

---

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE COLD WAR AND ITS EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**


---

**ABDULLAHI BALA ADO, MUAZZAM ABUBAKAR SALIHU, IDRIS YUSUF**

---

**Abstract:** The need for international peace and stability is a goal shared by all humanity. Yet, it is very difficult to predict the outcome of this dream due to the growing challenges that interrupts the global security system. The need to overcome these challenges therefore integrates internal security systems under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council with the aim to resolve conflicts and promote peace across the globe. Terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons among other factors are serious setbacks to this campaign. The catastrophe of the cold war is therefore elusive. The objective of this paper is to examine the consequences of the Cold War on international security. This paper gives more emphasis on the review of relevant literatures and employed content analysis technique as well. The paper finally recommends international cooperation and collective security as the best means to get rid of the present and future challenges against human security, enhance international security and prevent the outbreak of another world war.

**Keynotes:** Cold War, International Security, Human Security.

---

**1.1 Introduction:** The United States and the Soviet Union became the two superpowers of the post-World War II era [1]. The Cold War was a period that describe the tension and conflict in the bilateral relationship of the US and USSR after the World War II [2]. It denotes a state of constant conflict and strife, maintained and perpetuated without a direct armed conflict between the antagonists. Every expression of hostility and tension is used without a direct use of arms [3]. The cold war between the two post war superpowers was not an episode like other wars of modern times. The term "Cold War" was invented to describe a state of affairs. The principal ingredient in this state of affairs was the mutual hostility and fears of the protagonists. These emotions were rooted in their several historical and political differences and were powerfully stimulated the myths which at times turned hostility into hatred. The Cold War dominated world affairs for a generation and more [4]. The two super powers often jockeyed for position in the global south, supporting proxy wars in which they typically supplied and opposing factions in civil wars. The alignments were often arbitrary. For instance, the United States backed the Ethiopian government and the Soviets backed the next door rival Somalia in the 1970s; when an Ethiopian revolution caused the new government to seek Soviet help, the United States switched to support Somalia instead [5]. For forty-five years the Cold War was at the centre of world politics. It dominated the foreign policies of the two superpowers, and deeply affected their societies and their political, economic and military institutions. The Cold War also shaped the policy and domestics politics of most other nations around the globe. Few countries, in fact, escaped its influence [6]. However, the tension between the two superpowers was naturally also affected by the fact that the two countries had differing political and economic systems. The systems were not only

different; the two countries mutually denounced each other's system. The ideological gap made cooperation difficult and a sober analysis of the adversary nearly impossible. This had been evident even before the Second World War. Relations between the two of them were poor then, too. The new element was that the two powers now confronted each other face to face in several parts of the world [7]. The Cold War finally came to an end in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe [8].

**2. International Security in brief:** International security consists of the measures taken by nations and international organizations, such as the United Nations, to ensure mutual survival and safety. These measures include military action and diplomatic agreements such as treaties and conventions. International and national security are invariably linked. International security is national security or state security in the global arena. The meaning of "security" is often treated as a common sense term that can be understood by "unacknowledged consensus". The content of international security has expanded over the years. Today it covers a variety of interconnected issues in the world that have an impact on survival. It ranges from the traditional or conventional modes of military power, the causes and consequences of war between states, economic strength, to ethnic, religious and ideological conflicts, trade and economic conflicts, energy supplies, science and technology, food, as well as threats to human security and the stability of states from environmental degradation, infectious diseases, climate change and the activities of non-state actors. David Baldwin [9] argues that pursuing security sometimes requires sacrificing other values, including marginal values and prime values. Richard Ullman [10] has suggested that a decrease in vulnerability is security. Barry Buzan [11] views the

study of international security as more than a study of threats, but also a study of which threats that can be tolerated and which require immediate action. He sees the concept of security as not either power or peace, but something in between. The concept of an international security actor has therefore, extended in all directions since the 1990s, from nations to groups, individuals, international systems, NGOs, and local governments. While the wide perspective of international security regards everything as a security matter, the traditional approach focuses mainly or exclusively on military concerns.

### 3.0 Literature review :

#### 3.1 Origin of Cold war:

The first element to consider in analyzing the inevitability of the Cold War is the inevitability of conflict between the USA and the USSR in general. Historians agree that the root cause of the Cold War was tension between the US and the Soviet over contradicting ideologies. The Soviet Union wished to expand their communist influence, believing global communist expansion was key to propelling the world into a better future [12]. "The essence of the early Cold War was that the Soviet Union and its ideological clients were... expansionist" [13]. The US, a capitalist nation, felt it was their responsibility to prevent this occurring. They felt threatened by these expansionist aspirations, as communism had the potential of jeopardizing the US' capitalist economic system and the international climate in which they operated. In turn, this would endanger their individual material wellbeing [14].

However, there are three historical views on what caused the Cold War. These are the Orthodox view, which places the blame on Soviet expansion, the Revisionist view, stating that American imperialist capitalism led to conflict and the Post Revisionist view which places the responsibility on both the Soviets and the US. All three viewpoints share the belief that the actions that led to war were initiated by strong ideologies [15].

#### 3.0 Consequences of the war on International Security:

**3.1 Nuclear arms race:** A nuclear arms race is considered as one of the deadliest legacies inherited from the cold war. An arms race, in its original usage, is a competition between two or more parties to have the best armed forces. Each party competes to produce larger numbers of weapons, greater armies, or superior military technology in a technological escalation. A nuclear arms race developed during the Cold War, an intense period between the Soviet Union and the United States. This was one of the main causes that began the cold war. On both sides, perceived advantages of the adversary (such as the "missile gap") led to large spending on armaments and the stockpiling of vast nuclear arsenals. The

United State's use of nuclear weapons to end WW II led to a determined effort by Soviet Union to acquire those weapons, leading to a long-running nuclear arms race between the two superpowers [3]. The Soviet Union conducted its first nuclear test in 1949. At the end of 1956, the United States had about 2,123 strategic warheads and the Soviet Union had 84. Those numbers increased subsequently over the last thirty years. The U.S. arsenal peaked in 1987 at 13,002 warheads, the Soviet Union two years later at 11, 320 [16]. As part of nuclear technology competition, in August 1957, the Soviets successfully launched the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). And in October, launched the first Earth satellite, Sputnik [3].

**3.2 The decline in Human security:** In the wake of the Cold War, freed or newly founded nations inherited expenses, commitments, and resources for which they were not prepared. The successor states also found themselves with contemporary national-security burdens and substantial environmental contamination legacies, all to be financed while new or revised civilian economies had to be instituted [1]. As Cold War tensions receded, it became clear that the security of citizens was threatened by hardships arising from internal state activities as well as external aggressors. Civil wars were increasingly common and compounded existing poverty, disease, hunger, violence, human rights abuses as well as prompting mass exodus. Traditional security policies had effectively masked these underlying basic human needs in the face of state security. Through neglect of its constituents, nation states had failed in their primary objective [11]. Among the approaches which seeks to acknowledge and address these basic threats to human safety are paradigms that include cooperative, comprehensive and collective measures, aimed to ensure security for the individual and, as a result, for the state. In addition to the loss of lives by uniformed soldiers, millions died in the superpowers' proxy wars around the globe, most notably in Southeast Asia [1]. The legacy of Cold War conflict, however, is not always easily erased, as many of the economic and social tensions that were exploited to fuel Cold War competition in parts of the Third World remain acute. The breakdown of state control in a number of areas formerly ruled by Communist governments has produced new civil and ethnic conflicts, particularly in Cuba missiles crises, Suez crises, Hungarian revolution, Vietnam war and that of the former Yugoslavia. Although in Eastern Europe, the end of the Cold War has ushered in an era of economic growth and a large increase in the number of liberal democracies, notwithstanding, in other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, independence was accompanied by state failure [17]. Similarly, the accessibility to weapons had reasonably

increases the rate of terrorism across the globe. In general terms, however, it appears that terrorist violence has been on the rise, and has become more dangerous to the extent that today it is common place to say that terrorism is a major threat to international security [11]. Many experts and governments alike argue that terrorism should be recognized as a major threat to national and international security, in contrast to the past, when terrorism was a second-order security issue. Some argue that the 9/11 events established a new form of terrorism, "hyperterrorism" or "superterrorism", capable of significantly disturbing international security and severely wounding even the most powerful states by inflicting potentially massive damage on civilian targets [18]. The human security approach underlines that terrorism has come to be the principal challenge to international security [10]. The international terrorist groups also capitalize on this advantage. We have witnessed how militant groups across the globe (i.e. Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Taliban etc) are threatening international security by launching their attacks on innocent individuals and highly profiled government institutions in order to extend their brutal campaigns against humanity.

### 3.3 The nexus of nuclear deterrence and proliferation of nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons were essential to maintaining international security during the Cold War because they were a means of deterrence. The end of the Cold War made the doctrine of mutual Soviet-American deterrence obsolete. Deterrence continues to be a relevant consideration for many states with regard to threats from other states. But reliance on nuclear weapons for this purpose is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective. North Korea's recent nuclear test and Iran's refusal to stop its program to enrich uranium potentially to weapons grade highlight the fact that the world is now on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era. Most alarmingly, the likelihood that non-state terrorists will get their hands on nuclear weaponry is increasing. In today's war waged on world order by terrorists, nuclear weapons are the ultimate means of mass devastation. And non-state terrorist groups with nuclear weapons are conceptually outside the bounds

of a deterrent strategy and present difficult new security challenges [19]. Over the last half century, computer technology has evolved so that even the smallest PC has more computing capability than the largest computers that were used to design the nuclear weaponry of the 1940s, and the general evolution of technology has made simple many of the operations required to produce a nuclear weapon [20]. To this end therefore, it is not an overstatement to condemn the spread of nuclear weapons which could be attributed to the events of cold war. This is of course in line with their catastrophic effect even if they are going to be used for peaceful purposes. The explosion

Nagasaki, Hiroshima in Japan in 1945 is a good

#### example:

The tension of cold war continues to promote the level of nuclear threat. Immediately after the cold war, sovereign nations and other international organisations developed the desire to possess nuclear weapons which imposes significant threat to international security [16].

**Conclusion:** The Cold war and its events had many effect on society, both today and in the past. The catastrophe of the war continues to influence world affairs. From the above literatures, it is apparent to note that cold war events have left many legacies that produced social unrest, financial and economic recession and an increased military expenditure. However, living standard worsened which prompts mass exodus, thus difficult to estimate the loss of lives as a result of the war. The damages of the cold war does not circumscribe to the participants alone but also extended to the global communities. The outbreak of civil wars in Afghanistan, Korea, Vietnam, the Cuban missiles and other environmental consequences has shown the decline in human security. The proliferation of nuclear weapons along with the growing tension in international terrorism imposes threats to international security. The paper therefore, suggest for the increase in international cooperation as well as collective security as the best means that ensures international order and enhance international security. Beyond any doubt, this will help prevent the outbreak of another world war.

## References

1. Nagamaliika. E, Prathyusha. K, Veena. D, Obula Reddy. B, Role of Indian Women in Livestock Food Processing; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 482-483
2. J. Gaddis, "Russia, the Soviet Union and the United States". An Interpretative History. McGraw-Hill. P. 213, 1990.
3. W. Lippmann, "U.S. Foreign Policy". London, Hamish Hamilton, 1944.
4. K.C. Gill, S. Sehgal, "Dynamic of International Relations: Moving from International to Global.

- Theory and Issues". New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors (p) LTD. P 37-39, 2012.
6. P. Calvocoressi, "World Politics", 1945-2000. Delhi, Pearson. P. 2, 2004.
  7. J.S. Goldstein, J.C. Pevehouse, International Relations, Eight Editions. India, Pearson. P. 29-30, 2009.
  8. Dr.K.Prasannakumari, Women Empowerment in India –Issues and Challenges; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 475-481
  9. D.S. Painter, M.P. Leffler, "The International System and the Origin of the Cold War", 2010.
  10. The Cold war in Europe, (1945-1949).
  11. Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, "The Cold War" 1945-1989 full text. [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the\\_cold\\_war\\_1945\\_1989\\_full\\_text-en-6dfe06ed-4790-48a4-8968-855e90593185.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_cold_war_1945_1989_full_text-en-6dfe06ed-4790-48a4-8968-855e90593185.html) p. 2, 2014.
  12. D. Baldwin, "The Concept of Security." *Review of International studies*. P. 9, 1997.
  13. R.H. Ullman, "Redefining Security. International Security", 8 (1); <http://links.org/sici?sici=01622889%28198322%298%3A1%3C129%3ARS%3E2.o.CO%3B2-P>, (accessed date: 18/02/2015) p. 19, 1983.
  14. B. Buzan, L. Hansen, "The Evolution of International Security Studies." Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. P. 46-48, 2009
  15. I. Egan, "The causes of the Cold War". Lecture note prepared by the Department of International Relations, Dickson College. P. 6, 2.011
  16. Subodh Kumar Mishra and Kranti P Sawarkar, Women Empowerment Through Tourism: Options – Concerns – Transformation; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 1 Issue 1 (2013), Pg 18-24
  17. D.J. Macdonald, "Communist Block Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism"; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539142>, (date accessed: 18/02/2015) P. 17-18, 1995.
  18. H. S. Truman, 'Modern History Sourcebook: The Truman Doctrine, 1947', <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1947TRUMAN.html>, (date accessed: 13/02/15) P. 17, 1947.
  19. P. Bastian, 'Origins of the Cold War', [http://www.anzasa.arts.usyd.edu.au/ahas/cworigins\\_historiography.html](http://www.anzasa.arts.usyd.edu.au/ahas/cworigins_historiography.html), (date accessed: 15/02/15), 2011.
  20. Suhaib VP, Arundhati Roy: the Voice of Downtrodden; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 1 Issue 1 (2013), Pg 13-17
  21. I. S. Alhassan, "Arms race and International Security. An assessment of the past, present and future". (Unpublished). P. 23-29, (2015).
  22. F. Halliday, "Cold War". In Joel Krieger, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp. 149-150, 2001.
  23. N. Friedman, "The Fifty-Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War". Naval Institute Press. P. 210-213, 2007.
  24. D. Alexander, "Nuclear Insights: The Cold War Legacy: Nuclear Threats and Prospects". *A Knowledgeable Assessment*. 2009.
  25. J. Nagoya, "Nuclear nonproliferation and Plutonium" session 5. The 29<sup>th</sup> JAIF Annual Conference, Japan. 1996.
  26. Dr.J.Ramesh Sundar, R.Vidya, Violence Against Women- A Serious Threat to Women; Human Rights International Research Journal : ISSN 2320-6942 Volume 2 Issue 1 (2014), Pg 484-486

Abdullahi Bala Ado, Department of Local Govt. Studies, SORTED Rano, Kano State Polytechnic, Kano Nigeria.  
abdullahilaja@yahoo.com +917708528169 +2348036917566

Muazzam Abubakar Salihu, Department of International Relations, MA International Relations Student, SRM University, Kathankullathur-603203, Chennai, India, muazzamasalihu@gmail.com

Idris Yusuf, Department of International Relations, MA International Relations Student, SRM University, Kathankullathur-603203, Chennai, India, iyusuf628@gmail.com