits, among others. The Soviet Bloc donates all advanced military and sabotage training by means of 'scholarships' to the USSR and East Germany; attendance at such courses seems to be a sine qua non for advancement in the MK hierarchy*

#### **1.4. Diplomatic Challenges of the Russian Federation during the 1990s**

The Soviet Union and the Kingdom of Lesotho established diplomatic relations on 1 February 1980. The Soviet Ambassador to Mozambique was initially concurrently accredited to represent the Soviet Union's interests in Lesotho. Yuri Sepelev was appointed as the first Soviet ambassador to Lesotho, in concurrence with his posting to Maputo, on 24 April 1983, and presented his letter of credence to Basotho King Moshoeshoe II on 9 June 1983. After a South African raid on Maseru on 9 December 1982, Lesotho began to build its relationships with the communist nations. After trips to the People's Republic of China and the Eastern Bloc in May 1983, Basotho Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan announced that China and the Soviet Union would be establishing embassies in the kingdom. The South African government responded angrily to the announcement, and reminded Jonathan of a promise he made in 1965 not to allow an embassy of any communist country in Lesotho so long as he was Prime Minister. Vincent Makhele, the Basotho Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Moscow in September 1984 for discussions with officials in the Soviet government.

Russia's outreach goes further than financial and military bonds. Russian leaders visiting Africa capitalize on a narrative that emphasizes their historical support for African independence. At a time when the United States designated Nelson Mandela a terrorist for fear of his socialist sympathies, the Soviet Union actively trained and armed the African National Congress, now the ruling party of South Africa, to fight apartheid. Soviet support helped fuel liberation struggles across Africa. At the same time, Russia today pays little attention to undemocratic practices and human rights abuses that often hinder U.S. efforts on the continent. This strategy of combining historical moralism with present-day moral relativism has had some limited success On 24 January 1992, Lesotho recognised the Russian Federation as the successor state to the Soviet Union, after the latter's dissolution. The Russian embassy in Maseru was closed in August 1992, and thereafter the Russian Ambassador to South Africa has been concurrently accredited to Lesotho. Anatoly Makarov, the current Russian Ambassador, presented his letters of credence to King Letsie III on 13 April 2007. Makase Nyaphisi, until 2012 the Basotho Ambassador to Russia (succeeded by Matlotliso Lineo Lydia KhechaneNtoane) presented his credentials to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on 5 February 2010 Diplomatic relations between Burkina Faso and the Soviet Union were established for the first time on February 18, 1967. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Burkina Faso recognized Russia as the USSR's successor. However financial reasons have shut the embassies between the two nations. In 1992, the embassy of the Russian Federation in Ouagadougou was closed, and in 1996, the embassy of Burkina Faso in Moscow was closed.

Burkina Faso has since re-opened its embassy in Moscow. The US mission was closed in Somalia earlier in 1991 amid fighting between rebels and the US reopens diplomatic mission in Somalia after twenty eight year closure. The State Department said the "historic event" reflected the progress the east African nation had made Ambassador Donald Yamamoto to head the embassy

The situation in Africa is changing very rapidly, new opportunities and risks emerge and current business ideas lose their meaning. Those who manage to identify new opportunities and come up with ways to exploit them will gain obvious advantages. In this sense, Russia can do a lot: the country has an established system for monitoring the situation across Africa (over 40 embassies and four trade missions). It is the use of the information collected that is problematic. The Russian Export Center, set up in 2015 for the purpose of promoting non-energy exports, was expected to turn analytical materials supplied by Russian overseas representative offices into tangible proposals for the country's exporters. However, according to 2018 reports, the centre has taken a wait-and-see approach and its functions partially overlap with those of the trade Missions According to the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation to 2016, foreign policy strategy through to 2016 reads that the country is interested in "multidimensional interaction with African States" . It appears that this objective would be easier to achieve by replicating the experience of India and Japan, namely, by focusing on horizontal ties, thus ensuring a powerful diplomatic presence as a tool for coordinating developmental assistance and public diplomacy. Such a strategy would be less expensive to implement than the one pursued by China, but even in this

case the combined volume of development aid, loans and grants needs to be increased from the current levels. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, African countries only received around \$10 million from Russia in economic development aid in 2018. In addition to financial assistance (which should be provided with the help of the Russian Export Center and similar institutions), the Russian strategy needs to be careful when identifying the partner countries in Africa. Moscow's relations with the ANC during the waning days of apartheid were complicated by a series of radical policy shifts under Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin as well as Mbeki's proactive efforts to reduce the ANC's dependence on Soviet support. As the Gorbachev government sought a fundamentally new relationship with the West, it began to downplay support for armed struggle in Africa in both rhetorical and practical terms. For his part, Mbeki understood that "a thaw in the Cold War would inevitably mean Moscow's withdrawal of support for the ANC. Non-alignment was becoming a necessity." During the late Soviet period, the Kremlin pushed a series of diplomatic initiatives to reduce tensions in southern Africa, including by arranging the removal of all ANC fighters from Angola via airlift to Uganda, roughly 2,000 kilometers away.

According to Mbeki's biographer, MK commander Joe Modise believed that this move "was the moment the penny dropped that South Africa's only solution would be a negotiated one." In 1991, the Kremlin canceled direct funding for the ANC and all military training programs for foreign fighters

Desperate for new sources of external financial support, the Gorbachev government responded to the lifting of the ban on the ANC in early 1990 by reestablishing formal diplomatic contacts with Pretoria, which stirred unease inside the ANC. Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin avoided personal contact with newly freed Nelson Mandela. In June 1992, Yeltsin hosted a state visit by South African president Frederik W. de Klerk to showcase his break with Soviet foreign policy orthodoxy. Mandela's first visit to Moscow would not happen until seven years later.

Russian policy toward Africa remained a low priority during Vladimir Putin's first two terms as president from 2000 to 2008. The agenda for Putin's 2006 visit to South Africa, the first by a sitting Russian president, was largely devoted to arranging commercial opportunities for Russian companies flush with cash from the commodities boom. A handful of large-scale investments in strategic sectors (specifically, manganese and vanadium mining) by leading Russian tycoons Viktor Vekselberg and Roman Abramovich drew high-level attention. When then president Dmitry Medvedev traveled to Africa in the summer of 2009, South Africa was not included on his itinerary. In a moment of candor, Medvedev admitted that Moscow was "almost too late in engaging with Africa. Work with our African partners should have been started earlier."<sup>34</sup>

## **2. New Russian Commercial Engagement and Initiatives of Exploiting Natural Resources of Southern African States**

This section handles three main strategies developed by the Russian Federation as a means of intensive extortion of the regional wealth through Afreximbank loans, extension of her armed markets and the issues of nuclear energy installations. These are good initiatives which are coming with mixed feelings considering future challenges any eruption of a war, Russia may use them more negatively against the Africans to compete with other foreign powers in the region like China, United States and Japan.

### **2.1. Initiation of the Afreximbank Annual Meetings and Commercial Strategy**

One important foreign method strategized by Russia in the Post-Cold War Era was the safeguarding of her imports and exports channels through the Africa Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank). The guarantee of this initiative was targeted through annual meetings included a seminar and meeting of the Afreximbank Advisory Group on Trade, Finance and Export Development in Africa and Special meetings between Russian and African political and business leaders to discuss trade, industrialisation, export and the implementation of joint investment projects. Bearing in mind that Russia continues to strengthen its relationship with Africa due to multiple factors such as untapped abundant natural resources, improvement of the business climate, the rise of the middle-level income class and economic growth, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev noted in his speech at conference. He further pointed to Africa's growing appeal to and demand for high-technology, telecommunications investors and other products that could make swift business connection with Russia.<sup>35</sup> That cooperation with Afreximbank, which the Russian Export Centre (REC) has joined as a shareholder, will help promote long-term trade and economic relations between Russian businesses and their African partners." As expected, the REC predicts the volume of Russian-African trade relations will double within the next three-four years. "The Russian Export Centre maintains a close partnership with Afreximbank and has already entered the first deals that we are jointly implementing on the African continent. We intend to increase the volumes and we foresee the volume of the Russian-African trade ties in the next three to four years doubling," said the REC chief Andrei Slepnev. Basic financial instruments of supporting trade between Russia and Africa could be direct loans to foreign buyers (including those secured by the sovereign guarantee of the borrowing country) and loans to banks of foreign buyers under the insurance coverage Exiar, loans to sovereign borrowers, financing receivables against export earnings. In 2017, the REC became Afreximbank's third largest non-African financial institution or organisation shareholder, which has allowed for the rapid acceleration of investment, trade, and economic relations between Russia and African countries. It is active in mining projects in Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone, and has expressed interest in attracting Russian partners to the implementation of projects in the oil industry in Africa

### **2.2. Russian Lucrative Armed Markets Initiative and Struggle for New Strategic Zones**

Military-to-military cooperation between Russia and South Africa stems from a memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries in June 1995, under the newly elected Mandela government. Many of the senior ANC-

appointed members of the new South African National Defence Force at that time, and many of the currently serving senior military and political leadership, received their training and education in the former Soviet Union during the struggle against apartheid. More recently, in August 2018, Russia also signed a military technical cooperation agreement with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in South Africa. And in April last year, Russia's and Mozambique's defence ministers signed an agreement to develop military ties, giving Russian warships access to Mozambique's ports.

The second Strategy of the Russian Federation concerns an intensive search and guarantee of lucrative armed markets in the region bearing in mind that Africa is an important market for Russian arms exports during the Cold War. It is also where Russia has made key investments in the oil, gas and nuclear power sectors. In addition, Africa is an important source of minerals for Russia. The summit, the first ever of its kind, is a clear indication that Russia is stepping up its efforts to increase its influence in Africa. The deals signed all underscore how Moscow is using strategic investment in energy and minerals, as well as military muscle and soft power, to gain more traction on the continent. The Russian government and state companies signed dozens of memoranda of understanding and agreements during the first Russia-Africa Summit in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi in October 2019. Russia also promised further cooperation, building on recent agreements with <sup>35</sup> Kester Kenn Klomegh, *Africa Awaits Russia's Investment*, July 17, 2019, pp. 15-17.

Individual African governments. With the summit, the host, President Vladimir Putin, reaffirmed his intention to restore Russia as a major geopolitical player in Africa. Much of its political clout on the continent has waned in the Post-Cold War period. Russia accounts for 35% of arms exports to Africa, followed by China with 17%, the US with 9.6% and France with 6.9%. Africa is the second largest importer of Russian arms globally. The Asia-Pacific region tops the list with 60%. Russia has also signed close to 20 bilateral military cooperation agreements with African governments in recent years. These range from the supply of military aircraft to missiles to engines. Algeria is the largest importer of Russian weapons in Africa, followed by Egypt, Angola and Uganda. Other military agreements with African states pertain to cooperation on countering terrorism, including jointly training troops for peacekeeping on the continent. The countries involved include Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Niger and Rwanda.

South Africa has a long history of homegrown, left-wing political activism dating back to the early twentieth century. The South African Communist Party (SACP), whose forerunner was founded in 1921, was an early proponent of a nonracial South Africa and served as an important pillar of the African National Congress (ANC). Senior SACP party members such as Joe Slovo contributed a great deal to underground anti-apartheid activities after the party was banned in 1950, including by participating in the founding of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), or Spear of the Nation, the armed wing of the ANC, in 1961. As Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson wrote in their exhaustive history, *The Hidden Thread: Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era*, Moscow was a central, albeit underappreciated, force in encouraging and organizing opposition to the apartheid regime: "The USSR helped the ANC to turn itself, both in South Africa and internationally, into the main voice of South Africa's oppressed African majority, even though it was a party in exile. It helped the ANC to occupy a respected and prominent place in the international arena."<sup>5</sup> The leadership of the ANC carefully balanced this relationship with close ties to Western partners, most notably Sweden, which secretly provided hundreds of millions of dollars in support.<sup>6</sup> Operating from London, the leaders of the ANC in exile, Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki, sustained a delicate balancing act between its external backers and competing voices inside the anti-apartheid camp.<sup>1</sup> The failed nuclear deal was unique in terms of its outsized impact on South Africa's domestic political stability, potential negative economic consequences, and the desire of Russian officials to use nuclear power as a tool to expand Moscow's footprint in Africa for decades to come. But the deal also illustrated the limits of Russia's reach and its modest tool kit for projecting power and influence in regions far beyond its periphery. The failure of the nuclear deal also raised questions about the viability of Russia's renewed hopes for wielding greater global influence.

Russia landed two nuclear-capable bombers in South Africa on a training mission on Wednesday, a flight apparently timed to coincide with President Vladimir Putin's opening of a flagship Russia-Africa summit designed to increase Russian influence. The two Tupolev Tu-160 strategic bombers touched down at Waterkloof air force base in Tshwane on Wednesday, the South African National Defense Force said. Russia's Ministry of Defense has said the mission is designed to nurture military ties with South Africa. Speaking before dozens of African heads of state at a two-day summit in the southern Russian city of Sochi, Putin called for trade with African countries to double over the next four to five years and said Moscow had written off African debts to the tune of over \$20 billion. His first Russia-Africa summit is part of a Kremlin drive to win business and restore influence that faded after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, which backed leftist governments and movements across the continent throughout the Cold War. "Many Russian companies have long and successfully worked with partners from the most different sectors of the African economy and plan to expand their influence in Africa. We of course will provide support at the state level," said Putin. The prize is greater political clout on a continent with 54 United Nations member states, vast mineral wealth and potentially lucrative markets for Russian-manufactured weapons. But Russia is starting from a low base. Although it has enjoyed considerable success selling arms to African countries, Moscow lags far behind competitors in trade terms. Russia says its trade with African countries rose to \$20 billion last year, but it did not rank among the continent's top five largest partners for trade in goods, according to Eurostat. <sup>2</sup>That list was topped by the European Union, followed by China, India, the United States

<sup>1</sup> Andrew S. Weiss, Eugene Rumer, Nuclear Enrichment: Russia's Ill-Fated Influence Campaign in South Africa, December 16, 2019. Online, consulted, September 15, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. <sup>45</sup> Ibid.

and the United Arab Emirates. As it noted the arrival of Russia's warplanes, the South African National Defense Force praised what it said were strong diplomatic links between the countries. "Our relations are not solely built on 'struggle politics', but rather on fostering mutually beneficial partnerships based on common interests," it said in a statement. South African media have been more skeptical about Moscow's return to the continent. "Russia is the clumsy latecomer at Africa's superpower party," ran a Mail & Guardian headline in June.<sup>45</sup>

"Valiant breaks London-Cape record by 54 mins", led the 9 July 1959 edition of the *Cape Argus*. The arrival of the sleek, white-painted, and still highly classified long-range British nuclear bomber, which represented the cutting edge of Britain's new Cold War airborne nuclear deterrent, drew large crowds at Cape Town's DF Malan Airport. But despite the record-breaking flight to South Africa, it was no publicity stunt. Its real purpose was part of a Royal Air Force experimental program into the then-emerging technology of air-to-air refueling to increase operational reach. Sixty years later, on 23 October 2019, in a groundbreaking visit to demonstrate their operational reach and capabilities, which again drew large crowds of onlookers, two whitepainted Russian Aerospace Forces Tupolev Tu-160 "Blackjack" nuclear-capable bombers touched down at Air Force Base Waterkloof near Pretoria. It was the end of an 11,000-kilometre non-stop flight from Engels air base in Russia to South Africa, refueling in the air over the Caspian Sea *en route*. Significantly, this is the first occasion that Tu-160 bombers have landed on the continent of Africa

Although South Africa has never bought Russian weapons, this situation could change in the future. Russia has been attempting to regain influence in Africa and the Indian Ocean region in recent years. From a historical perspective, although the former Soviet Union had first begun making port calls along the East African coast astride the southern routes to the Suez Canal in 1965, and it had long wanted to spread its influence in both the Indian sub-continent and in East Africa, it was not until mid-1968 that it had supported these efforts with a growing and continuous naval presence in the Indian Ocean region. From a Western perspective, NATO contingency planning, as part of measures to counter Soviet maritime power outside the NATO area, was focused on maintaining the free flow of oil and supplies essential to the support of the NATO nations. It covered contingencies ranging from times of tension and limited aggression up to and including major aggression. The five specific areas of high probability of operations identified were the Caribbean Sea and Cape Verde in the Atlantic, the Cape of Good Hope straddling the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and the Mozambique Channel, the Arabian Sea, and the Straits of Malacca in the Indian Ocean. These were considered the focal points on Western trade routes where obstruction or limited aggression against Western trade could most be expected. Of particular significance was the vulnerability of oil supply routes around the Cape

### 2.3. Russian Federation Spotting of Regional Natural Resources

The spotting of essential natural resources and development of nuclear energy has been one of the fundamental of Russia intension of re-opening relations with Africa and South Africa in particular. Russia relies on imports from Africa to cover its requirements for minerals such as manganese, bauxite and chromium. In addition, Great Dyke Investments, a company jointly owned by the Russian and Zimbabwean governments, is developing a \$4 billion venture to mine the world's largest deposits of platinum in Zimbabwe. In oil-rich Angola, discussions with Russian companies have focused on hydrocarbon production. Russia is also interested in Namibia's uranium. In recent years, Rosatom and the Namibian government have been finalising an agreement on cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. And the Russian state-run oil company Rosneft has benefited from a cooperation agreement between the Russian and Mozambican governments and to develop offshore gas exploration in Mozambique. Precious gems, especially diamonds and gold, are also on Russia's list of priorities in Africa. Moscow has thus deepened relations with Angola, where Alrosa, the Russian diamond mining giant, mines diamonds.<sup>49</sup>

The institution was developed in 1992 with little successes due to lacked of effective reforms which coincided with the total disintegration of USSR according to Rudiger Ahrend and William Tompson in 2010.<sup>3</sup> The African continent has been increasingly in the sights of many global actors such as China, the United States of America, the European Union, Turkey, Japan, India and, more recently, the Russian Federation. The successor to the Soviet Union is not a new actor in Africa, but relations deteriorated with the collapse of the USSR at the end of the Cold War. Its renewed engagement, through its "Pivot to Africa" has been more niched, focusing in the areas of security, weapons trade, oil and gas. Russia's *Tochki rosta* or "Points of Growth" – a principle of its 2035 energy strategy – has included a central role for nuclear energy and technology. This article will look specifically at Russia's energy engagement in Africa and the potential for mutually beneficial relations. Russia is a powerful player in the global energy market. First, it has extensive domestic resources in oil and gas. Also, big Russian companies (Rosneft, Gazprom) have an obvious interest in oil and gas exploration in countries such as Egypt, Libya, Mozambique and Nigeria. In Algeria, Gazprom and Transneft are working together with Algeria's Sonatrach on a pipeline construction project. However, it is in the area of nuclear energy and technology in Africa that Russia has been gradually building up partnerships Moscow has been in negotiations with 12 African countries (Egypt, Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Republic of Congo, Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya) to cooperate in the nuclear energy sector. The agreement that probably garnered the most notoriety was the Intergovernmental Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Cooperation in Nuclear energy, signed between Rosatom and South Africa, to build eight nuclear reactors. While the controversial \$76 billion nuclear energy deal was rendered unconstitutional in 2017, the South African government under president Cyril Ramaphosa has indicated that nuclear will remain part of the energy mix (coal, solar, hydro, photovoltaic, wind, gas and storage). On 18 October 2019,

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<sup>3</sup> Rudiger Ahrend and William Tompson, Unnatural Monopoly: The Endless Wait for Gas Sector Reform in Russia, October 5, 2010, online, consulted September 21, 2020.



Minister Gwede Mantashe announced that South Africa will expand its nuclear energy, which will contribute 5% to energy volumes

The Nuclear Industry Association of South Africa (NIASA) has said there are at least six potential options for financing new nuclear power plants in the country, with Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe telling a parliamentary committee in mid-May he is open to considering innovative funding options in order to develop new nuclear capacity. The NIASA group said financing options for nuclear power in South Africa include: Government funding of the entire project, or government-backed loan guarantees, supported by money from state-owned companies an intergovernmental loan, corporate financing, financing by

<sup>49</sup> Alexander winning, “Russia’s Putin Raises Nuclear Deal at Ramaphosa Meeting during BRICS.”

Plant vendors, a special investment vehicle to finance the project and “build, own, operate” structure<sup>54</sup>. These are much undetermined measures considering the Russian inconsistent Post-Cold war negative diplomatic measures against the region with the closure of some foreign services.

The World Nuclear Association noted that at least seven sub-Saharan African states have signed agreements to deploy nuclear power with backing from Russia. Rosatom, the state-owned Russian nuclear company, is “currently working with more than fifteen Sub-Saharan African countries, namely; Ghana, Zambia, Kenya, South Africa, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and others; as well as with four North African countries including Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco,” according to Ryan Collyer, acting CEO of Rosatom Central and Southern Africa<sup>55</sup>, who corresponded with *POWER*. South Africa is the only country on the African continent with nuclear power generation, but Russia is working to make nuclear power a reality for more African nations. Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke at a Russia-Africa summit in Sochi, Russia, in late October—attended by heads of state and government representatives from 55 countries—and said his government is ready to provide its nuclear power technology to more of Africa<sup>56</sup>.

South Africa’s only nuclear power plant is a 1.8 GW facility at Koeberg in the Western Cape that was completed in 1984. It was originally expected to be decommissioned in 2024, based on the normal lifespan of nuclear plants, which is 40 years. The plan proposes that the plant’s decommissioning be postponed to 2044. The planned extension of Koeberg’s life cycle was however flagged in the earlier drafts of the country’s energy plan. In that sense, it doesn’t represent a new intensification of the nuclear programme in South Africa.<sup>4</sup> According to Anton Eberhard and Amory Lovins, a nuclear deal with Moscow would not only squander billions, but would compromise South Africa’s sovereignty. Likewise, if Europe allows new Russian gas arteries into the heart of the continent, it will find itself hosting a Trojan horse. If completed, the new pipelines will allow Moscow to make good on its public threats to end gas transit through Ukraine — cutting a vital link between that country and the west. If Gazprom, the state-owned Russian gas company, can bypass Ukraine, it will not only give Moscow significant leverage but also leave the west vulnerable anew to a cut-off in supplies in coming winters. The good news is that Europe does not have to make the unwise and unnecessary choice of depending on Russia’s president Vladimir Putin to keep the lights on. There are other sufficient, reliable and price-competitive sources of liquefied natural gas free of the true costs of Russian gas

Given that less than 40 percent of the population in sub-Saharan African had access to electricity in 2014, nuclear power, which is hailed by its proponents as a reliable and affordable source of energy in the longterm, has become a serious option for various African countries. Some states, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco and South Africa, have been actively preparing the ground for future nuclear power programmes – or

<sup>54</sup>[Russia Offers to Expand Nuclear Power in Africa www.powermag.com › russia-offers...](http://www.powermag.com › russia-offers...)

South Africa is the only country on the African continent with nuclear ... but Russia is working to make nuclear power a reality for more African nations. ... Unlocking Value at the Grid-Edge: Extending the Reach of the Utility ... December 1, 2019. Consulted September 19, 2020.

<sup>55</sup>According to Dr. Mamdouh G Salameh , Russia’s state-run company Rosatom is world leader in nuclear technology with an order book of 34 reactors in 12 countries worth \$300 bn. Providing the necessary technology to Africa serves another purpose besides increasing influence and revenue for the state’s coffers.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

the expansion of current capacities in the case of South Africa – by ratifying international instruments covering nuclear safeguards, non-proliferation, safety and security. All five are now parties to the IAEA safeguards Additional Protocol and the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Most are parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Nuclear Terrorism Convention, the Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste Management and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty<sup>60</sup>. These five countries, all of which have signed nuclear cooperation agreements with Russia, have also undergone an Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review conducted by experts from the IAEA in order to assess the infrastructure required by a state wishing to embark on a nuclear energy path. The measures adopted by these five countries stand in stark contrast to the spotty record of other states contemplating nuclear programmes with Russian support. Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda have either not signed or not ratified any

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<sup>4</sup> South Africa’s Future Energy Mix – Wind, Solar And Coal, But No Nuclear, 5 November 2019, South Africa's Future Energy Mix - Wind, Solar and Coal, but No ...[www.iea-coal.org › south-africas-fut...](http://www.iea-coal.org › south-africas-fut...) South Africa has a new energy plan which covers 2019 to 2030. ... to new plants being built, with advance plans reportedly made with Russia to sign a deal. ... There is a fair case to be made to extend nuclear plant operations by a further 20 years. ... Trade unions see renewable as a threat to more traditional electricity.. Online, consulted August 20, 2020.

of the aforementioned international agreements (with the exception of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty in the case of Ethiopia). Given that Egypt will likely be the next country with a fully functioning nuclear power plant, and Sudan is apparently eager to start constructing a nuclear reactor as early as 2019, Russia is clearly not asking its clients for adherence to international nuclear governance norms. The Bushehr nuclear reactor constructed by Russia in Iran, which is also not a party to the conventions on nuclear safety, nuclear terrorism and the protection of nuclear material, is a case in point.

## CONCLUSION

However, Sub-Saharan African countries represent a strategic zone of the World's largest uranium deposits among others especially in countries like Malawi, Niger, and South Africa. Access to these resources is essential if Moscow's wants to maintain its position globally. To that effect, Russia is well advised to consider the global security risks resulting from its nuclear activities particularly in those countries where huge nuclear investments have been targeted. This is because majority of those countries have weak institutions and unstable governments due to the previous consequences of apartheid practices. Therefore, Russia should study these risks carefully in a case per case basis before getting involved.<sup>62</sup>The Southern African countries have to take serious precautions when accepting Russian nuclear ambitions in the region. If we take a flash back of the incidents of the Cold War histories concerning the question of nuclear armament, planning, building and testing, it will portrays that those countries receiving rapid intensify Russian nuclear investments without proper check will likely have themselves to blame in the near future. The danger of it is that, in case of any nuclear war of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, those countries will likely safe as Russian military and stationing bases. The Russian Federation closure of some diplomatic services were accompanied with serious financial and economic stresses she witnessed in the Post-Cold War Era spanning from 1991. Within the period of thirty years following the collapsed USSR, Russian attempt to re-new Africa policy initiatives are suspiciously underlined with negative perception and could be termed a strategy to prepare any future escalation between China-U.S-Korean-RussianJapan nuclear ambitions within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. On the other hand, the Western European powers like Britain, France, Germany and Portugal whom in one way or the order manifested their colonial and neo-colonial agenda also portrayed the anachronism of their relations with the Southern African countries in terms of racial segregation/apartheid practices and periods of civil wars in countries like Angola and Mozambique. Nevertheless, there is a great fear of Russian recent engagement with the Southern African States following their strategic importance to the Atlantic and the India Oceans in terms of any blink of an unforeseen Third World

<sup>60</sup>Névine Schepers, Russian incentives for nuclear hopefuls in Africa, 30th April 2018, online, consulted, August 16, 2020.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. [Russian incentives for nuclear hopefuls in Africa www.iiss.org › analysis › 2018/04](http://www.iiss.org › analysis › 2018/04).

30 avr. 2018 - Before being ruled unlawful last April, Russia had also finalised a contract for the expansion of South Africa's nuclear energy programme.

16 oct. 2019 - It remains unclear whether Russia's investments in Africa over the past ... looks to Africa as a region where it can project power and influence. ... And Germany is treated as a clear example of the threat it poses to Western democracies. ... The doors of its universities to African students, extending educational...

<sup>62</sup> Dr. Mamdouh G. Salameh, International Oil Economist, Visiting Professor of Energy Economics at ESCP Europe Business School, London. Russia's energy approach in Africa is not dissimilar to China's strategy in Africa. China's expansion in Africa has been driven by a desire to obtain sources of energy and raw materials for its continuing economic growth and open up new export markets. Moreover, both Russia and China lack the colonial background of most Western countries.

War in the contemporary international order. Russia eyes more cooperation with Southern African Development Community (SADC)<sup>63</sup>.

"Taking into account memorandums signed between Russia and the SADC on mutual understanding of the bases of relations and military and technical cooperation, the Russian side is looking to ramp up political dialogue and cooperation with the SADC on a number of priority areas, including trade, economy, investment, science and technology as well as humanitarian cooperation," the minister noted. "I would like to express confidence that the existing partnership between Russia and the SADC will foster development of the whole complex of relations." Lavrov praised success the community achieved in advancing political and economic integration and maintaining peace and security in Southern Africa, highlighting their significance in the context of tasks set out by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063<sup>64</sup>. The SADC is one of the largest and most influential subregional associations in Africa that unites 16 states.

Many SADC member states are using military equipment produced in Russia (or Soviet Union).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Moscow, April 8. /TASS/. Russia intends to strengthen full-fledged cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), says the address of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to SADC Executive Secretary Stergomena Lawrence Tax to mark the 40th anniversary of the organization.

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