

CHAPTER II

THE DYNAMICS OF U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS

In this chapter, the writer will elaborate the dynamics of the relation between the U.S. and Russia. The elaboration will take place in the Post-Cold War era until the era of Obama's administration. The discussion in this chapter will emphasize the events that reflecting U.S.-Russia's progress and deterioration during Obama's administration.

A. The Relations between the U.S. and Soviet Union during the Cold War

In 1947-1991, so called as Cold War era, Soviet Union (now Russia) and the U.S. were competed to each other regarding who was the super power. The war was about the different ideas and principles from both states; Soviet Union with its Communism, and the U.S. with its Liberalism. Both parties competed on which ideas should rule the world. As the Cold War heated up, the U.S. implemented a policy to contain the spreading of communism, known as "containment" policy. The policy was developed and implemented through military forces and arms buildups to contain communism from occurring and spreading. This was triggering an arm race between the U.S. and Soviet Union to develop their weapons.

For many years of competition and arm race, the international world was concerned because it was triggering worse tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union that might affect international peace. In order to prevent that from happening, both parties agreed to conduct an agreement on arms reduction. In 1982, an agreement named Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) was signed. The agreement continued and faced many rearrangements, until today, from START I, START II, START III, the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), and New START. (Kadyshev & Miasnikov, 2014)

The competition was not limited to the ones in Earth but also in space. In 1957 for example, Soviet Union launched Sputnik, an intercontinental ballistic missile to Earth's orbit. Not long after, in 1958, the U.S. also launched its intercontinental ballistic missile called Explorer I. This phenomenon is known as the Star wars. The competition continued as in 1961, Soviet Union succeeded to send their first-man into space. In order to compete with Soviet's accomplishment, in 1969, the U.S. also sent its astronaut Neil Armstrong, not only into space, but also step on the moon for the first time in the human history. (HISTORY, 2009)

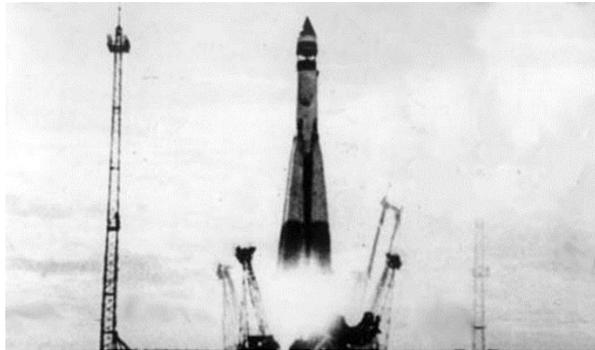


Figure 2.1
The Launch of Sputnik in 1957³

³ Retrieved November 18, 2018, from <https://www.google.co.id/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjN6N7Lpd3eAhWfSsKHQIBC0sQjRx6BAGBEAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.scmp.com%2Fnews%2Fworld%2Funtied-states-canada%2Farticle%2F2114112%2Fwhen-soviets-sent-sputnik-space-1957-us-public-was&psig=AOvVaw3IZjeWoVmKve7Us1gpU2PL&ust=1542608200288556>



Figure 2.2
The Launch of Explorer 1 in 1958⁴

The competition between the U.S. and Soviet Union was not only affecting both states but also the international arena. The attempt of the U.S. to contain communism from spreading was not limited to its soil but also to the West and the East. Both the U.S. and Soviet Union were intervening in many events of conflict such as Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Bay of Pigs invasion, which made the relation between the U.S. and Soviet Union become critical. Fortunately, the Cold War ended in following of the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991. Many of the states of Soviet Union declared their sovereignty. The Cold War was officially ended in a summit

⁴ Retrieved November 18, 2018, from https://www.google.co.id/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjP5dbept3eAhXle30KHXJxA98QjRx6BAgBEAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nasa.gov%2Fdirectorates%2Ftheo%2Fscan%2Fimages%2Fhistory%2FOctober1958_2.html&psig=AOvVaw04E_SGI3LIUyNUHNXYN7LM&ust=1542608509268761

between U.S. President Bush and Soviet Leader Gorbachev in Malta. (Russia Matters, 2018)

B. The U.S.-Russia Relations after the Cold War

After the end of the Cold War– and the dissolution of USSR, it can be seen that the U.S. and Russia were able to promote new dimension of their relations through cooperation and partnership. Both the U.S. and Russian government reached out to one another in order to arrange new principle of U.S.-Russia relations. There are some domains that are reflecting the effort of both states to maintain their relationship to each other such as arms control– especially in weapon of mass destruction (WMD) and nuclear reduction, economic cooperation, military and security, and the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights.

In 1992, for example, Russian President Boris Yeltsin made a state visit to the U.S. During his visit, a joint proclamation on a new era for U.S.-Russia relations was established and signed by both parties. It was called as the “Charter for U.S.-Russian Partnership and Friendship”. President Boris and President Bush then made an agreement on arms control and set a goal of nuclear reduction strategy through what so called as START or Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. After the establishment on a new relationship, both states made agreements which address the limitation of WMD, nuclear non-proliferation, and U.S. nuclear assistance to Russia.



Figure 2.3

U.S. President Bush and Russian President Yeltsin signed the proclamation in 1992⁵

Besides agreements on arms control, the U.S. and Russia also made agreements on economic cooperation. After the USSR dissolved, Russia had to struggle in reforming its economic growth and markets. Therefore, establishment of economic cooperation with the U.S. could help fostering the economic reforms of Russia. It also would be enhanced by trade agreements, as well as bilateral investment and taxation treaties. (U.S. Department of State, 2009) One of the examples is that the U.S. pledged economic assistance and \$4.5 billion from its international program budgets to support the economic reform in Russia as long as the aid is being used for economic reform and humanitarian aid. (Russia Matters, 2018)

⁵ Retrieved November 19, 2018, from <https://www.google.co.id/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwja16bSp93eAhVGVH0KHSpECnoQjRx6BAGBEAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ncpedia.org%2Fmedia%2Fgeorge-hw-bush-and-boris&psig=AOvVaw2Kp4fbJNpxVwYDYZl89zyQ&ust=1542608744882582>

The relation between the U.S. and Russia is considered as the world's most critical bilateral relations. Even though there are some evidences which reflecting the progress of U.S. and Russia in maintaining their relations, it is also undeniable that the paths toward a better U.S.-Russia relations is quiet hard to achieve. There are numbers of disagreements and clashes that influenced the progress of U.S.-Russia relations. For example, the disagreements between U.S. and Russia on NATO expansion plan that happened since the administration of Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin. In NATO Summit in Buchares in 2008, in a discussion on NATO expansion towards Georgia and Ukraine, Russia opposed this plan even though other member states and allies such as Germany and the U.S. were agreed that Georgia and Ukraine will be NATO members.

Also in 2008, Russia invaded Georgia by sending its peacekeeping troops to Georgian soil. This invasion showed how serious Russia on opposing the expansion plan by NATO to Georgia. However, the action taken by Russian government considered as a disappointment for the sustainability of U.S.-Russia relations. The U.S. government supported Georgia and decided to condemned Russian government actions. The relation between the U.S. and Russia became vulnerable. As an attempt to continue the maintaining of U.S.-Russia relations, the U.S. government formulated new policy on U.S.-Russia relations in order to reset and renew the cooperation between both states, so called as "Reset" policy. (Russia Matters, 2018)

C. The Dynamics of U.S.-Russia Relations under Obama's Administration

In 2009, in Obama first months as the President of the U.S., his administration officially announced a policy called "Reset" foreign policy in order to establish a more positive relationship with Russia. The policy was intended to reengage the cooperation with Russia after the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008. The year 2009 until 2014 is considered as the year of

big milestones for the U.S. and Russia relationship. It is known as the era of “Reset” foreign policy made by Obama administration towards U.S. and Russia relations. One of the first attempts was the meeting between Obama and Medvedev in April 2009 to discuss the future of U.S.-Russia cooperation. From the meeting, both parties assumed that they had the same interest regarding some issues. The agreement which address the future for the cooperation of both states; the negotiation on arms reduction, nuclear non-proliferation, and economic cooperation between the U.S. and Russia were established.

1. Arms Control and Reduction Cooperation

In 2010, U.S. and Russia cooperated in many events such as arms control through New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) which agreed on the reduction and limitation on deployment of nuclear warheads, nuclear-armed submarines and bombers. (Russia Matters, 2018) According to Article II of the New START treaty, both the U.S. and Russia agreed on cutting down the deployment of nuclear warheads to 30 percent from the limit set by Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), and limiting the number for Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) to 700 from 1,600 limits which set by previous START and SORT. (ACA, 2018)

However, the cooperation on arms control is not always as smooth as expected from the “reset”. The Iran’s nuclear program for example, before Russia joined the U.S. to support the UN sanction on Iran nuclear proliferation, there were some controversies in the process. Gaining Russian support for the nuclear non-proliferation had been one of the main goals of Obama’s reset policy. For years, Russia had been known as Iran supplier on nuclear assistance which indirectly affecting U.S. attempts on pressuring Iran to give up its alleged nuclear weapons. After several efforts done by the U.S. government to break the Russian resistance, Russia finally voted for UNSC Resolution to give sanction to Iran.

2. *Conflict over Syrian Civil War*

The tension between U.S. and Russia was also strengthened by the event which both states clashed over Syria's civil war. Since the beginning of the civil war in 2011, Russia has backed the Syrian government under Bashar Al-Assad with political and military support to against the opposition groups. It has actually been cooperating with Syria since the Cold War era. Russia, then Soviet Union, succeeded spread its influence into Syria. However, the relation between Soviet Union and Syria faced deterioration after the collapse of Soviet Union, until Bashar Al-Assad became the president of Syria and Vladimir Putin became the president of Russia. As an attempt to strengthen the relation between Russia and Syria, in the mid-2000s, Russia began its military expansion. (BBC, 2017) For example, Russia showed its support to Assad by preading its naval facility in Syria in 2011 and 2012.

While, on the other hands, the U.S., the European Union, and the Arab League strongly demanded Assad to step down from the authority and gave sanctions to the members of Assad regime. In showing its opposition against Assad regime, the U.S. gave military aid and supported the anti-Assad rebel groups and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to fight against the Islamic State (IS) group. (RAND, 2014) In the era of Obama, the U.S. government also demanded to give sanction to Al-Assad's regime because there have been many actions taken by the Syrian government that violated the human rights of the civilians because the war has resulted tremendous casualties.

In 2012, chemical weapons were discovered in the arms possession of Syria. The discovery were triggering strong responses from the international world. Russia for example, as it has supported Assad since the beginning of his era, has to withdraw its support for Assad. (BBC, 2017) While on the other hands, the U.S. President Barrack Obama gave a "red line" warning towards chemical weapons use would prompt military intervention. However, the warning was denied by the Syrian government. The chemical weapons attack allegation

use was reported firstly in December 2012 in Homs. Syrian government was alleged to launch poisonous gas which resulted the death of seven people. (Al Jazeera, 2018)

More chemical weapons attacks were launched in the year 2013. As what Obama has warned the Syrian government, that if the chemical weapons were launched, it would prompt interventions. For example, after what happened in Aleppo and Damascus in March 2013, the United Nations (UN) announced that it would conduct an investigation along with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) regarding the attacks whether the chemical weapons were used or not. (ACA, 2018)

In August 2013, a large scale of chemical weapons attack was launched in Ghouta region, Damascus, and resulted the death of 1,500 people.

Syria: Damascus Areas of Influence and Areas Reportedly Affected by 21 August Chemical Attack

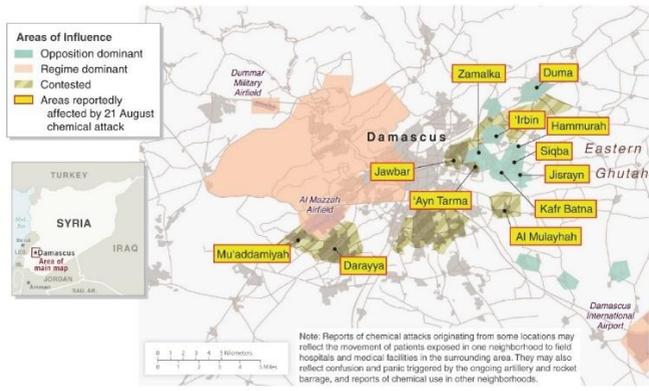


Figure 2.4
Damascus chemical weapon attack areas of influence.⁶

⁶ Retrieved November 21, 2018, from <https://www.armscontrol.org/files/images/08.30.2013-Map-Accompanying-USG-Assessment-on-Syria.jpg>

The U.S. alleged that the attack was Syrian government. In order to response the attack, the UN, according to its Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, would conduct a further investigation. Not only the UN which gave its respond towards the attack. The U.S. were also responding the attack by planning a “mindful” military intervention. Not long after, the U.S. government granted Obama’s proposal on military and released the U.S. Government Assessment on the chemical weapons use in Syria.

On the other hands, in a response towards the August 21 attack and the U.S. military intervention proposal, Russia proposed a diplomatic path through UN Security Council where Syria would have to agree to place its chemical weapons under international control and to disarm the weapons so that the U.S. would not conduct the military intervention. The diplomatic path proposed by Russia has made the U.S. postpone the voting on military intervention proposal in the Congress, but still uphold its stance to use military force if Syria declined the proposition. While, the Syrian government agreed that it would observe the Russian proposal to secure its chemical weapons within the Chemical Weapons Convention.

3. *The Expulsion of USAID*

In 2012, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was expelled from Russia after two decades of working on aid and democratic programs in the country. USAID is a U.S. government agency in which the goals are to promote international development and humanitarian efforts to save lives, reduce poverty, stengthen democratic governance and help people progress by giving assistance to foreign countries. It was firstly introduced by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. President Kennedy recognized that there is the need to unite development through a responsible agency for administering aid in order to support the promotion of social and economic development in foreign countries.

(USAID, 2018) There are five programs in which USAID works, namely (USAID, 2018):

1. Promote Global Health
2. Support Global Stability
3. Provide Humanitarian Assistance
4. Catalyze Innovation and Partnership
5. Empower Women and Girls

USAID has operated and spreaded its wings in many foreign countries and regions, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, Africa, Asia, Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and the Carribean, and the Middle East.



*Figure 2.5
Interactive Map of USAID around the world.⁷*

The work of USAID has been proven in so many of its programs. One of them was in Russia. USAID has provided assistance that helped improving public health, protecting the environment, developing stronger civil societies, and modernizing the economy of Russian people. There were many transformations that resulted from the relation between the U.S. and Russia through USAID, such as (USAID, 2012):

⁷ Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://stories.usaid.gov/usaidmap/>

- *USAID-supported projects helped introduce internationally recognized approaches in diagnostics and treatment of tuberculosis enabling the national TB program to decrease transmission and improve treatment success rates. Russia ranks 11th among 22 highest TB burden countries and the third among priority multi-drug resistant (MDR) and extensively drug resistant (XDR) TB countries worldwide.*
- *USAID's child welfare program has provided over 80,000 at-risk children and their parents with innovative services designed to reduce abandonment, resulting in a 33% increase in family reunification and an 85% increase in the number of foster families in target regions.*
- *USAID's health programs have dramatically helped raise awareness among Russian citizens of their health-related rights and responsibilities and strengthened an array of NGOs, including more than 200 which work on HIV/AIDS.*
- *Russia is experiencing a concentrated HIV/AIDS epidemic fueled by injection drug use. Together with the Global Fund, UNAIDS, other international organizations and an array of Russian NGOs, local regional and national authorities, USAID is supporting dissemination and institutionalization of best practices for prevention, care and treatment.*
- *USAID also has supported Russia's reemerging efforts as a global donor and partnered with Russia to address health issues in third countries and globally. In the last two years, the U.S. and Russia have signed protocols of intent to work together on the global effort to eradicate polio and to control malaria.*
- *USAID has been a proud supporter of Russia's oldest human rights organizations that have been pivotal in*

promoting support for democratic values throughout Russia.

- *As a world-wide movement for open government has developed, USAID has supported civic watchdog groups in Russia that have provided non-partisan oversight over electoral processes including through innovative uses of technology.*
- *USAID supports civil society organizations whose number and influence has grown from 40 registered organizations in 1987 to approximately 300,000 today, not including state-funded public organizations. These organizations contribute to Russia's economic, political and social life in numerous ways and provide opportunities for citizens to help create better communities and elevate their voices.*
- *USAID has helped foster the development of skills and relationships that have generated a more resilient information environment, especially as technology has evolved. Since 1992, USAID has supported the development of professional relationships between Russian and American journalists, publishers, electronic media managers, designers, content developers, advertising specialists and new media practitioners. In recent years, USAID media programs have worked to encourage convergence between traditional and new, innovative digital media.*
- *USAID-funded Rule of Law implementers helped draft the Russian Constitution, Part I of the Russian Civil Code, and the Russian Tax Code.*
- *USAID assistance led directly to the adoption of the 2001 Land Code which provided the right to buy, sell, and own urban and rural land in Russia.*
- *Since 2001, the Government of Russia and the World Bank collaborated to implement two multi-billion-dollar judicial reform programs. These programs were built on*

models and best practices introduced to Russia by USAID programs in 1992-2008, which were related to improvements in court administration, justices of the peace, and jury trials. Russia increased its court administration budget thirty-three times between 2001 and 2010. The number of judges and their salaries were increased as well. Justices of the Peace and jury trials were reintroduced into the Russian justice system.

- *Over 5,000 Russian and U.S. judicial officials have taken part in exchanges and events resulting in strong partnerships between Russian judicial bodies and U.S. counterparts.*
- *The U.S. Russia Investment Fund (TUSRIF), founded with a 1995 grant of \$329 million from the US Government, promoted the development of a free market economy in Russia by providing investment capital to well-conceived, potentially high-growth entrepreneurial companies. TUSRIF generated in excess of \$350 million in investment proceeds, and attracted \$1.2 billion in outside equity, debt and co-investments.*
- *Through microfinance, USAID supported the development of the small business sector, which in Russia still accounts for only about 12% of the economy as compared with 50-70% of the U.S. and European economies.*
- *The Russian electricity sector has successfully undergone substantial restructuring and reform since 1992. Early USAID assistance focused on restructuring and particularly the design of the future competitive electricity market. These principles and design guide today's electricity market as implemented by the Government, the electric utility system companies and their advisors. In 2012, USAID has been helping Russia develop a smart grid and improve energy efficiency.*



*Figure 2.6
USAID in Russia⁸*

However, by 2012, USAID has ended its programs due to the expulsion by the Russian government. The government of Russia concerned, that any NGOs with foreign funding will harm the political atmosphere in Russia, especially USAID whom for two decades has been giving aid to Russia to support democracy, protect human rights, and promote fair elections. This statement was of course disappointing to the U.S. Government since USAID has been working in Russia since 2002 and had budgeted almost \$50 million for its programs in Russia, and it has been helping in maintaining U.S.-Russia relations. (The Washington Post, 2012) The expel of USAID has proven that U.S. foreign policy on maintaining relationship with Russia was having deterioration. Although the USAID office in Russia is closed, the government of the U.S. will continue its work through some organizations and as an action to maintain its relationship with Russia, the U.S.

⁸ Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://www.google.co.id/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjgkp25gezeAhUJLY8KHxQxBZ4QjRx6BAGBEAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fimrussia.org%2Fen%2Fnews%2F305-pavel-khodorkovskys-statement-on-kremlins-decision-to-bar-usaid-activities-in-russia&psig=AOvVaw3ODdWgmQFmma7Hma6LFs7z&ust=1543113903673399>

government will be committed on continuing its cooperation with Russian NGOs. (BBC, 2012)

4. *Putin's Gay Propaganda Law*

In 2013, President Putin announced a very controversial federal law which aimed for the protection of children from information that harmful to their health and development, known as anti-gay law. The purpose of this law, according to Russian government, is to prevent any exposure of homonormativity⁹ which contradicted with the traditional values of Russian families. It was ammended in the Federal Law of Russian Federation no. 436-FZ of 2010-12-23 (Legal Analysis , 2013) :

- *Article 5 “On Protection of Children from Information Harmful to Their Health and Development” by adding information “propagandising non-traditional sexual relationship” to the list of information banned for distribution among children:*
- *Article 14 “On basic guarantees for the rights of the child in the Russian Federation” wich obliges the authorities to take measures to protect children from certain types of information and propaganda that are harmful to their health and moral and spiritual health;*

The law was getting many criticisms from many parties such as several governments, equality campaigners, and human rights groups. One of the criticisms came from the U.S. government. In an interview on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno” on NBC, Obama mentioned that the anti-gay law is discriminating and harmful to the LGBT groups. He also mentioned that this issue would affect the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. (CNN, 2013)

⁹ In this case is homosexuality as being a norm in the society.

“Every judgement should be made on the track, or in the swimming pool, or on the balance team, and people’s sexual orientation should not have anything to do with it.”

“...when it comes to universal rights, when it comes to people’s basic freedoms, that whether you are discriminating on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, you are violating the basic morality that I think should transcend every country.”



*Figure 2.7
Obama in The Tonight Show with Jay Leno¹⁰*

¹⁰ Retrieved November 24, 2018, from <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/dam/assets/130806205608-obama-leno-story-top.jpg>