

Are we heading towards a second cold war?

By [Will Barnes](#)

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Image: World Economic Forum

With the beginning of clearing the debris of the MH17, implementation of the investigation along with the conclusion of the G20 summit in Brisbane, Australia. As a result, the situation in Ukraine has resurfaced in the international arena.

With David Cameron criticising Putin's involvement in the Ukrainian situation and subsequently offering a quasi-ultimatum saying that Russia is at a 'cross roads' in the situation, these kind remarks are not raw rhetoric or empty threats but also come with a warning.

Upon examining the situation, we can see that the Ukraine Crisis is about more than the separatists wanting to become part of Russia. Instead this is more about Russia and Putin reasserting themselves in the world. Russia has been building up its presence in the ruins of post-Soviet Russia. However, while Russia is making a resurgence in the world politically, it comes with a warning from Mikael Gorbachev that there could be a second Cold War due to Russia being at logger heads on many stand points of foreign policy. For example, their stance on Iran's development of nuclear weapons and to what many see as an unsavoury alliance with Syria, who use chemical weapons on it on citizenry.

Further Russian foreign policy developments included suspect submarine presence in the Baltic and illegal flying of military airplanes over Northern European countries.

This all comes at a time when foreign policy focus has been targeted at China and the Middle East (with the exception of Bosnia) for the last 20 years and the dwindling significance of NATO, which is seen as a relic of the Cold War. However, with the resurgence of Russia's international presence, and the opposition to them, the importance of NATO has risen. However, the West have united in opposition to Russia's actions through the imposition of trade sanctions and travel bans for high profile Russian government officials and aides to Putin. This only increases mistrust and increases tensions.

With Russia now acting as the opposition to the West, and the West uniting in their former alliances of the Cold War, it is difficult not to compare the trend to the situation of the Cold War. Trade sanctions, the formation of alliances, localised war in Ukraine, suspect military

activity, (for example the MH17 crash), submarine activity in the Baltic and a flotilla of Russian warship sailing towards Northern Australia all adding to worsening relations.

With the UN and G20 powerless to resolve the heightening tensions, this has left individual countries along with NATO and the EU to try and deal with the situation themselves. This has led to polarisation through the isolation of Russia and the unity of the West against Russia's action.

If the international community cannot resolve the tensions and find a solution, we could in effect start to experience a Cold War like relationship with Russia. Be it a mini Cold War or a second Cold War, unless the situation is resolved quickly, the possibility of a second Cold War is not farfetched.



One comment

Coralie

28 Mar '18 at 10:51 am

Wait, I cannot fathom it being so straightforward.

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