Transforming Escalation to Negotiation: Rethinking Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the Ongoing Russia-Ukraine War

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ABSTRACT: *There have been several pieces of literature on the current war between Russia and Ukraine but little emphasis has been placed on transforming the growing escalation into negotiation. In this study, I discuss the causalities that surround the current war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine from different prisms. Various justifications and other indices which provide the likelihood of escalation to a nuclear conflict were touched. Also, I assessed, if at all, there was politics behind the supplies of 'defensive weapons' and other military aid to the warring parties. I propose an urgent arms control treaty not only between the United States and Russia but should also include China as the emerged third force, and other minor nuclear powers. Although, the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are mostly prominent before a complex conflict is transformed into conventional war, thus, this study suggests the roles the CBMs can still play in the current war. As such, the study relies on relevant written sources which make the study qualitative in nature.*
KEYWORDS: Russia-Ukraine war, arms control, confidence-building measures (CBMs)

INTRODUCTION

At the time the world was recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic came Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. Although several arguments are attesting to the decline of war (Fortna et al 2013, Cederman et al 2017). Human Security Research 2013 also suggests that violence and wars have significantly decreased over the past few years. Thus, the report equally noted that international wars have grown less lethal as well as fewer in number (Human Security Report 2013). However, there were no known predictions that war should be expected in the world anytime soon, not even in Europe. Therefore, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on the 24th of February 2022 has caused an escalation that reshaped the dynamics of the world's politics, economy, and security. As the situation observers are left bristled after the first year into the war, to at least a debatable extent,

the war appears to be further fuelled by the existing competition between the United States and its allies, and the Former Soviet Union\Russia Federation. Although a conventional war between states is assumed to be an outdated means of settling an international dispute, hence the timing of the Russia-Ukraine war is strategic. In other words, the war was prosecuted a year after the expiration of the 10 years of the New START Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation. And, when the agreement of 5 years extension of the treaty was newly reached in February 2022.

Indeed, there are reported cases with shreds of evidence of gross violations of human rights and potential war crimes committed during the Russia-Ukraine war (Human Right Watch 2022). Even though both sides are accusing each other of various crimes. But what is not in contention, therefore, is that only one of the two warring countries is a nuclear power which creates great concern over the possibility of the war escalating to a nuclear conflict. Moreover, the United States which is leading the league of other 'concerned' countries to wade into the war emerged a new reality that the competition between the two superpowers continues as Ukraine is backed up with the so-called "defensive weapons". This, as it stands, has incurred enormous sanctions on Russian Federation. However, as it appears that the world is short of an effective umpire, or international conflict resolution bodies, this study proposes two approaches from the existing Confidence Building Measures -CBMs, to reduce the tension. Even though CBMs are exclusively active during peacetime, this study argues that in the case of a complex conflict where the fear of a potential nuclear conflict continues to grow wider, the measures could still be put into use. Therefore, the study submits itself to further intellectual criticisms as it presents the roles of effective arms control before the war, and Confidence-Building Measures - CBMs during a war.

Background to the Russia-Ukraine War
The Russian Federation has a penchant to expand its territory for more than one reason, but mostly, it has been for economic purposes, as Stavrianos contends. As such, this expansionist idea, which started hundreds of years ago had 'transformed Russia from just being an East European state to an empire of continental proportions' (Stavrianos 1981). But on closer inspection, there seem to be more motivations for the current Russian invasion of Ukraine than economic gains. To be sure, there has been a plethora of viewpoints on the invasion of Ukraine. Hence, prominent among many reasons given by analysts, is that Russia acted to defend its 'national security', considering the intention of Ukraine to gain NATO membership (Talabi et al 2022). However, it is important to note that the Russian-Ukraine war did not start in February 2022. In other words, the war is thought to be a product of unresolved conflict that surfaced after Russia annexes Crimea. Ultimately, in 2013, there were mass protests in Ukraine over the decision of the former President of Ukraine, Yanukovych, who was unwilling to sign a free trade agreement with the European Union (EU) with the intention of taking preference in the Russian-Ukraine economy relationship. Consequently, President Yanukovych's administration was suspended in February 2014 because of the protests that resulted in violent clashes between the Ukrainian security forces and protesters.

As a result, the unrest brought on by the clashes between Ukrainian security forces and Ukraine protesters, therefore, provides Russia with opportunities to annex a portion of the country. It is said that afterward, secessionist aspirations in the nearby regions of Luhansk and Donetsk were also fuelled.

In what follows, on the 24th of February 2022, the so-called Russian 'Special Military Operation' fired the first salvo into the sovereign state of Ukraine. This Russian aggression, however, beats all imaginations and predictions, as it becomes the genesis of a horrible event that could ever reintroduce 'European refugees' into recent literature. As expressed by the United Nations (UN), "the war has caused the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe" (United Nations (UN), 2022). As a result, "about five million Ukrainian refugees have fled west across borders into the European Union, a migration through the continent unseen since the Second World War" (New York Times 2022) and still continuously raising more humanitarian concerns. To make it worse, however, there is no background for the resolution of the conflict, even after the first year of commemoration.

The Rhetoric of a Just War
A proponent of the philosophy of war, Carl von Clausewitz, emphasized war as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will" (Clausewitz, 1997, p. 5, cited in Kaldor, 2010, p. 272) Thus, to fulfil this will, it, therefore, takes one or many narratives to justify the war in other to appeal to the moral approval of the public. Also, justifications usually navigate a means to legitimize the intention of the aggressor over the casualties the war incurs. It is evident that since the war began between Russia and Ukraine, especially when the death of civilians becomes a daily reality and the reputation of the Russian Federation, is questioned by the media and public opinion, there have been several moves to find justifications for the war. As Coates alluded, justification of war takes two forms: negative and positive forms, while the negative denotes 'restrictive and inhibiting', the positive form entails 'expansive and empowering'. Going further, he noted that the positive justification is targeted at energizing, increasing, and encouraging the continuation of the war, while the negative justification aims at ending the war (Coates 2003). Owing to this argument, and in relation to the Russo-Ukraine war, extant studies demonstrate that there have been more positive justifications to keep the war continues than negative justifications, which could have reduced the intensity of the war.

Indeed, Russia, being the aggressor, has justified the war more than any other country (Reddy 2023). Ting, therefore, concludes that to harm Ukraine's reputation and morale, Russia has manufactured facts about the conflict (Ting 2022). Moreso, one of the justifications is that Ukraine was set to gain NATO membership which is a threat to the security of the Russian Federation, therefore, decisive action becomes imperative. As such, it is important to note that Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were former Soviet republics that had joined NATO earlier. Consequently, it said that it becomes a concern for the Russian Federation as it continues losing the fold of its old-

time ally countries, informing why it has been striving exhaustively not to lose anyone else to the United States and NATO. In return, Russia tends to justify the war as the last attempt to prevent such an occurrence. Beyond this, it is also noteworthy that, the Warsaw Pact (Warsaw Treaty Organization) of 14th of May 1955, a military and political agreement between the defunct Soviet Union and numerous countries of Eastern Europe to balance up with the growing popularity of NATO also got dispersed. In fact, before the disbandment of the Soviet Union, the agreement had already faltered. And before the Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, East Germany abandoned the Warsaw Pact in September 1990 to unite with West Germany. As a result, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland withdrew from all military drills under the organization (The US DoS, Office of Historian, 1955). It is therefore argued that Russia, being the face of the defunct Soviet Union, has so far been conscious of losing the bonds with countries that are geographically near and historically attached to the federation.

Although veteran politicians and diplomats warned that the expansion of NATO was a tragedy waiting to happen (Medea et al., 2022). As such, there has been an influx of questions about the presence of NATO in Ukraine, even though Ukraine is not a member. John Quinn, however, inferred that to lower wartime morbidity and mortality and improve the medical readiness of both Ukrainian and NATO forces, NATO is compelled to support and coordinate Global Health Engagement (GHE) operations in Ukraine (Quinn 2022). In what follows, the US is also said to have justified its anti-Russia leading role as being necessary for the world's 'police of democracy'. And under the same climate of justifications, what the Russian President tagged the 'Special Military Operation', came to the fore because "the people's republics of Donbas turned to Russia with a request for help (…) I[Putin] decided to conduct a special military operation" (Sheftalovich (2022). The Russian leader, therefore, appealed to his countrymen to view the war as a course to fight for the Russian people in Donbas (Kilby 2022). In other words, ancestry and other historical narratives were imported into the war to find more captivating and presentable justifications. According to Fridman, Russia adopted 'strategic communication' in justifying the war. That is, the practice of influencing target audiences' views and conduct using speech, actions, pictures, or symbols to advance goals or policies to change people's perceptions, which he argued, is Russia's forte (Fridman 2020). Considering this, it is evident that the war enjoys justifications from all facets. While upon closer scrutiny, the available records on war have demonstrated that several justifications offered to legitimize war are only partially valid in achieving the goals are ineffective. Plainly, it is proven that war is usually not the people's choice.

The Continuation of the Existing Competition
According to a popular phrase by Clausewitz, also adopted by Jerry Lenaburg, "War is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means" (Lenaburg 2022). In lieu of this, it is constantly speculated that behind every war, there lies politics. However, the rivalry of competition between the world's superpowers arguably implies that at the slightest opportunity where one of them has the advantage

over the vulnerability of the other, such privilege is carefully considered and therefore utilized. As a result, there is a wide range of debates among security and peace analysts, that the Russia-Ukraine war is prolonged because of the continuation of unending competition between the United States and the defunct Former Soviet Union, now taken up by Russia. Plainly, the events after the end of the Cold War further uncovered security and strategic competition between the two leading superpowers, and most recently, with China.

As Cordesman noted, in the months of June and July 2020, top U.S. officials carefully delivered a series of speeches that represented the first since the U.S. released its new national strategy in 2017, hence a meaningful attempt to outline the major areas for U.S. civil and economic confrontation with China. Meanwhile, many of the issues raised also suit Russia neatly, which is an indication that their competition may switch to confrontation (Cordesman et al., 2020). Also, the visit by another notable US official, Nancy Pelosi, on 2nd August 2022, to Taiwan, increased the level of volatility in the Asian continent, and the perception that the existing competition between the U. S. and China is also gradually shifting to confrontation. Notwithstanding, there are connections between the recent fear that greeted Europe and the rest of the world over the insinuation that the Russia-Ukraine war may lead to a nuclear conflict. Therefore, amid this palpable tension, the United States is thought to be facing many tasks as a leading superpower. First, to continue the battle against terrorism and other emerging extremist ideologies, the battle that started after the event of Sept 9, 2011. Secondly, to match up with the growing production of nuclear weapons by Russia, and China, and the threats from North Korea. Therefore, it is an emerging concern that in the face of all these tasks, the United States has adopted a different strategy of 'using a part to divide a whole'. In other words, employing any of the co-competitors' closest neighbors as distraction traps, such as in the case of Ukraine for Russia, and Taiwan for China.

The Politics of 'Defensive Weapons'
Considering the level of resistance that greeted the Russian aggression, put up by the Ukrainian forces, it is fair to assume that war is unpredictable. To be clear, the military capabilities of the Ukrainian forces are no match for the Russians. And by all standards, on land, sea, and air, the might of the Russian army is potent enough to have made anyone conclude from the beginning, that confrontation between these two neighbors is unnecessary, and could have been prevented ab initio. Again, in Russia's 'New Military Doctrine' of February 2010, the importance of the "near abroad" is mentioned which indicates the Russian fears over NATO incursions in Europe (Braun 2012). Moreover, beyond the remaining ammunition and other military equipment of the defunct Soviet Union that Russia inherited, the country has over the years been massively expanding the scope of its military strategy. As Russia always prepares and is usually on high alert to face any eventuality, however, Ukraine has no unfinished battle that might stimulate any war preparedness. It is against this backdrop that a re-evaluation of the Ukrainian military's level of resistance in the face of Russian aggression is essential. Although, war analysts argue that a force that is advancing

into the enemy territory has less control over some unpredictable factors like morale and topography than one that is on its own territory (ibid). Even at that, the level of resistance provided by the Ukrainian forces suggests there were some powerful backups.

Nonetheless, it is pertinent to observe the constant appeal for reinforcement of 'defensive weapons' by Ukrainian leadership to secure their land, and why the United States and other NATO allies continue to supply. Again, it constantly appears in debates how these supplies have impacted the war. Essentially, on closer inspection, the flow of ammunition and other destructive weapons exposed the gap that should be filled by the United Nations. Although, the limited power of the United Nations is noticeable, according to Albright, "the United Nations has no armed forces of its own, no power of arrest, no authority of tax, no right to confiscate, no ability to regulate…" (Albright 2003, p 22), even at that, critics have claimed that the UN has fallen flatly in initiating peace project in the context of the Russo-Ukraine war. In the moment of clarity, however, any invasion of a sovereign state is an act of aggression that is never acceptable. Indubitably, the constant arrival of the so-called 'defensive weapons' has over time informed counterattacks from Russia with more damaging consequences. As a result, establishing the propensity for the 'politics' behind the constant supply of 'defensive weapons' and sending back any offer for a peaceful resolution. And this is thought to be keeping the war much longer than expected. For instance, in a couple of hours, Russia "rained cruise missiles on busy Ukrainian cities", targeting major infrastructures, and launches the biggest attacks since the war started (Hunder and Landay 2022). Hence this series of missile launches is said to be carried out as a retaliation to the use of the 'defensive weapons' to attack a bridge that links Russia with the annexed Crimea on the 8th of October 2022. At the height of it, the politics guiding the supply of 'defensive weapons' also fails to categorize which weapons are not lethal.

The Effective Arms Control Gap
The relative peace the world recently enjoys is predicated on the ability of the world's superpowers to find a point of compromise where they could sit and discuss modalities on how to guide their military capabilities and nuclear abilities. Thus, a peaceful world could not be achieved by settling international disputes through war, alternatively, by political solutions and certain mutually agreed principles (Saliu and Adebisi 2022). Again, Wolfsthal contends that through a complicated interplay of diplomatic and military choices, as well as a 'good deal of luck', America managed to endure the nuclear age through cooperation (Wolfsthal 2020). Therefore, reaching certain agreements and specific treaties between the world's superpowers and other 'minor' nuclear powers is pivotal to global stability, the prevention of nuclear war, and other armed conflicts. It is essential to note, however, that the competition between the United States and the Former Soviet Union\Russia Federation also entails the risk of nuclear conflict, provided this competition grows wider without any formidable restrictions and guiding principles. As warned by Cordesman, it is likely that nuclear assaults on populated areas will follow once the United States, Russia, and now China escalate to a strategic nuclear strike on the territory of another big power (ibid). To put it

another way, the current glimmers of an offensive strike into Russian territory are a warning sign of the potential for a nuclear conflict.

In 2010, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New Treaty) was signed between the United States and Russia in Prague. However, the treaty was designed expansively to replace the Treaty of Moscow (SORT) which was due for expiration in 2012. Therefore, the treaty brought a significant reduction to the submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers that could be used by parties to the treaty, while the strength of the treaty lies in its ability to allow both the United States and Russia Federation to conduct proper monitoring activities on their nuclear sites through satellites. Essentially, this bilateral cooperation also reduced "a combined limit of 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments" (New START Treaty, 2010). Nonetheless, even though arms control agreements are never perfect, they are mostly rated according to how each of these agreements can lower the risk of armed conflict and, other attacks. Relying on this indication, the New START, before it expired, is rated high in this regard. For clarity, the New START agreement was not between Russia and Ukraine, it will nevertheless have an impact on the weaponry that each party to the agreements might supply against the other. Arguably, it is however, not by chance that when the New START agreement between the United States and Russia was active, the world is not gripped by the fear of a potential nuclear assault. As such, the latest development in Ukraine only serves to highlight the importance of effective arms control.

In essence, considering the records, it is argued that there is always a growing concern about any nuclear agreement with Russia. Thus, past efforts to unite Russia and the EU, the US, for example, the NATO-RUSSIA Council (NRC), and Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PAC), have been going back and forth without achieving the most expected results (Studzińska 2015). Nevertheless, since parties to the New START agreement complied in the first 10 years, and were able to access important information and monitor the nuclear progressions, there was no concern over nuclear attacks during this period, this means the target was met. Therefore, to maintain Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) and ensure that the United States will not lose its significant nuclear advantage over renegade nuclear powers like North Korea (which seems unrestrained by anyone), effective arms control is still essential. Beyond the fear that war in Ukraine could transform into a nuclear conflict, the threats of nuclear engagement are not limited to only the United States and Russia. It should be observed that nuclear competition also surfaced between India and China, and Iran's nuclear activities becoming a threat to the United States, while Russia is also feeling unsafe because of British nuclear forces. It is against this backdrop that achieving effective and legally binding arms control agreements between major nuclear powers and 'minor' nuclear powers is critical to the world's peace and stability.

Zartman's Notion of 'Concessions' on Regional Conflict

Many thinkers have argued about international conflicts from different perspectives. Prominent among them, and whose argument is considered potent for this study, is William Zartman. As such, his thoughts concerning negotiation in a situation of conflict could be connected to the context of this study. Zartman holds that there are three notions to understanding conflict from the thinking of the conflicting parties (states in conflict\war). Firstly, war is a contest between parties while each party is with a ray of hope to win, and that the other party would lose. Secondly, the notion that each party to the conflict will continue to stay energized in as much as the 'cost-benefit' is more than what to lose. And thirdly, that conflict\war in most cases is a challenge to the 'world order' in an attempt to change the patterns and formation of the order, where the 'new order' has to be installed (Zartman 1991).

Essentially, Zartman contends that international conflict management and resolution are made desirable because more often, the involvement of the third party in a conflict brings more positive results than using the 'unilateral' mechanism of resolving the conflict within the conflicting parties. To achieve a remarkable result, however, the negotiating third party should ensure 'concessions' are exchanged by the conflicting parties (ibid). To narrow it down, the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine seems prolonged because the concession is not mutual. Thus, it is thought that both warring parties are loaded with the hope of winning. Owing to this intention, Russia viewed itself as mighty enough to defeat Ukraine, while the reimbursement, solidarities, and external military support of 'defensive weapons' made available to the Ukrainian military give rise to the impression that the war is winnable. Thus, the ongoing war brought the dilemma that is making 'concessions' difficult to achieve. To a considerable extent, this argument featured slightly in the opinion of Josep Borrell, the Vice-President of the European Commission and a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, at the European Defence and Security Summit. Borrell, sarcastically, contends that "I know a way of stopping the war,(…) to stop supporting Ukraine (…) because, without our[EU] support, Ukraine cannot defend itself (…) because people tell me [to] stop supporting Ukraine and the negotiations will start and peace will come." (Borell 2023). Although, if this 'solution' is applied, according to Borrel, Russia would win, and the 'insecurity' would increase. Consequently, where it seems that there is no obvious route to negotiations and concessions, it is against this backdrop that some of the CBMs are proposed for glints of peaceful resolution.

Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

There is no single approach to ending a war. An official declaration of war is not required for a war to begin; it can occur without one as well. Wars can also end in a variety of ways that evolve through time (De Franco et al. 2019). To Rauf, it is not apparent if crisis management procedures would take precedence over conflict avoidance procedures or whether war termination should. As such, many of these measurements closely resemble Confident-Building Measures - CBMs (Rauf 2005). Therefore, what is referred to as CBMs owe their origins, at least in part, to the European

military practice of inviting observers from various states to military exercises. This practice, however, dates to the years preceding the First World War, if not earlier (Borawski 1986). According to Schaller, despite the 'hope' that follows 'the most devastating war in world history', after the 1945 World War event, the dread of nuclear devastation dominated most of the Cold War security scene. Also, Europe experienced a conventional arms race of inconceivable proportions in the decade that followed (Schaller 2018). It should be noted, however, that Confidence-Building Measures - CBMs are effective before a conflict is transformed into war. CBMs are peacetime procedures. Even at that, these measures cannot be completely neglected, instead, to look at what roles these measures can still play whenever conflict degenerates into war. However, if war should break out, there are compelling reasons for confidence to be increased while the fighting is still going on. In essence, extant studies show that when there is war, there tends to be a gap between the warring parties. As such, each party in war tries to distance itself from the other. Hence, this always poses the risk of an information gap. Again, information sharing is essential during a war. In lieu of this, when there is no useful military information between two warring parties, it gives room for mistrust. As conceded by Vick, improved communications can give a direct channel for sharing information, inquiring about suspicious behaviors, and reassuring the opponent of one's 'good' intentions (Vick 1988). It is against this backdrop that maintenance and transparency procedures are therefore suggested as CBMs tools that could still be adopted in the ongoing Russo-Ukraine war:

Maintenance Measures
The maintenance approach explains that the existing CBMs should be maintained. Thus, according to Schaller, the essence of maintenance measure is that it 'focuses on smaller technical changes that aim to maintain or slightly improve existing provisions'. These existing provisions include 'increasing the size of verification teams' and 'improving procedures for verification measures' (ibid) To be clear, increasing the number of verification teams is crucial when the war is ongoing. The tasks of these teams, however, would cover 'inspection' and 'evaluation' of the available weapons and other instruments of war. In this case, therefore, the special teams of inspectors could be the existing constituted ones from, for instance, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and other designated teams within the UN Security Council.

With closer observation, the current war in Ukraine lacks due inspection and verification. Russia, being the aggressor, has since the beginning of the war been utilizing conventional weapons, firing missiles which according to reports, almost triggered the explosion of the largest nuclear plant in Europe. As a result, the President of Ukraine worried that "If there is an explosion [on the day the missile was fired at the nuclear plant], it is the end of everything. The end of Europe" (BBC 2022). In what followed, the United Nations Security Council called for an urgent meeting over the incident (Borger and Henley 2022). However, this development poses a threat to more than just Ukraine where the war is raging; rather, the consequences may have had an adverse impact on most of Europe, if not all of it. Meanwhile, such a situation could have been prevented if, for

instance, there were sub-teams who are verifying not only the weapons to be used but also the speculated targets. Furthermore, improving the procedure for verification is two folds: one, it allows for proper monitoring of every bit of weapons to be deployed by the two warring parties, and secondly, the safety of the teams of inspectors will be assured. In other words, the team of inspectors can move unhindered, and become the link between the two countries. This exercise, however, could pave the way for mediation and eventually result in a ceasefire.

Transparency Measures

The extant studies of the war between Russia and Ukraine show the failure of information between both warring parties. Consequently, the information gap has ushered in the misunderstanding that is argued to have led to the war in the first place. As conceived by Darilek, more thorough knowledge about opposing military forces and their actions should assist to clear up misconceptions quickly in circumstances when no hostile intent exists. But, even in cases where hostilities are seriously anticipated, such information may also help protect against underestimating of a possible attacker's capabilities or intentions (Darilek 1992). In the moment of clarity, this study is not pretending as if it is unaware that introducing transparency in the middle of a war could be detrimental to both sides (as none of the two warring sides has been transparent since the beginning of the war). But transparency in this regard, is, therefore, suggesting the idea of notification. As argued by Sharp, with notification, both sides are going to be well informed of their adversary and military activities, and it will be helpful to build the confidence of the military and further helps in arms control (Sharp 1982).

It should be emphasized that the proposals of transparency are not always accepted and agreed upon, even in peacetime. For instance, numerous proposals for increasing mutual confidence and transparency between India and Pakistan have been made, but few of them have been honored (Rauf 2005). Again, between 24th April and 19th May 2000, there was the Reviewed Conference of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York. Thus, Robinson conceived that the officially recognized nuclear weapon states (NWS) put up a proposal for better transparency in their dealings (Robinson 2016), but transparency is usually regarded as 'Western attempts' and 'espionage' (ibid). Nevertheless, whatever additional information and transparency which political-military communication during a conflict may produce, as argued by Darilek, clear and persistent adherence to established CBMs can send a powerful message, showing a basic determination to keep the crisis in control and see it resolved peacefully at the end (ibid). In other words, even though the Russia-Ukraine War had already lasted a year, possible mediating parties can choose to start the process of resolution with a 'transparency approach'. To be clear, as more information continues to spread between the two warring parties, as is to be expected, they grow more and more aware of the necessity of putting an end to the fighting.

CONCLUSION

After the pandemic turbulence that the world witnessed during the prime of Covid-19, and the countries of the world were recovering from the economic quagmires as the consequence of the dreaded virus, Russia's first strike into Ukrainian territory on the 24th of February 2022, changed the dynamics of the world. Indeed, it started as a regional conflict between two neighboring countries, in retrospect, it beats the imaginations of conflict analysts. This question is not only why the war is prolonged than speculated, but how it appears as the continuation of the existing competition between the United States and the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Hence, creating a climate of fear with a potential nuclear war.

In this study, I argued that the fear of the Russia-Ukraine war of a potential escalation into a nuclear war is traceable to a lack of effective arms control treaty, most especially, between the United States and the Russian Federation. Given that, the New START agreement signed in 2010 between these two superpowers allows for proper monitoring and supervision of the nuclear activities of the two countries. In effect, this treaty prevents any of the two superpowers from issuing nuclear threats. It features in the argument that if the treaty had been renewed or still active, there might likely be no cause for alarm.

This study does not completely argue against the supplying of 'defensive weapons' to either of the two worrying parties in the Russia-Ukraine war, howbeit, maintains that it is problematic to distinguish between the weapons that are 'defensive' and those that are 'offensive'. And if at all we can differentiate between the two, both tend to raise humanitarian concerns and impose threats to the world's peace and stability. Alternatively, however, instead of 'third-party' supplying weapons of any kind, more energies should be expended on reaching a compromise between the two warring parties and paving the way for 'concessions'. Finally, this study suggests that, although confidence-building measures – CBMs are prominent in preventing war, all the measures could not be trashed. Therefore, maintenance and transparency approaches were proposed as measures that could still be adopted in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

There is no organization or individual sponsoring this article. It was only put up for scholarly purposes. As a result, the author declares that his thoughts on this subject are solely his own. Nothing written here represents the position of the Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) of the Arctic University of Tromsø – UiT, on the Russian-Ukraine war. Furthermore, the author's goal is to analyze intellectual options for putting an end to an ongoing war. Further insightful intellectual objections can be made to the study's arguments.

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