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The Russo-Ukrainian War and the Nuclear Proliferation

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language and Culture

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Abstract

Individual proliferators, the halted US-Russian arms-control negotiations, and the resulting dissatisfaction over stalled progress towards disarmament had all posed challenges to the global nuclear order in recent years. Then, under the guise of nuclear threats against NATO, Russia began a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine. This has neither rendered the international nuclear-governance framework ineffective, nor has it driven it to the brink of collapse. So far, the Russian invasions of Ukraine, first in February 2014 and then again in February 2022, have been fought solely with conventional weaponry. However, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has significant, multilayered nuclear undertones. It raises serious concerns about the dynamics of nuclear deterrence, the future of nuclear nonproliferation, arms control and disarmament, and international nuclear energy governance. In sum, the current conflict in Ukraine has serious consequences for the global nuclear order. The global nuclear order has been fraught with inherent tensions and paradoxes since the shocking advent of nuclear weapons into the international system in 1945. However, the conflict in Ukraine is worsening the global nuclear problem by intensifying existing dysfunctions. It has to be seen whether and how tensions are relieved, conflicts are resolved, and dysfunctions are mended. This research examines the inherent vulnerabilities of the global nuclear order, diagnose how the war in Ukraine might have exacerbated them, and open the way to the search for a cure.

ملخص

إن الناشرين الفرديين ، والمفاوضات الأمريكية الروسية المتوقفة بشأن الحد من التسلح ، وما نتج عن ذلك من عدم الرضا إزاء التقدم المتعثر نحو نزع السلاح ، كلها عوامل شكلت تحديات للنظام النووي العالمي في السنوات الأخيرة. بعد ذلك ، تحت ستار التهديدات النووية ضد الناتو ، بدأت روسيا غزوًا شاملاً لأوكرانيا. وهذا لم يجعل إطار الحوكمة النووية الدولي غير فعال ، ولم يدفعه إلى حافة الانهيار. حتى الآن ، تمت محاربة الغزو الروسي لأوكرانيا ، أولاً في فبراير 2014 ثم مرة أخرى في فبراير 2022 ، بالأسلحة التقليدية فقط. ومع ذلك ، فإن الصراع الروسي الأوكراني له نغمات نووية كبيرة ومتعددة الطبقات. إنه يثير مخاوف جدية بشأن ديناميكيات الردع النووي ، ومستقبل منع الانتشار النووي ، وتحديد الأسلحة ونزع السلاح ، والحوكمة الدولية للطاقة النووية. باختصار ، فإن الصراع الحالي في أوكرانيا له عواقب وخيمة على النظام النووي العالمي. كان النظام النووي العالمي محفوفًا بالتوترات والمفارقات المتأصلة منذ الظهور المروع للأسلحة النووية في النظام الدولي في عام 1945. ومع ذلك ، فإن الصراع في أوكرانيا يؤدي إلى تفاقم المشكلة النووية العالمية من خلال تكثيف الاختلالات الحالية. يجب أن نرى ما إذا كان سيتم تخفيف التوترات وكيف يتم حل النزاعات وإصلاح الخلل الوظيفي.يفحص هذا البحث نقاط الضعف الكامنة في النظام النووي العالمي ، ويشخص كيف أدت الحرب في أوكرانيا إلى تفاقمها ، ويفتح الطريق أمام البحث عن علاج.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BSSR	Belorussia
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
EU	European Union
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile
IFVs	Infantry fighting vehicles
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti
MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket Systems
NACC	Northeast Alabama Community College
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEP	New Economic Policy
NPT	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
NUC	NATO-Ukraine Commission
NWS	Nuclear-weapon states
POWs	prisoners of war
PRC	People's Republic of China
RBMK	Reaktor Bolshoy Moshchnosty Kanalny
SPC	Strategic Partnership Commission
UNR	Ukrainian National Republic
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

Ukraine's history began with the Kyivan Rus, whose capital city was Kyiv. Following the invasion of the Golden Horde after the mid-14ᵗʰ century Ukraine has fallen under the rule of multiple neighboring countries. While Ukraine had been mostly occupied, Moscow state became a powerful enemy however many Ukrainians became Kozaks, formed a state on part of the territory and built a powerful volunteer army. Soon Ukraine found itself divided between the Russian Empire and Habsburg Austria, but the spirit of the Kozaks remained as Ukrainians fought for their independence which they finally gained in 1918.Then Russian Bolsheviks installed their government using military force. Ukraine became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. To suppress Ukrainians, the new government conducted a mass confiscation of food in Ukraine known as Holodomor; millions of Ukrainians were starved to death. Despite remaining an oppressed colony within the Soviet Union Ukrainian nation has survived and outlived the Union itself, and in 1991 Ukraine has declared its official independence handing over all of Russia's nuclear weapons, again in 2004 the Orange Revolution took place. Hundreds of thousands of peaceful protesters rose up against fraud caused by a pro-Russian lobby during the presidential elections. Despite some progress political pressure within Ukraine and strong Russian influence continued Ukraine suffered economic stagnation.

Fast forward to 2013 the pro-Russian president Yanukovych refused to sign the European association agreement which has led to statewide peaceful protests called Euromaidan. The government attempted to violently shut down the protests but the nation didn't give up the protest turned into the revolution of dignity. Revolution supporters were threatened, persecuted and killed by the government riot police and thugs. They killed more than a hundred protesters. President Viktor Yanukovych and his cronies escaped an interim. Government was formed in Ukraine; the new presidential elections were scheduled for May

2014, followed by the parliamentary elections in the fall. In the meantime, Russia has started its special operation to annex Crimea. On February 27 Russian troops occupied the peninsula.

Ukraine's decision to join NATO was not in its favor, generating a new episode in the long conflict with Russia which considers the fact that Ukraine the neighboring country and the link between it and Europe as a member of this competing alliance is a threat to the security of its lands and borders, and thus, it had a hostile reaction that was not pleasant for Ukraine. On 24 February Ukraine informed the IAEA that Russian forces had taken control of all facilities of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (which is located on the shortest road between Belarus and the capital, Kyiv). Control of the site was returned to Ukrainian personnel on 31 March.

The stalled US-Russian arms control negotiations and the ensuing dissatisfaction over the slow pace of disarmament have all put the world nuclear order under threat in recent years. Then, under the guise of nuclear threats against NATO, Russia started a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This hasn't rendered the international nuclear governance apparatus ineffective or put it in danger of disintegrating. History demonstrates the global nuclear order's resistance to misbehavior by superpowers. The security and energy interests of major nuclear-capable governments will continue to be served by it in the field of non-proliferation. The arms control agreement between Washington and Moscow can be reconstructed and has always been responsive to their strategic whims.

The Significance of the Study

This research will shed light on the Russia's use of nuclear threats as an enabler for escalation and the specter of Russian tactical nuclear use against Ukraine goes well beyond its declared nuclear doctrine. The outcome of the war in Ukraine thus has critical importance for deciding the value of nuclear weapons in global security architecture and for resolving the

conundrum between the systems of deterrence and restraint. This study will be significant in examining the inherent vulnerabilities of the global nuclear order, diagnose how the war in Ukraine might have exacerbated them.

The Aim of the Study

The aim of the study sheds light on Russia's aggression that challenges the global nuclear order, from long-standing multilateral treaties to assumptions about the usability of nuclear arms in conflict that upended many of the norms and expectations essential to the success of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. Moreover, the work will investigate the potential consequences of the conflict on nuclear proliferation and non-proliferation efforts, and identify possible trajectories of the conflict.

Research Questions

The work tackles a main subject in the studies of the impact of Russo-Ukrainian war on nuclear proliferation. Among the other inquiries that drive this research work, the following will be profoundly examined: What is the impact of the conflict on nuclear proliferation and non-proliferation efforts, and how might it affect the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the general international effort? What are the possible trajectories of the conflict? What's the relation between Ukraine joining NATO and the nuclear proliferation? What's the nature of the relationship between Ukraine and the US? How did Vladimir Putin's invasion affect the life in Ukraine? What are the aims of the treaty of the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW)? What are the implications of Russian nuclear threats to Ukraine and to what extent this war influences the nuclear proliferation? These questions will be discussed in the research with the addition of other concepts that will occur during the process of developing the subject of study.

Literature Review

Several articles and books have dealt with this issue. In his report "The great famine in Soviet Ukraine: new avenues of inquiry into the Holodomor", Troy Reisenauer explores new avenues of inquiry into the Holodomor, a man-made famine engineered by the Soviet government of Joseph Stalin in 1932 and 1933. The report highlights the deliberate nature of the famine, which was a direct assault on the Ukrainian peasantry and an attack on the Ukrainian village, which traditionally had been a key element of Ukrainian national culture. The report also emphasizes the role of the famine in the construction of national memory and identity in Ukraine and its impact on the development of Ukrainian nationalism. Overall, the report provides insights into the complex historical, political, and social factors that led to the Holodomor and its implications for Ukrainian and Soviet history.

Following, in the chapter "The Ethnic Cleansing of Western Ukraine (1939–1945)" from his book "The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999" Timothy Snyder discusses the ethnic cleansing of Western Ukraine during the period of 1939-1945, which involved the forced removal of Poles and Jews from the region by the occupying Soviet and Nazi forces. The chapter also highlights the ethnic cleansing and deportations of the Polish elite and Jewish populations by the occupying Soviet and Nazi forces, which led to the destruction of the Polish state. Snyder's research found that Poles and Ukrainians engaged in "ethnic cleansing" against each other in what is now Western Ukraine during the early 1940s. The chapter provides insights into the complex historical, political, and social factors that led to the ethnic cleansing of Western Ukraine and its implications for Ukrainian and Polish history.

In his book "Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: a Minority Faith", Andrew Wilson talks about Ukrainian nationalism in the modern era, its historical roots of diversity, and its

development vital to the evolution of both the form and content of the independent Ukrainian state. The book examines the emergence of Ukrainian nationalism in the 1990s, its relationship with the Soviet past, and its impact on the political, social, and cultural life of Ukraine. The book also explores the role of Ukrainian nationalism in shaping the country's foreign policy and its relations with Russia and the West.

In their article "Impact of the Ukrainian Conflict on US Relations with Countries in the Middle East", Nikolay Bobkin discusses the implications of the conflict in Ukraine on US relations with countries in the Middle East. The article analyzes the position of leading countries in the region. The article argues that the war in Ukraine has put the United States in a difficult position, as it has failed to achieve its objectives and has faced negative consequences in the Middle East and beyond. The article suggests that the conflict in Ukraine has become a global and regional problem, and its implications for international relations require in-depth study. Overall, the article provides insights into the complex geopolitical dynamics that have emerged as a result of the conflict in Ukraine and its impact on US foreign policy in the Middle East. Moreover, Max Rose and his co-authors in an article entitled "Nuclear Weapons" provide an overview of the history and current status of nuclear weapons. The article discusses the development of nuclear weapons, their use in warfare, and the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The article also examines the current state of nuclear weapons, including the number of weapons in possession of various countries, the risks of nuclear proliferation, and the efforts to reduce the number of nuclear weapons through arms control agreements. Overall, the article provides a comprehensive analysis of the history, politics, and technology of nuclear weapons and their implications for global security.

Methodology

The research would be conducted through both historical and qualitative methods aiming at explaining the relation between the Ukrainian war and the nuclear proliferation. This study is based on qualitative method used to give deep explanation of the different procedures of Russia's invasion against Ukraine. The historical approach as well, to explore different facts and reasons of the subject through a detailed investigation and intervention of the real goals of Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and Nuclear Threats. These are two predominant approaches used for the achievement for this research work.

This dissertation will include three chapters. The first is entitled "The Background of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict". The chapter examines the factors that led to the conflict, including Ukraine's move towards Western Europe and away from its former Soviet ally, and the role of Russian nationalism in the conflict. The chapter also discusses the impact of the conflict on Ukrainian citizens from all regions and linguistic and religious backgrounds, as well as the split between Ukrainian and Russian identities. Overall, the chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the historical, political, and social factors that led to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and its implications for regional and global security.

"The Russo-Ukrainian Conflict Episodes", is the title of the second chapter which explores the various episodes of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine dealing with the causes of Russia's invasion and its justification. The chapter examines the different phases of the conflict, including the annexation of Crimea, the fighting in the Donbas region, and the escalation of the conflict in 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The third chapter is the analysis of this dissertation, under the title "The implications and recommendations of the Russian nuclear threats ", it analyzes the potential consequences of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, including the threat of nuclear weapons. The

chapter examines the implications of the conflict for global security, including the weakening

of the norm against nonuse of nuclear weapons and the potential for nuclear proliferation.

Overall, the chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the potential implications of the

Russo-Ukrainian conflict for regional and global security and offers recommendations for

promoting peace and stability in the region in the conclusion.

Chapter One

Background of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

The crisis between Russia and Ukraine has deep-seated, multidimensional roots. This chapter explores details about this conflict since Ukraine has a long history of being torn between Russian and Western influence. Russia and Ukraine have strong cultural, economic, and political ties, and in many respects, Ukraine is essential to Russia's identity and conception of its place in the world. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is an example of resurgent geopolitical competition between powerful nations. Overall, history, culture, politics, and geopolitics all play a significant role in this conflict's origins.

1.1 The Roots of the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict

The current situation in Ukraine could be seen as a structural crisis of the post-unipolar world and the post-Soviet Ukrainian statehood, which united territories and established new internal borders without considering the specifics of its territories' histories and cultures. These choices weren't made on the principles of harmonious creation, but rather on manipulative and pragmatic factors. Political, economic, social, and cultural factors are clearly present in this issue and its numerous underlying causes (Valdai Discussion Club9).

The beginning of hostilities between Russia and Austria-Hungary in August 1914, which started World War I, had a significant effect on both combatant states' people in Ukraine. Publications and cultural institutions from Ukraine were banned in the Russian Empire, and significant individuals were either imprisoned or banished. The fleeing Austrians put many to death for alleged pro-Russian sympathies, outlawed Ukrainian, shut down institutions, and were getting ready to exterminate the Greek Catholic Church. The Austrian reconquest in the spring of 1915 ended the Russification effort, although Western Ukraine remained a battlefield and experienced severe devastation. The Provisional Government was

established following the February 1917 Ukrainian Revolution, which also resulted in the removal of tsarist restrictions on minorities and the introduction of freedom of speech ("Ukraine - World War I and the struggle for independence").

The Central Rada was a revolutionary parliament established in 1917 in Ukraine through the initiative of the Society of Ukrainian Progressives and other cultural, professional, and political association ("Central Rada"). It was a body representing Ukrainian organizations in the Russian Empire and claimed authority over the Ukrainian provinces of the Russian empire, excluding the Crimea (Velychenko). In other words, is a representative assembly of Ukrainians, was established in March and recognized as the country's highest authority in April. Its claimed objectives were to give Ukraine geographical autonomy and make Russia a democratic, federative republic. The Rada had to contend with the more radical soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies, and there were unresolved disagreements regarding its territorial jurisdiction and political prerogatives. Following the 1917 Bolshevik takeover of Petrograd, relations between Ukraine and Russia deteriorated. On November 20, the Central Rada declared the Ukrainian National Republic in response to its refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the new government. The Bolsheviks began an offensive in the Left Bank on January 22, declaring Ukraine a Soviet republic, and on March 1919, the third congress adopted the country's first constitution. As a result, Soviet Ukraine gave Russia the exclusive right to trade with and conduct relations with other countries ("Ukraine - World War I and the struggle for independence").

The German-Austrian offensive was put an end to, by the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty on February 9, where the Central Powers signed peace accords at Brest-Litovsk (now in Belarus) with the Ukrainian Republic, and with Soviet Russia on March 3, 1918, ending hostilities between those nations during World War I; this allowed the Rada administration to return to the city. The Soviet Army withdrew from Ukraine in April. Gen.

Pavlo Skoropadsky, who overthrew the Ukrainian government in 1918 and annulled all legislation issued by the Rada, installed a conservative government with the backing of landowners and the urban middle class, which was predominately Russian. Nationalists, Marxists, and rural Ukrainians all fiercely opposed this. When the peasants expressed their animosity through uprisings and partisan fighting, the Ukrainian National Union was established to coordinate political opposition. The fundamental pillar of Skoropyadsky's dictatorship was dismantled by the capitulation of Germany and Austria in November, which prompted the establishment of the Directory of the Ukrainian National Republic and his plan to federate with a future non-Bolshevik Russia. On December 14, the hetman resigned, and the Directory came to power in Kiev. In reaction to the threat posed by the escalating Ukrainian nationalism, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (S.R.) was founded in 1937 ("Ukraine - World War I and the Struggle for Independence").

The first constitution for the new international federation was established on December 30, 1922, with the proclamation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S. R.); RSFSR (Russia), the YUSSR (Ukraine), the BSSR (Belorussia), and the ZSFSR (Transcaucasia)—thus they were forging a single union state with the objective of consolidating Soviet control on an equal and voluntary basis. The Treaty outlined how the all-Union governmental organizations would be organized and generalized their scope of authority ("The first constitution of the USSR adopted").To accomplish this, the New Economic Policy (NEP), announced by Lenin at the Tenth Congress in March 1921, marked a significant change from the party's prior strategy for conducting national affairs, the foundation of NEP was the establishment of a tax-in-kind that allowed farmers to sell their excess food on the open market. This tax was set at levels significantly lower than those of prior requisition quotas. This submission to market forces quickly resulted in the denationalization of small-scale business and services, the creation of trusts for supplying,

financing, and marketing the goods of large-scale business, the stabilization of the currency, and other actions, such as the granting of concessions to foreign investors, all of which were intended to reestablish the connection (Smychka) between town and country (Siegelbaum).

In April 1923, the Russian Communist Party established the korenizatsiia (indigenization or nativization) policy in an effort to quell the resentment it had sparked among the sizable non-Russian Soviet population during the Civil War. The party sought to legitimize a predominantly Russian and urban-based revolution in an overwhelmingly agricultural, multiethnic state by elevating non-Russians to positions of leadership in the party, the government, and the trade unions and by supporting the development of distinct national cultures in the USSR. A full-scale industrialization program was launched by the party soon after korenizatsiia was introduced. Long-term, the Communist Party's leaders anticipated that industrialization would successfully reunite the varied populations of the Soviet Union under the socialist system. However, in actuality, even among party members, ethnic assertiveness was enhanced as a result of societal changes brought on by rapid economic growth (Liber).

1.1.1 Industrialization and Collectivization

The NEP came to an end by establishing two remarkable goals for Soviet domestic policy in November 1927 — rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture — Joseph Stalin began his "revolution from above." His objectives were to entirely eradicate any evidence of the capitalism that had been ushered in by the New Economic Policy, and to rapidly and cheaply transform the Soviet Union into an industrialized socialist state. Due to this, there was a significant increase in the industrial production, a tripling in the number of workers, and a rise in the urban population from 19 to 34 percent. The peasantry revolted against collectivization by increasing delivery quotas and seizing food, bearing the burden of

the increased industrialization. Over 100,000 families had been deported by the middle of the 1930s, and farms had gone from being 9 to 65 percent collectivized (Pike).

In 1932–1933 The Holodomor famine occurred (a famine that was orchestrated by The Soviet government under Joseph Stalin by taking steps to exterminate the Ukrainian peasantry and the Ukrainian intellectual and cultural elites in order to boost support for the Soviet rule in Ukraine). The name Holodomor means "death inflicted by starvation", millions of Ukrainians died at that time. The majority of the Holodomor's victims were rural farmers and villagers, who made up about 80% of Ukraine's population in the 1930s (University of Minnesota). Why exactly this category! Because Stalin had a unique resentment toward the Ukrainian peasant, realizing that the Ukrainian farmers were the mainstay of the national movement, as they were the ones who most obstinately clung to their national identity and opposed both Russian colonial rule and the Soviet regime (Reisenauer 25).

Although it is impossible to pinpoint the exact number of victims of the genocide in Ukraine, most estimation by academics falls between the ranges of 3.5 million to 7 millions. In 1933, the Holodomor was over. All farmland had been collectively owned by the state, and all farmers were now employed by it. Recent demographic estimates indicate that during the Holodomor, 13.3% of Ukraine's population perished. The percentage of deaths attributable to the famine was higher in other parts of Ukraine; for instance, it was 19% in Kyiv and 29% in Kharkiv oblasts. During the Holodomor, millions of Ukrainians perished. Promotion of a "new Soviet identity" and state pressure to speak Russian increased among Ukrainians. The misery endured by Ukrainians continued even after the Holodomor ended. For the remainder of their lives, the families of Holodomor victims faced starvation and more repressions ("Holodomor").

1.1.2 Russification

In addition to the industrialization and collectivization efforts; the Soviet government launched a campaign against "nationalist deviations" that ultimately turned into a virtual assault on Ukrainian culture. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was persecuted to the point where it was finally destroyed in 1930, along with its clergy and hierarchy, who were imprisoned and exiled. The Union for the Liberation of Ukraine is said to have been a covert group that the secret police allegedly discovered in 1929. Serhii (Serhy) Yefremov, the leading literary critic in Ukraine at the time, was among the suspected leaders who were put on trial in a mock trial and given prison sentences in labor camps in 1930. The ranks of thinkers, authors, and artists were wiped out by arrests, followed by incarceration, exile, or execution; some, like Khvylovy, took their own lives in dissent Approximately four out of five ("Ukraine - Great Famine, Soviet Repression, and CP(B)U Purges 1929-1938").

1.1.3 Western Ukraine under Soviet and Nazi Rule

In his book titled "The reconstruction of nations", Timothy Snyder states that everything changed in September 1939 when Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union overthrew the Polish state (154). Hitler and Stalin split Poland's territory and people for two years. While the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact's conditions were in effect between 1939 and 1941, the majority of Poland's Ukrainians were under the Soviet rule while the majority of Poles were under Nazi rule. Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, taking over Galicia, Volhynia, and Soviet Ukraine in the process.

All of Poland's land and people were at Hitler's mercy for the following three years (Snyder 154). Snyder also mentions that Nazi Germany created the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, which included Volhynia, but also included Galicia to the General Government, which was the name of its administration of the remaining portions of Poland (154). After the

biggest fight in history in February, Paulus defied Hitler and gave up at Stalingrad. The Red Army launched an offensive in the spring of 1943. The Soviet Union redrew the Polish-Ukrainian border after driving the Germans out of Ukraine in the summer of 1944. By the spring of 1945, Stalin controlled the entirety of Poland's territory and population. The Soviet Union occupied Galicia and Volhynia in 1939, the Nazis in 1941, and the Soviet Union once more in 1944 (Snyder 154).

1.1.4 The Nazi Occupation of Soviet Ukraine

Concerning the Nazi invasion of Soviet Ukraine during World War II, millions of men, women, and children perished in a famine brought on by the Soviet Union's forced collectivization of farms at this time, which caused extreme suffering for the Ukrainian people. The suffering in Ukraine was made worse by the German invasion in June 1941, after the Ukrainian people considered that the German presence saved them from Soviet oppression (Cengel). One of the greatest Jewish populations in Europe lived in Ukraine on the eve of the invasion; the fate of these Jews depended on a number of variables, including the local occupying power and whether they were among the extremely few who managed to flee. Millions of people, including Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, Belarusian, Romanian, Polish, and Roma/Gypsy communities, perished as a result of the Nazis' extermination strategy in Ukraine. The Reich Ministry oversaw the Nazi occupation system in much of Nazi Germany's occupied Ukraine. On July 17, 1941, Adolf Hitler issued a Führer Decree outlining the rules for running the recently captured Eastern provinces. Ukrainians were ranked higher than Russians in the Nazi racial hierarchy, and the Nazis made a meager effort to advance Ukrainian national culture in the occupied territories—a move that helped bring some of the Ukrainian nationalist ("The Holocaust in Ukraine").

1.1.5 Ukraine Reunited Under Soviet Rule

As it's already mentioned in December 1922, the Ukrainian SSR became one of the founding states of the Soviet Union. The other founding states were the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the Transcaucasia Socialist Federalist Soviet Republic, and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic ("Ukraine - Ukraine in the Interwar Period"). Ukraine remained under Soviet rule until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. During World War II, Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany, and after their victory over the Germans at the Battle of Stalingrad in early 1943, the Soviets launched a counteroffensive westward. In mid-1943, the Germans began their retreat from Ukraine, and by the end of the year, Ukraine was reunited under Soviet rule. The western borders of Ukraine were permanently redrawn as a result of the Soviet victory, the Red Army's occupation of Eastern Europe, and Allied diplomatic efforts. Poland agreed to cede Volhynia and Galicia in exchange for payment for German areas in the west, and the two countries exchanged populations (Hajda and Stebelsky).

Ukraine signed the Charter of the United Nations as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on June 26, 1945, and it came into force on October 24, 1945. Ukraine was among the first countries that signed the United Nations Charter, becoming a founding member of the United Nations among 51 countries. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly independent Ukraine retained its seat in the United Nations. Ukraine has been an active member of the United Nations and its various organs, and its delegation took an active part in the San Francisco conference in 1945. Despite the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation, Ukraine pays particular attention to the activities of the United Nations in support of international peace and security, considering it as an important factor of its foreign policy. Despite the Russian Federation's continuous aggression, Ukraine pays close attention to what

the UN is doing to maintain global peace and security and views it as a key component of its foreign policy (Feltman).

The final years of Stalin's administration were marked by his growing paranoia, which resulted in yet another massive purge that he planned in his final days. There is evidence that Stalin was preparing for a new, massive purge of the Jewish people ("The Cold War and Stalin's Last Years"). At the start of 1946, he announced the new Five-Year Plan, to continue focusing on heavy industry and military technologies. Stalin declared that the war and the triumph had validated his strict policies of the 1930s, and urged Soviet scientists to catch up with and surpass Western science ("20th-Century International Relations - the End of East–West Cooperation"). Moreover, and during Khrushchev's leadership, Russification was a tendency that aimed to promote the Russian language and culture. However, it was not as intense as during Stalin's rule. Khrushchev's policies were characterized by a period of "thaw" during the Cold War, which included de-Stalinization and liberalization of Soviet society. Khrushchev's foreign policy of pursuing peaceful coexistence with the United States and its allies was a dramatic change from previous leaders' attitudes (Torigian).

26th April 1986 at Chernobyl, Ukraine, in the former Soviet Union, Unit 4 of the nuclear power plant was entirely destroyed by an unexpected surge of power during a reactor systems test, resulting in the worst nuclear disaster in history. The incident and the accompanying fire caused enormous amounts of radioactive material to be spilled into the environment; increasing radiation exposure for 5 million people will raise their risk of developing thyroid cancer. The Soviet nuclear power authorities presented their initial accident report to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting in Vienna, Austria, in August 1986 ("Backgrounder on Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident"). This tragedy was caused especially by a subpar Soviet reactor design as well as grave errors

committed by the site's operators. It was a direct outcome of Cold War isolation and the absence of a safety culture that followed ("Chernobyl Accident 1986"). After that, starting in Poland and moving throughout the Soviet bloc, anti-communist demonstrations erupt across central and Eastern Europe. In January 1990, almost 400,000 people in Ukraine joined hands to form a human chain that stretched 400 miles from Ivano-Frankovsk, a city in the west, to Kyiv, the country's capital, in the country's north. Many people display the Ukrainian flag of blue and yellow, which was forbidden under Soviet authority, demanding secession from the Soviet Union (Sullivan). According to Andrew Wilson, the Ukrainian SSR held its Supreme Soviet elections on March 4, 1990, with some seats requiring runoffs between March 10 and 18. The Verkhovna Rada, the republic's parliament, was to be represented by the winners of the elections. Oblast council elections were also held concurrently in each of their administrative regions (Wilson120).

From October 2–18, 1990, Kyiv witnessed the Revolution on Granite, a pivotal moment in the history of Ukraine. The paving stones on which the tents were set up inspired the name of the revolution. It was a student-led demonstration against the Soviet administration's choice to postpone Ukraine's independence. The protest captured the attention of a larger audience, and supporters flocked to the streets in large numbers. The students' cause was supported by a number of sizable protests, and numerous labor unions also called for widespread strikes in support of the students. It's no coincidence that numerous following demonstrations, or "Maidans," have also been concentrated on Kyiv's Independence Square now that the Revolution on Granite has taken on symbolic significance throughout the country (Chupryna). In 1990 The Rada, the newly elected Ukrainian parliament created from the former Soviet assembly, votes to renounce the Soviet Union. The Chernobyl nuclear power station in northern Ukraine will be shut down once officials recall Ukrainian soldiers from other USSR regions. On August 24, 1991, which is still observed as Ukraine's official

Independence Day, the Ukrainian parliament declares independence once again in response to a failed coup in Moscow (Sullivan).

The Ukrainian Supreme Soviet Council, the nation's parliament at the time, determined that Ukraine would no longer be subject to the laws of the Soviet Union and would instead be controlled by its own laws when a large majority of Ukrainians chose to become an independent country in a referendum held on December 1, 1991. (Roughly 90% of eligible voters supported independence; roughly 84% of them participated in the referendum.) Kravchuk was elected president in a vote that took place concurrently with the referendum. By this time, a number of significant changes had occurred in Ukraine, including the breakup of the Communist Party and the creation of the foundation for separate military forces under the leadership of newly appointed Minister of Defense Kostiantyn Morozov. Additionally, Ukraine had defied political pressure from Moscow to change its trajectory away from independence and join a reorganized Soviet Union. The presidents of Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus decided to create the Commonwealth of Independent States one week after the independence referendum ("Independent Ukraine").

1.1.6 Post Independence Issues

In 1992 Ukraine legally established contacts with NATO, where Ukrainian delegates attended the first-ever meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council's High-Level Group. In order to help Central and Eastern European nations' efforts to join NATO, Ukraine was the first post-Soviet nation to reach a framework agreement with the alliance under the Partnership for Peace project (NATO). After the Soviet Union's collapse in 1994 As a crucial tool for guaranteeing Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Budapest Memorandum was reached after protracted and difficult negotiations involving the then-President of Russia Boris Yeltsin, the then-President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma, the then-

President of the United States Bill Clinton, and the then-Prime Minister of Great Britain John Major. In accordance with the conditions of the memorandum, Ukraine promised to give up its third-largest nuclear arsenal in the world, which it inherited from the Soviet Union, and transfer every nuclear warhead to Russia for deactivation. This made it possible for Ukraine to sign up for the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as a nuclear-free state (Borda).

Ukraine joined the NATO Partnership for Peace program in February of the same year, becoming the first CIS nation to do so. The fundamental tenets of non-coalition and long-term neutrality were included in the 1996-adopted Ukrainian Constitution. A NATO-Ukraine Commission was founded on July 9, 1997. However, Ukraine decided against joining NATO as the alliance's members debated to include for the first time countries from central and Eastern Europe. After Viktor Yanukovych, who opposed NATO membership, was elected president in 2010, Ukraine halted plans to join the alliance ("Relations with Ukraine").

1.1.7 State building and diplomacy

Despite complex challenges like nuclear disarmament, the status of Crimea, and control of the Black Sea Fleet, President Kravchuk gave state growth and citizenship a high priority. The 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership was signed by Ukraine under intense diplomatic pressure. After the disagreement over disarmament was resolved, relations between Ukraine and the US got better and finally developed into a strong political alliance. In office from 1991 until 1994, Kravchuk was Ukraine's first democratically elected president. He served as a Communist Party official for 30 years before switching to nationalist politics with the fall of the Soviet Union. Before serving as president of Ukraine from 1991 to 1994, Kravchuk oversaw the Communist Party in Ukraine during the last years of the Soviet Union and was a crucial player in its fall. Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma defeated Kravchuk in the race for the presidency (Wesolowsky).

After that, during Leonid Kuchma's presidency, he promoted more privatization, free trade, and entrepreneurship, which helped Ukraine transition from a Soviet republic to a capitalist nation. Kuchma won the 1994 presidential election and was reelected in 1999. Despite this, his popularity dipped over time as his economic reforms did not help the nation's economy. The media had less independence during Kuchma's presidency, as well as multiple corruption scandals. In order to compete for president in 1994 on a platform to revive economic relations with Russia and advance pro-market reforms, he resigned from his position as prime minister of Ukraine in September 1993. Against the current president, Kuchma won handily. Its administration worked hard to increase Ukraine's access to foreign markets ("Leonid Kuchma").

Ukraine represented a rejection of the communist past during Viktor Yushchenko's 1999 presidential campaign and shown that the east-west divides was not as bad as anticipated. With Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, Ukraine agreed to establish a "joint economic space" in 2003. Kuchma's presidency was overthrown by a scandal involving audio recordings that revealed he authorized the killing of a journalist till 2000. He ruled for around another four years. In 2003, the presidents of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan reached a preliminary understanding establishing a "joint economic space" between the four nations. In 2003, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan also agreed to establish a CIS Free Trade Zone, also known as a "Joint Economic Space" (RFE/RL).

Kuchma declared in 2004 that he would not be a candidate for president. Kuchma's Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych was a rival candidate who had Kuchma's and Russia's backing. He was confronted by the Westerner and opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko. The presidential election in Ukraine ended up being a vote on whether to follow the West or Russia. Yanukovych narrowly prevailed against Yushchenko in the run-off elections, although Yushchenko and his allies charged that the votes had been tampered with,

particularly in eastern Ukraine. As Yushchenko supporters carried orange flags during their protests, these demonstrations came to be known as the "Orange Revolution." The results of the run-off election on November 21, 2004, were deemed void by the Supreme Court of Ukraine; a new election was held on December 26, 2004. On December 31, 2004, Viktor Yanukovych formally accepted his loss (Hofmann).

Outside of free and fair elections, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine stood for political principles and goals. The election fraud highlighted the need for a more pluralistic form of administration among Ukrainian residents. One of the main concepts for a better future for Ukraine that was expressed in the slogans of the revolution and the writings of significant authors and public intellectuals at the time was the "European choice" of Ukraine. The Orange Revolution was a dazzling, somewhat unplanned, and undoubtedly vibrant manifestation of the will of the people. People wearing orange were demonstrating against government corruption and the degradation of Ukraine as a country in the eyes of Ukrainians and the rest of the world. Ukrainians learned during the Orange Revolution that people could wield genuine political power despite widespread fraud and corruption (Pifer and Thoburn).

A gas crisis occurred outside of Ukraine in 2009 after Gazprom abruptly stopped delivering natural gas to that country. For the gas it had already received, Ukraine owed Gazprom $2.4 billion. Eighteen European countries reported significant drops in or total cuts offs of their gas supplies that were imported through Ukraine from Russia as a result of this dispute, which caused supply disruptions in many European countries. In the midst of accusations between the two parties, all Russian natural gas deliveries through Ukraine were stopped on January 7. To resolve the problem, Tymoshenko and Putin negotiated a new agreement, and gas flows started again on January 20 (Kirby).

For the seventh time since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukrainians went to the polls in 2010 to choose a president. Viktor Yanukovych defeated Yulia Tymoshenko in the second round run-off on February 7, winning the election by a slim margin. This article provides a background for the 2010 presidential election, analyzes the process and outcomes, and then discusses post-election coalition building and what the election means for the development of Ukrainian democracy and Ukraine's European integration process (Copsey and Shapovalova). Under Yanukovych's administration, Russia's lease on the Ukrainian port of Sevastopol was extended until 2042 in exchange for a reduction in the price of Russian natural gas (Hofmann).

1.1.8 The Maidan Protest Movement

Ukraine's pro-European trajectory was halted in November 2013, when a planned association agreement with the EU was scuttled. Street protests erupted in Kyiv, with Lutsenko and Klitschko leading the largest demonstrations since the Orange Revolution. In response, Yanukovych signed laws restricting the right to protest, leading to bloody clashes. In February, hundreds of protesters were released from jail, but tensions were short-lived. On February 24, the interim government charged Yanukovych with mass murder and issued a warrant for his arrest. The Ukrainian economy responded erratically, with the hryvnia sinking to historic levels ("Ukraine - The Maidan Protest Movement").

1.1.9 The Annexation of Crimea

Ukraine's Maidan Revolution ended in late February 2014, when President Victor Yanukovych fled Kyiv and the Rada appointed an acting president and acting prime minister to take charge. Armed men began occupying key facilities and checkpoints on the Crimean Peninsula, wore Russian combat fatigues but with no identifying insignia. On March 6, the Crimean Supreme Council voted to ask to accede to Russia, with 96.7 percent voting to join

Russia. On March 18, Crimean and Russian officials signed the Treaty of Accession of the Republic of Crimea, which Putin ratified three days later (Pifer).

March referendum that Ukraine and the West refused to recognize its legitimacy as the West imposed sanctions on Russia for. The event was the beginning of an undeclared war. At that time, Moscow saw that it had the right to keep 25,000 of its soldiers on the peninsula; While Kiev saw the presence of Russian troops in Crimea as hostile action. Crimea has the naval base Sevastopol, which is the seat of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. Also in 2014, Russian separatists in the Dombas region of eastern Ukraine started unrest, which ended with their control of the region, and while Ukraine and the West accused Russia of supporting the separatist movement in Dumbas, Russia defended that the fighters in Dumbas are volunteers. Since 2014, ongoing clashes between the Ukrainian army and separatists there have killed more than 13,000 people ("Ukraine - The Maidan Protest Movement").

1.2. The Turbulent Relations between Russia and Ukraine

The turbulent history of the two close neighbors spans more than a millennium. The first East Slavic state, Kievan Rus, which spanned from the Baltic to the Black Sea from the ninth until the middle of the thirteenth centuries, is where both countries' roots may be found. Oddly enough, Vikings — "Rus" is the Slavic term for the red-haired Scandinavians — who stormed down from the north in the 9th century, subdued the surrounding Slavic tribes, and established their capital at Kiev, are credited with founding this medieval kingdom. In 988, the kingdom became an Eastern Orthodox Christian nation, providing the groundwork for the current Russian church. A French priest dispatched to the Ukraine claimed, "This land is more unified, happier, stronger, and more civilized than France herself." However, once Kiev was destroyed by Mongol invaders in the 13th century, control went to Moscow, a little Rus trading outpost in the north.

Competing nations divided up Ukraine's land, with Catholic Poland and Lithuania dominating for many years. Imperial Russia had seized the majority of the nation by the end of the 18th century, with the exception of Galicia, which was governed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first independent Ukrainian state was established in Kiev in 1917, but it was short-lived due to Poland's invasion and battles with Moscow's Bolshevik government and forces loyal to the monarch. When Ukraine joined the Soviet Union in 1922, its economy had collapsed and its people were famished. During World War II, the Nazis invaded Ukraine and massacred 5.3 million people—mostly Jews—there. Stalin murdered thousands more people while deporting tens of thousands more Ukrainians to Siberian labor camps on the grounds that they had collaborated with the Nazis (Bates).

The 1991 referendum saw a reaffirmation of Ukrainians' desire for independence from Russia, with 92.3% of voters supporting the legislature's statement. Ukraine attained freedom on December 26, the day Mikhail Gorbachev disbanded the Soviet Union. As Ukraine attempts to sculpt its future in 2022, the West's participation is crucial. Boris Yeltsin, the president of Russia at the time, pressed Gorbachev to dismantle the USSR, but he had not given up on keeping Ukraine in a successor union. The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances served as the official instrument for the 1994 settlement of Russian territorial claims. The agreement, to which the United States and the United Kingdom provided guarantees, has been rendered meaningless during the past eight years. Putin defended it by claiming that the Euromaidan Revolution had established "a new state" with which Russia had not entered into any agreements (Hess).

1.2.1. Historical Connections and Context

There were numerous wars in the nation in the years preceding the 1917 Russian Revolution. These were The Crimean War (1854–1856; Russo–Turkish War; 1877–78;

Russo–Japanese War; 1904–1905; and World War I, which lasted from 1914–18. All of these demanded a lot of the state, including resources like tax money and labor. All but one of Russia's losses was to Turkey. The people were very unhappy as a result of this conflict cycle, which also had a negative impact on the administration and economy of the nation.

Three significant parties also aided the revolution's cause in addition to these fights. The majority of the populations in Russia, the peasants, were the first group. They were extremely underprivileged and barely managed to avoid hunger from harvest to harvest. The peasants in Russia saw the most severe effects of the population increase between 1867 and 1896. The population increased by 30 million in less than 30 years, which was too many for the amount of land available to the peasants. The government made an effort to assist, but the war took priority. The industrial working class also grew in size. The major cities' mines, industries, and workshops all employed these employees. They had little pay, subpar housing, and numerous accidents.

Once more, the government made an effort to assist by enacting factory acts that limited the number of hours one might work. Their efforts, meanwhile, were too modest in scope to make much of a difference. There were thus numerous strikes and ongoing disputes between the employees and the police. Last but not least, there was widespread opposition of the Russian monarch. Tsar Nicholas II was far more concerned with his family than with governmental issues. He believed that he had been appointed by God to reign, and he was obsessed with keeping all of his privileges. He also didn't comprehend the nationalistic and industrial forces that were gaining strength across Russia. His lack of concern for the people's difficulties caused them to lose trust in him and the long-standing autocratic legacy. The populace was dissatisfied and prepared to rise up in revolt. All they needed was a compelling argument and a capable leader.

One of the most important historical occurrences of the 20th century was the Russian Revolution of 1917. In the relatively huge nation of Russia, it dramatically altered the political system and way of life. However, the significance of an empire falling and a people rising up goes beyond the war effort. The events of the revolution were a direct result of the escalating fighting in World War I.

Russia joined the conflict in 1914 with great enthusiasm. Their excitement, however, was insufficient to keep them going, and the army suffered several fatalities and a loss of artillery supply. More importantly than lacking mobilization abilities to offset its losses, Russia lacked effective leadership. The bureaucracy and the military were completely under the control of Tsar Nicholas II (1894–1917). The people started to question his leadership because he would not cede his authority. The Duma (parliament) requested a democratically-minded administration that catered to the concerns of the populace in the summer of 1915. But Nicholas disbanded the Duma and headed for the fighting lines later that year. It was bad that he left (Llewellyn et al.).

Tsarina Alexandra and Rasputin, her unusual counterpart, overthrew the government. Alexandra was an extremely independent woman who favored absolute rule over democracy. She appointed and elected people based solely on her whim in an attempt to reign with total power while her husband was away. Rasputin, whose name means "Degenerate," was her favorite official and a Siberian preacher. He possessed enigmatic healing abilities and belonged to a group that combined religion with sexual extravagance. Rasputin was assassinated by three nobles in December 1916 as a result of suspicions that the two were in a relationship. Food scarcities in the cities grew worse, and people's spirits dropped. On March 8, 1917, riots broke out in the city of (Petrograd the western, Gregorian calendar was 13 days ahead of the Julian calendar that Russia was using at the time. Consequently, some place the riot's date as February 24.) Women's demands for more bread sparked it, and it gradually

extended to other industries and the entire city. Even the front-line soldiers took part in the revolution. On March 12, 1917, the Duma established a provisional administration, and the tsar abdicated a few days later (Hallemann).

A liberal agenda of different rights was implemented by the interim administration. These included the rights to equality before the law, freedom of expression, religion, and assembly, as well as the ability of unions to organize and go on strike. The leaders of this newly constituted government, including Alexander Kerensky, continued to reject social revolution and regarded the pursuit of the war as a duty of the country. The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the government were in a power struggle. This group closely monitored the interim administration and even issued its own ordinances. One of these gave elected committees the power previously held by the officers. As a result, army discipline broke down. Later on in the year, troops started going back home to claim some land for their families. Due to the provisional government's failure to address the issue of food supply, peasants were committing farm plunder and food riots. The time was right for a radical socialist like Vladimir Ilyich Lenin to seize power as anarchy was replacing freedom ("Alexander Kerensky").

Marxian socialism was strongly backed by Lenin (1870–1924). He thought that only a revolution, which could only happen under specific circumstances, could end capitalism. The Bolsheviks, or "majority group" of Lenin, and the Mensheviks, or "minority group," were divided inside the socialist party. Although Lenin's group lost its position as the majority, he retained the name and created a structured, revolutionary group. In July, the Bolsheviks made an unsuccessful attempt to seize control. Lenin escaped Petrograd and took refuge in Finland. But during the course of the summer, the party's popularity skyrocketed (Wilde).

The Bolsheviks and other parties held a debate in Petrograd in the second half of September, with Leon Trotsky as the head of the executive. The sentiments of the populace outside of Petrograd were in line with those of the Bolsheviks, who wanted the overthrow of Kerensky's regime, an end to the conflict, and a new land distribution scheme. Lenin asked the Bolshevik committee to organize an armed rebellion from Finland, but the Bolsheviks changed their minds after Lenin traveled in secret to Petrograd and engaged in a ten-hour discussion with them. The revolution was skillfully carried out by Trotsky, who established a military-revolutionary commission and organized meetings in the factory. Finally, the combined forces of the Bolshevik soldiers and workers invaded the city on the night of November 6 (or October 26) and took control of the government buildings.

Lenin proposed an armistice and enacted legislation to nationalize the land, but he was unable to solve the issue of widespread hunger. In the ensuing years, Lenin and his Bolsheviks faced more opposition and Tsar Nicholas II and his family was killed in July 1918. When stability returned by the end of 1920, Russia had undergone a complete transformation. The goal of the Bolsheviks was to end all social class-based inequalities in Russia, but they had some degree of success. Private ownership was outlawed and the tsar was replaced with a Council of People's Commissars. The capitalist world was alarmed as the Communist movement spread throughout the world, but the fact that the Russian Revolution existed at all is evidence that it was a significant twentieth-century event (Fernholz).

On November 7, 1917, the Russian capital of Petrograd was overthrown by Bolshevik forces commanded by the Marxist idealist Vladimir Lenin and his countrymen Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. The long-lasting and violent Russian Civil War that ensued was ultimately won by the Bolshevik Red Army in 1921.In addition to capturing Russia, the Red Army also triumphed in former Russian Empire satellite states including Ukraine, Belarus, and the Caucasus. Non-Russians suffered systematic oppression under the czarist regime, but Lenin

promised reform when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established on December 30, 1922.The USSR was also the first country in the world to be established on the socialist and Marxist ideas of a classless society and a communal economy. Lenin pitched the USSR as an alternative political model that was radically democratic, anti-imperialist, and egalitarian to the oppressed and colonized peoples of Africa and Asia (Roos).

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was established one hundred years ago, at the end of December 1922. A multi-ethnic nation-state that promised a socialist future and the safeguarding of national identity was founded out of the turmoil of civil war a little more than five years after the end of the Russian Revolution, which put an end to the Tsarist Empire. The founder and first leader of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Lenin, had criticized Tsarist Russia for confining people of all nationalities in a "prison of nations." The downtrodden people of the former Tsarist regions would be brought together in his new Soviet Union, which would be "national in form, socialist in content." While the culture and traditions of the various Soviet republics would be preserved, the economic and political institutions were to evolve along a socialist path in an effort to convert the populace to communism. Both the Russian chauvinism that Lenin detested and the Russification of the Tsarist era had passed.

The actuality of this new way of life, however, didn't measure up to the promises made by the Party bosses in Moscow, as was so frequently the case in Soviet history. What resulted was a massive state that compelled millions of individuals to join a federation that was first composed of Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Transcaucasia republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. As new republics were added from the surrounding regions that had once been part of the old Tsarist Empire, the USSR expanded to become the largest country in the world (expanding on what was already the largest country, Russia). One of these was the Nazi-Soviet alliance, which was formed in August 1939, and included the Baltic States, who

were integrated against their will. The Soviet Union was one of the two nuclear superpowers by the end of the 1940s (Davis).

Additionally, Lenin's massive new nation, which he founded in 1922, was not at all what he had anticipated would result from the 1917 revolution. His Marxism was internationalist and outward-looking, and it disapproved of nationalism and patriotism. And while the USSR initially "saw a flowering of national cultures in republics like Ukraine and Belarus, and especially the growing importance of national languages,", Joseph Stalin departed from this policy in the 1930s by concentrating more power in the hands of the Party leaders in Moscow and centralized authority. As a result, the tale of the Soviet Union's formation was one that began with the toppling of the Tsar and the promise of liberating Russia's downtrodden masses and concluded with the establishment of a strong, bureaucratic, and undemocratic state that dashed the hopes of the Russian Revolutions (Hellie and Medvedkov).

Ukrainian self-determination dates back to the 19th century, when nationalist movements began to emerge across Europe. Kyiv and eastern Ukraine were under Russian imperial administration, while western Ukraine was governed by Austro-Hungarians. The Soviet Union officially recognized Ukrainian as a distinct language and gave Ukraine "statehood" in the form of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. However, being a Soviet state did not entail true political independence. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Ukraine's relationship with Moscow underwent a significant turning point, when the Soviet Union eliminated private property in rural areas and established state-run farms in its place. This led to the Holodomor, a famine that killed four million Ukrainians in 1932–1933. The 1937 purges resulted in the murder of three-quarters of a million people across the Soviet Union. A mass burial from one of many was exhumed in Vinnytsia, a province in the center of Ukraine (Arel).

Ukraine received a gift from the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1954: Crimea. And with that, Ukraine was "gifted" a region that had been a part of Russia for generations. It was "Gifted" because Khrushchev supposedly made the transfer to mark the 300th anniversary of Ukraine's union with the Russian empire. Additionally, he presumably didn't anticipate the Soviet Union's demise in less than 40 years. But there were additional factors at play in the changeover. Millions of people perished in Ukraine's devastating famine, known as the Holodomor, which Joseph Stalin, Khrushchev's predecessor, caused. When Khrushchev assumed power following the death of Stalin in 1953, According to Nina Khrushchev; Khrushchev's great-granddaughter and associate professor of international affairs at The New School in New York: "the idea was that they really needed to democratize the system, to centralize it less" (Calamur).

The religious landscape in Ukraine mirrors the country's complicated political past with Russia, where the country's majority of Orthodox Christians are split between a faction that is independent-minded and based in Kyiv and one that is devoted to its patriarch in Moscow. Although religious nationalism has been emphasized in both Russia and Ukraine, religious fidelity does not correspond to political allegiance in the context of Ukraine's struggle for survival (Smith).

The Soviet Union was the first nation to have the abolition of religion as an ideological goal. To do this, the Communist government expropriated church property, mocked religion, persecuted believers, and encouraged atheism in the classroom. The majority of established faiths were never prohibited, but actions regarding certain religions were guided by State interests.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the greatest number of adherents, was the major focus of the anti-religious campaign. Many of its

followers as well as almost its entire clergy were either executed or transported to labor camps. Church publications were not allowed, and theological institutions were shut down. Only approximately 500 of the nearly 50,000 churches were still operational in 1939.In order to increase patriotic support for the war effort after Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, Joseph Stalin reactivated the Russian Orthodox Church. About 22,000 Russian Orthodox churches had started holding services by 1957. However, Nikita Khrushchev launched his own offensive against the Russian Orthodox Church in 1959 and compelled the closure of over 12,000 churches. Less than 7,000 churches were still in operation in 1985. Church hierarchy members were imprisoned or driven out, and their positions were filled by compliant clerics, many of whom had connections to the KGB ("Internal Workings of the Soviet Union - Revelations from the Russian Archives").

The United States didn't inform the Soviet Union that they planned to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, despite informing them that they had developed such a bomb, thus fanning the fire of mistrust. The US developed more atomic weapons to help thwart Soviet communist expansion. Nevertheless, the Cold War nuclear arms race began in 1949 when the Soviet Union conducted its first atomic bomb test.

The Soviet Union imitated the United States' 1952 action by testing a highly deadly hydrogen "super bomb," and the United States did the same in 1953. Four years later, both nations conducted their first ICBM tests, and the weapons race reached a dangerous new height. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first Sputnik satellite, shocking and alarming the United States and the rest of the world as the Cold War armaments race quickly turned into the Space Race.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower tried to tone down the rhetoric over the success of the launch, while he streamed federal funds into the U.S. space program to prevent being left

behind. After a series of mishaps and failures, the United States successfully launched its first satellite into space on January 31, 1958, and the Space Race continued as both countries researched new technology to create more powerful weapons and surveillance technologies.

Throughout the 1950s, the United States became convinced that the Soviet Union had better missile capability that, if launched, could not be defended against. This theory, known as the Missile Gap, was eventually disproved by the CIA but not before causing grave concern to U.S. officials. The Missile Gap was a popular talking issue during the 1960 presidential campaign. However, American missile strength at the moment was superior to that of the Soviet Union. But during the following three decades, both nations increased the number of warheads in their arsenals to well over 10,000 (Hellie and Medvedkov).

The two sides of Joseph Stalin's worldview were the imperialist and capitalist regimes on the one hand, and the communist and progressive world on the other. After the death of Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev claimed that capitalism and imperialism could live in harmony. Expectations of a more accommodative stance between East and West were stoked by the summits held in Geneva in 1955 with Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States and Eisenhower and Khrushchev in 1959 at Camp David. Russia now refers to the lengthy Brezhnev government (1964–1982) as the "period of stagnation." Negotiations between the US and USSR resulted in summit meetings and agreements to restrict strategic weaponry. In the late 1970s, as internal repression grew and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, there was a return of Cold War hostility (McMahon).

After Mikhail Gorbachev took office in 1985, President Reagan organized a new round of summit meetings with Gorbachev that resulted in arms reductions and helped persuade even Communist leaders to increase cooperation and reject a class-based, conflict-oriented worldview. These summit meetings helped to revive arms control negotiations.

President Yeltsin's proclamation of independence for the other USSR republics and his launch of a comprehensive economic reform program meant to create a market economy signaled Russia's definitive commitment to eliminating the imperial and ideological legacy of the Cold War (Smith).

When U.S. surveillance flights in October show the Soviet Union building covert missile facilities in Cuba in 1962, Cold War tensions nearly escalate into a nuclear catastrophe. John F. Kennedy issues a threat to Moscow that it will face a "full retaliatory response" if it conducts a nuclear attack from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere. The Soviet Union agrees to remove its missiles after a thirteen-day standoff between the superpowers, which includes a U.S. naval blockade of Cuba. In return, the US agrees in secret to remove its nuclear missiles from Turkey and publicly swears not to invade Cuba ("Forty Years Ago: The Cuban Missile Crisis").

The Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States decide to prohibit nuclear explosions in the atmosphere, space, and beneath the sea while severely limiting underground testing after years of on-again, off-again negotiations. The Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963 is a result of growing global apprehension about the risks associated with a nuclear accident. To lessen the likelihood of unintentional conflict, a high-speed "hotline" is established between the heads of the Soviet and American governments. The following year, China will surpass France as the fourth nuclear power in the world. France is not a party to the treaty ("Test Ban Treaty (1963)").

Nuclear weapons technology had the potential to spread by the start of the 1960s. Academic publications had allowed the study of bursting and fusing atoms to reach the general public and private firms were now interested in nuclear technology as well as governments. The production of plutonium, the primary component of nuclear bombs, was

becoming more accessible and affordable. Due to these developments, there were five nuclear powers in the world by 1964: in addition to the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, which all acquired nuclear capability during or shortly after World War II, France detonated its first nuclear bomb in 1960, and the People's Republic of China was not far behind in 1964. There were numerous additional nations that had not yet conducted a weapons test but whose technological development was such that if they chose to do so, they most likely could in the near future (Burr).

The proliferation of nuclear weapons technology has implications for international legislators. During the Cold War, the only nations capable of launching a nuclear attack were the United States, its close ally Britain, and the Soviet Union. However, if more countries, especially emerging nations on the perimeter of the power balance between the two Cold War superpowers, developed nuclear weapons, this equilibrium could be upset, and the deterrence system would be in jeopardy. This has implications for international legislators, as the policy of deterrence could be maintained even if the only nations capable of launching a nuclear attack were the United States, its close ally Britain, and the Soviet Union("The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 1968").

Schwelb and Law School argue that The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of July 1, 1968 prohibits non-nuclear-weapon States "from any activity with respect to specified weapons and devices (nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices), including their acquisition and possession," in contrast to the Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits all States from a list of activities related to nuclear weapons tests and other nuclear explosions Stein titles one of his sections on the Non-Proliferation Treaty "Sovereign Inequality," implicitly referring to "the principle of sovereign equality" of all United Nations Members(329).

They also argued School the nuclear-weapon States commit to never "transfer" nuclear weapons to anyone and never "assist, encourage, or induce" non-nuclear-weapon States to "manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons." The restrictions cover "other nuclear explosive devices" in addition to nuclear weapons. Except for the fact that they are likewise prohibited from acquiring nuclear weapons even via their own efforts, the duties of the non-nuclear-weapon States are essentially symmetrical to the constraints adopted by the nuclear-weapon States. States without nuclear weapons agree to accept the safeguards outlined in the agreements that will be negotiated and reached with the International Atomic Energy Agency (337).

Nothing in the Treaty "shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties... to conduct nuclear energy research, production, and use for peaceful purposes.... " ."Each Party... undertakes to take appropriate measures to ensure that potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty on a non-discriminatory basis," according to the treaty. All parties to the Treaty agree to "pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and an early end to the nuclear arms race, as well as on a treaty on general and comprehensive disarmament under strict and effective international control."

The Communist Party leadership swiftly grew rich and powerful in the 1960s and 1970s while millions of ordinary Soviet residents went hungry. Food and other consumer products were frequently in limited supply as a result of the Soviet Union's aggressive industrialization efforts. The 1970s and 1980s saw a lot of bread queues. People in the Soviet Union frequently lacked access to necessities like clothing and shoes. Younger people who refused to adopt Communist Party ideology as their parents had caused a backlash due to the gap between the excessive wealth of the Politburo and the poverty of Soviet residents. Additionally, the Soviet economy came under threat from outside forces. Oil prices reached

their lowest ebbs in decades during the 1980s as a result of President Ronald Reagan's isolation of the Soviet economy from the rest of the globe. The Soviet Union started to lose control over Eastern Europe when its oil and gas revenues plummeted. Gorbachev's reforms, meanwhile, were delayed to take effect and contributed more to the Soviet Union's demise than to its preservation. Liberation movements in the former Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe were encouraged by a relaxation of restrictions on the Soviet people ("Arms Race").

In the beginning, Department of State officials and Bush's foreign policy team were reluctant to discuss German "reunification" in public for concern that change would be thwarted by hard-liners in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Soviet Union. The world was shocked when, on the night of November 9, 1989, large groups of Germans started tearing down the Berlin Wall—a wall that for almost 30 years had served as a symbol of the Cold War division of Europe—despite changes in the GDR leadership and encouragement speeches by Gorbachev about nonintervention in Eastern Europe. When Germany was united by October 1990, the other East European regimes quickly fell into disarray.

On December 25, 1991, 13 months after Gorbachev took office; the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was disbanded. Following the fall of the Communist monolith rather than when it was on the verge, President Bush and his top foreign policy advisers were more proactive in Russia and the former Soviet republics. Bush committed $4.5 billion, as well as further financial guarantees and technical aid, to help economic reform in Russia at a series of summits with the new Russian President Boris Yeltsin the following year ("The Berlin Wall Falls and USSR Dissolves").

Boris Yeltsin was chosen to lead the newly independent Russian state on December 25, 1991. The Bush administration's main goal was to maintain economic and political

stability and security for Russia, the Baltic republics, and the other republics of the former Soviet Union. Bush maintained diplomatic relations with all 12 independent republics as well as with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. Yeltsin and Bush met at Camp David in February 1992. He made a formal state visit to Washington in June of that same year. It was crucial to keep the nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union secure and prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the wrong hands.

In order to provide financial support for the destruction of weapons in the former Soviet Union, the Nunn-Lugar Act established the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program in November 1991. Along with Yeltsin, Bush and Baker collaborated with international institutions like the World Bank and IMF to give funding and, ideally, avert a humanitarian crisis in Russia (Leffler).

Ukraine now possesses the third-largest nuclear arsenal in the world following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In a treaty known as the Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine consents to trade away its intercontinental ballistic missiles, warheads, and other nuclear infrastructure in return for assurances that the three other treaty signatories—the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia—will "respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine"(Sullivan).

Presidents George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Strategic Defense Initiative (START) in 1991, which required the two nations to reduce their combined stockpile of nuclear weapons and bombs by one-third. However, concerns regarding the treaty's effectiveness arose after the fall of the Soviet Union. Further strategic weapon reductions were mandated by a second START agreement signed by President Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1993, which set a combined cap of between 3,000 and

3,500 strategic weapons for each nation. The START II pact was approved by the United States in 1996 and Russia in 2000 (Schumann).

Following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, Ukraine gained independence and took up a "command economy" as its own. In a command economy, a government makes all centrally controlled decisions on production, investment, prices, and earnings. Furthermore, most of it was connected to the Soviet Union's huge military industrial complex and fixation with heavy manufacturing. In other words, the economy of Ukraine excelled at ore mining and the construction of intercontinental ballistic missiles but lagged behind in producing the kinds of consumer goods necessary for a modern economy.

The economy collapsed in the early 1990s, with GDP plummeting by over 60% and inflation rising to more than 10,000%. This led to massive poverty and hardship for ordinary Ukrainians, with 50% of households living on less than $5.50 per day and life expectancy declining by five years. This led to the mass privatization of state-owned enterprises and the creation of the oligarchs, made up of former Communist elites and others with connections in the government who got control over major factories and other key productive assets at little or no cost. The oligarchs initially helped Ukraine's biggest businesses restore their productive capacity, but they quickly began using their connections to stifle competition and corruption was endemic. The economy struggled to grow or diversify beyond producing basic commodities and equipment (Gorodnichenko).

Ukraine gained independence with the fall of the Soviet Union, but bringing the nation together proved to be a challenge. In the east, "the sense of Ukrainian nationalism is not as deep as it is in the west," according to Steven Pifer, a former ambassador to Ukraine. Many Ukrainians, especially in the east, yearned for the relative stability of former ages due to the

transition to democracy and capitalism. Eastern Ukrainians have deeper ties to Russia and have a history of supporting Russian-leaning leaders, while western Ukrainians have a tendency to prefer leaders who are more pro-Western. The eastern population is typically more Russian-speaking and Orthodox, while sections of the west are more Ukrainian-speaking and Catholic (Conant).

Since 1991, when the Soviet Union broke up into 15 sovereign nations, there have been periods of ties, tensions, and outright animosity in the relations between the former USSR's successor states. Beginning in the 1990s, Ukraine's foreign policy was driven by a desire to safeguard its independence and sovereignty as well as a desire for fair collaboration with the European Union (EU) and other major powers, such as Russia. Following the fall of the USSR, the EU, the US, and Russia all had distinct goals and perspectives for Eastern Europe's future. Russia sought to have a sphere of influence, the EU wanted a hegemonic and united Europe, and America wanted to play a significant role in preserving the Euro-Atlantic union in addition to showing Russia who was boss.

Ukraine was important to Russia on more than simply a geopolitical level. Both historically and culturally, it was. Although the Russian and Ukrainian languages had split out somewhere in the 13th century and Ukraine had an own and distinguished literature, the two still had a tight relationship—roughly on par with that of Spanish and Portuguese. Although the majority of the population was of Ukrainian descent, a sizable ethnic Russian minority existed, notably in the east. More significantly, despite Ukrainian being the official language, Russian was commonly spoken in the majority of the major cities. Furthermore, and maybe more importantly, the majority of individuals were bilingual. On television, it was usual to have a journalist pose a question in Russian and get an answer in Ukrainian, or to have a panel of judges for a talent competition that included two judges who spoke Russian and two judges who spoke Ukrainian. It was a real bilingual country, which is unusual. That was an issue

from a Russian nationalist standpoint. Why learn two languages if you can learn one? A particularly sensitive area was Crimea, where the vast majority of people identified as Russian. And after thinking about Crimea, your mind naturally turned to eastern Ukraine (Gessen).

1.3. Political Alliances in Europe

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has been plagued corruption scandals, poor economic management, and Russian influence. Russian threats have been worse as Ukraine's relations with the US and Europe has gotten better recently.

1.3.1 US-Ukraine Relationship

At that time, the United States established diplomatic ties with that country. The success of Ukraine as a free and democratic nation with a thriving market economy is extremely important to the US. U.S. policy is focused on assisting Ukraine as it implements reforms to enhance democratic institutions, combat corruption, and provide conditions for economic growth and competition in the face of ongoing Russian aggression. And keeps working with its allies to find a diplomatic resolution to the situation that Russia started in eastern Ukraine (Bureau of European and Eurasian affairs). The past three decades have seen a steady increase in Ukraine's involvement in NATO. It was among the first nations to sign up for NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1994 (Pifer). That June, Russia joins and cooperates with NATO in a variety of ways, including joint military exercises, until 2014, when NATO formally suspends relations with Russia. July 9, 1997, Kuchma meets with NATO chiefs in Madrid, where they formally establish a distinctive partnership between Ukraine and the defense group ("Historical Timeline of Post-independence Ukraine").

1.3.1.1 Bilateral Economic Relations

With the termination of the Jackson-Vanik amendment's application to Ukraine and the granting of market economy status, Ukraine now enjoys ongoing status as a country with regular commercial relations. An agreement on bilateral investments exists between the US and Ukraine. Coal, machinery, automobiles, agricultural goods, fish and shellfish, and aircraft are among the exports from the United States to Ukraine. Oil, inorganic chemicals, iron and steel products, airplanes, and agricultural goods are among the imports from Ukraine that the United States purchases. The U.S.-Ukraine Council on Trade and Investment was founded in accordance with the nations' agreement on trade and investment cooperation, and it seeks to expand business and investment opportunities by locating and removing barriers to bilateral trade and investment flows ("Joint Statement on the United States-Ukraine Trade and Investment Council").

1.3.1.2 Ukraine's Membership in International Organizations

Since both the United States and Ukraine are members of the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, there are many international organizations to which they both belong. In addition, Ukraine participates in OAS as an observer member. Aiming to increase business and investment prospects by identifying and removing obstacles to bilateral trade and investment flows, the U.S.-Ukraine Council on Trade and Investment was established in accordance with the nations' agreement on trade and investment cooperation ("U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership"). To support Ukraine in maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized boundaries, extending to its territorial waters, the United States has given more than $39.7 billion in security aid for training and equipment. In order to ensure the security of both Ukraine and all of Europe, the United States plans to support Ukraine's efforts

to establish a strong investment environment based on the principles of the rule of law, a fair competitive economy, and to integrate Ukraine into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions ("U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine").

1.3.2 Ukraine joining NATO

Since independence and up until now, in its principal security-related documents, including laws, plans, and military strategy, Ukraine has endeavored to identify and implement essential policies as well as its security priorities ("Military doctrine"). Since attaining independence, a significant change has occurred. From the sometimes idealistic and naive documents of the 1990s, Ukraine has advanced to define a thorough and realistic definition of national interests. The Ukrainian government's strategy of striking a balance between the West and Russia has also been abandoned due to the war with Russia since 2014. Its priorities and approach to NATO and the EU have been distinctly stated (Maksak). Özgöker and Yilmaz claim that the question of Ukraine joining NATO is a very delicate one there. The consequences of the conversation could split Ukraine into its eastern and western halves (153). And according to Aleksander Olech in his article "Determinants for the international security: membership of Ukraine in NATO", Ukraine and NATO made their initial contact in 1991, and their first official meeting took place in January 1992 at the North Atlantic Treaty Council Summit and Working Group Meeting (NACC). Manfred Wörner, the NATO Secretary General, visited Kiev as a result of that summit. The Ukrainian government was extended a permanent invitation to attend NACC sessions during his visit. Olech also states that Ukraine was the first CIS country to sign the Partnership for Peace program's framework document on February 8th, 1994. The result of the aforementioned actions was the adoption by the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) of a resolution outlining the key tenets of its foreign policy, chief among them being full and direct membership in all European organizations that will enable the establishment of the necessary external safeguards

for national security. Ukraine joined the coalition as a non-affiliated, neutral member. In a way, that was to be the start of the journey toward full membership in the NATO organizations (Olech 2-3).

The plan of actions was developed "in compliance with the decision of Ukraine-NATO committee with a view to deepen and extend the relations between them." The plan reflects the strategy of their relations. It is based on the Distinctive Partnership charter, which was signed in Madrid on July 9th, 1997 (Savka).In November 2002, a NUC gathering of foreign ministers in Prague approved the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan (Özgöker & Yilmaz 654).

The Act on the Fundamentals of National Security of Ukraine was passed by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine a year later, making it very clear that NATO membership should be the main focus of the country's foreign policy. Additionally, Ukraine complied with the terms of the North Atlantic Treaty (Aleksander 3). In March 2003, Ukraine sent soldiers to Iraq, becoming a non-associated member of NATO at the same time. During this deployment, it was also the third-largest military contingent (1650 soldiers). Additionally, in June 2004, a contract was negotiated allowing NATO to use Ukrainian air forces (Aleksander 4).

In March 2003, Ukraine sent soldiers to Iraq, becoming a non-associated member of NATO at the same time. During this deployment, it was also the third-largest military contingent (1650 soldiers). Additionally, in June 2004, a contract was negotiated allowing NATO to use Ukrainian air forces (Aleksander4). And according to John Criendler in his book "Ukraine membership in NATO *: benefits, costs, misconceptions and urban legends*", the Orange Revolution in November 2004 raised hopes that this process would move more quickly, and in response to Ukraine's desire to join NATO, foreign ministers started an Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine in April 2005. When Secretary General Jaap de Hoop

Scheffer stated, "Our overriding goal – to assist Ukraine to realize its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and to promote stability in the region remains unchanged" (Criendle 6).

The West is trying to get closer to the East, and Russia sees this as a growing geopolitical threat. NATO is now forced to defend its Eastern border by stepping up its troop presence in the Baltic States, as Russian President Vladimir Putin has demanded NATO withdraw all its forces from the region. NATO should shift from a tripwire defense to a modest forward defense posture, as Russian President Vladimir Putin must know of NATO's commitment to defend alliance territory (Emmott and Sytas).

Understanding the history of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is essential to comprehending the elements that have influenced the relations between these two countries. The historical, political, and cultural complexities that have fueled tensions and hostilities between Russia and Ukraine have been covered in this chapter. It is obvious that the Russian-Ukrainian war has wider global ramifications than just a bilateral issue. Conflicting ideologies and geopolitical interests are at play in the fight for Ukraine's future, with the West supporting Ukraine's goals for democracy and stronger ties to Europe while Russia seeks to keep its hold over its neighbor. Understanding the history of this dispute is essential to understanding current events, the goals of the parties involved, and potential avenues to a solution. The dynamics between Russia and Ukraine are shaped by a complex web of historical resentments, geopolitical goals, and cultural identities. In the following chapters, we will go into further detail about the individual incidents, significant figures, and geopolitical developments that have occurred since the conflict first broke out, with the goal of presenting a thorough study of this intricate and constantly changing scenario.

Chapter Two

Russo-Ukrainian Conflict Episodes

The Russo-Ukrainian Conflict Episodes have been going on since 2014, but the most recent one started in late February 2022 when Russia attacked Ukraine in a major way. The Ukrainian crisis has re-emphasized the danger of nuclear war as a major global worry. With overt nuclear threats being made over the conflict and more ominous rhetoric from the nuclear-armed powers and their allies, the likelihood of nuclear war is at an all-time high.

2.1 Vladimir Putin's Invasion of Ukraine

Ukraine has always had a significant but perhaps underappreciated contribution to the international security system. The nation is currently in the center of a revived great power struggle that many observers predict will rule world affairs for decades to come. A major turning point for European security was reached with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, which signaled a dramatic escalation of the eight-year-old conflict that started with Russia's takeover of Crimea.

Putin's attempt to redraw Europe's borders runs the risk of sparking the continent's deadliest battle since World War II. It has already triggered a horrific humanitarian crisis: According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, hundreds, possibly thousands, of civilians have perished in the conflict, and more than 1.5 million people have fled it so far, making it the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II (Kirby and Guyer).

Ukraine has always played a crucial but perhaps underappreciated role in the international security system. The eight-year-old conflict was dramatically escalated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which also signaled a historic turning point for European

security. Many defense and international policy specialists viewed the conflict as a significant strategic error by Russian President Vladimir Putin a year after hostilities started (Masters).

Concerns about a potential conflict escalation have been raised as a result of the war in Ukraine. The war has expedited Ukraine's efforts to join Western political groups, including the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Another major worry is that Russia might decide to choose to intensify the continuing conflict in Ukraine by targeting a U.S. or allay target. Ukraine's ability to threaten Russia is limited, but it has the ability to escalate by launching more sabotage operations deep inside Russian territory. This aspect of the conflict has gradually intensified, with some Ukrainian strikes reaching hundreds of kilometers into Russian territory. Additionally, the level of Western military aid to Ukraine has steadily increased throughout the conflict, keeping pace with Russia's escalation by supplying it with ever-more-advanced and powerful weapons (Jenkins).

Both the global economy and a serious humanitarian disaster have been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Millions of people have been displaced within Ukraine and have sought safety in neighboring countries as a result of the fighting, which has resulted in thousands of deaths and the destruction of millions of livelihoods. The invasion has also significantly disrupted the world's supply of commodities, driving up the cost of food and energy. The battle has taken a terrible toll on Ukraine, and the country is in the midst of a severe recession as a result of the extraordinary sanctions imposed on Russia. Inflation is being fueled by the weakening of the ruble, further lowering people's living circumstances. Russia's attack on Ukraine has already had an impact on those countries as well as the region and the world as a whole, highlighting the necessity of a global safety net regional robustness (OECD).

2.1.1 Putin's Rationale for the Attack

Whether in Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, or post-Soviet Russia, the country considers the protection of its borders as being crucial to domestic security. Moscow believes that only by maintaining a solid sphere of influence over its neighbors can security be guaranteed. The southern and eastern borders of Russia have also contributed significantly to ensuring the security of the Russian state, even if the western border has historically served as the most significant defense against actual or perceived foreign aggression.

Russia's sphere of influence has fluctuated throughout history as a result of geopolitical conflict and diplomacy that have either benefited or hurt Russia. Victimized nations have frequently looked to Russia's enemies for protection after becoming pawns in great power games. Russian has not been widely and voluntarily accepted.

The Second World War devastated the lives of millions of people and up heaved the geopolitical structures of Europe. With the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its Secret Protocol on August 23, 1939, Adolph Hitler's Germany and Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union split up much of Eastern Europe. When Hitler invaded western Poland on September 1, 1939, and Soviet forces entered eastern Poland two weeks later, what appeared on paper almost instantly became a reality. Shortly after, Soviet forces occupied Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as a portion of Romania, and Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union during what is now known as the Winter War of 1939–1940.

At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Stalin formalized the results of the Soviet and Allied victory over Nazi Germany and its allies. The Baltic States, a portion of Finland, and Romania (modern-day Moldova) were previously under Soviet control, but Stalin's brashness and the reality of geographical proximity won out, leading to the restoration of Soviet control over these areas and the

subsequent subjugation of the majority of Eastern Europe. There are many questions about the true intentions of the three leaders and their ability to carry out their commitments. Additionally, it led to the establishment of Communist governments that, except for Yugoslavia and Albania, were obedient to Moscow; despite the fact that they were becoming more servile in their relationships.

Therefore, the Communist system and Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe fell before two years from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Kremlin's hard-won and fiercely guarded zone of control was destroyed. The former Soviet satellite governments of Eastern Europe not only ousted their communist leaders, but they also acquiesced to their membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was unthinkable only a few years earlier. Even worse for Moscow was the fact that the once-powerful Soviet Union, which was made up of 15 union republics, had disintegrated and that 15 independent nations had replaced it. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic's leader, Leonid Kravchuk, who was elected president of the nation following presidential elections in which Ukrainians voted in favor of independence on August 24, 1991, led Kiev's attempt to secede from Moscow during the years that followed the fall of the Soviet Union.

The inability of the outside world to categorize the area that succeeded the former Soviet Union contributed to the Kremlin's perception of its sphere of influence, and may have strengthened Moscow's assertion of its dominance over the area. In his infamous "Chicken Kyiv" address on August 1, 1991, President George H.W. Bush warned against "suicidal nationalism" and advised Ukraine not to declare itself independent as the Soviet Union was about to disintegrate. Ukraine did so three weeks later in spite of the president's admonition. Russia seemed to receive preferential treatment over other former Soviet republics during the Clinton Administration, as aid and technical help flooded into the nations of the former Soviet

Union. This might be seen, for instance, in the preference the West displayed (Devroy and Dobbs).

Moscow has historically favored security arrangements that reflect the 19th-century division of the continent into spheres of influence in Europe and elsewhere. In this regard, President Vladimir Putin (and his acting successor Dmitry Medvedev from 2008 to 2012) insisted that the international community acknowledge the post-Soviet space as falling within Russia's sphere of influence and that any attempt to enlist nations like Ukraine and Georgia into the West—particularly into the Western security structure (NATO)—would be met with vehement opposition. Like previous Russian governments, Putin's Russia perceives itself as being encircled by adversaries, primarily NATO in the west (Berls).

Russia and Ukraine have a shared history that spans more than a thousand years, from the founding of the first Slavic state, Kyivan Rus, in what are now parts of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. After periods of rule by the Mongols or Tatars, the Poles and the Lithuanians, the area that is now Ukraine joined the Russian Empire in the late 1700s. Ukraine declared its independence in 1918, one year after the communist revolution in Russia, but the Red Army eventually took most of it in 1921, turning Ukraine into a republic inside the Soviet Union. When Soviet policies penalized farmers in the republic who resisted collectivist orders in the 1930s, the resulting man-made famine known as the Holodomor, which killed an estimated 20 million people, sharpened Ukrainians' sense of national identity (Donahue and Krasnolutska).

Following Ukraine's bloodless Orange Revolution of 2004 overturned Viktor Yanukovych's rigged election as president, tensions between Moscow and Kyiv have dominated relations. Nevertheless, Yanukovych won the election in 2010, but he was deposed in February 2014 after bowing to Kremlin pressure and abandoning a trade agreement with the EU. The capture and annexation of Crimea by Putin, who accused the US and EU of

fomenting a "fascist" revolution, was the largest land grab in postwar Europe until his full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Later, Russia supported pro-Moscow separatist organizations in Ukraine that established two independent republics in the eastern Donbas region along the Russian border, sparking a conflict with the Ukrainian military

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine's ties to NATO have continuously become stronger. Ukraine was the first CIS nation to sign up for the NATO Partnership for Peace initiative in 1994. The Ukraine and NATO Charter, which increased collaboration, was signed in 1997. Relations with the alliance slowed, but did not stop under Leonid Kuchma's administration. An Action Plan was signed in 2002, and communication continued. Following the Orange Revolution, ties between Ukraine and NATO improved a little bit and entered an "intensified dialogue" phase ("Ukraine and NATO: Dynamics of the Relationship").

Additionally, Russian attempts to halt Ukraine's Western trend extend back to the early years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Viktor Yushchenko, the hand-picked successor of outgoing president Kuchma, was openly supported by Putin's Kremlin in the 2004 Ukrainian elections. Even though a sizable number of demonstrators were marching through the streets wearing orange vests, Moscow stepped up its support after exit polls revealed that the official results, which claimed a narrow Yanukovych victory, had been rigged. Moscow reacted to Yushchenko's victory in the new election with a variety of pressure tactics, including politically motivated gas cutoffs in 2006 and 2009.Yushchenko advocated for worldwide recognition of the Stalinist famine (Holodomor) as an anti-Ukrainian genocide and brought up the possibility of earning a NATO Membership Action Plan as part of his increased focus on Ukrainian language and culture.

In 2010, Viktor Yanukovych and his eastern-based Party of Regions won a free and fair election, giving Russia a chance to rebound from the Yushch's failures. However,

Yanukovych refused to join Putin's proposal for a Eurasian Union, leading to Moscow using bribes and punishments to persuade him to reconsider. The protests in Kyiv, which spread outside of Kyiv, became increasingly belligerent. The Kremlin acknowledged Yanukovych's inability to hold onto power by February 2014, but his hurried departure led to the collapse of the transition deal and early elections, limited Moscow's ability to influence the results. Petro Poroshenko won the presidential election in May 2014, and pro-Russian protesters managed to seize control of local governments in Donetsk and Luhansk. However, attempts to use referendums as a pretext for annexation were abandoned due to lack of voter support. After the rebels took control, Poroshenko launched an "anti-terrorist operation" (Mankoff).

In response, Russia invaded the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula in March 2014; early in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea, military warfare broke out in eastern Ukraine. State security forces violently suppressed protests in Kyiv against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's decision to reject an agreement for greater economic cooperation with the EU. Russian forces invaded the Ukrainian province of Crimea in March 2014, claiming that they had to do so to defend the rights of Russian residents and speakers. Pro-Russian rebels launched their own independence referendums in the eastern Ukrainian districts of Donetsk and Luhansk two months later. The Ukrainian troops and those backed by Russia soon engaged in combat.

Russia denied any military engagement, but Ukraine and NATO both noted a buildup of Russian forces and military hardware close to Donetsk, as well as cross-border firing from Russia soon after Crimea was annexed. The battle developed into an active standoff, with frequent shelling and clashes taking place along the front lines separating the areas of the east held by Russia and Ukraine ("Conflict in Ukraine").

Vladimir Putin has provided a variety of absurd justifications for his invasion of Ukraine. He has attributed the war to a variety of causes, including NATO expansion and fictitious Nazis, while also alleging wholly unfounded conspiracies by the West to invade Russia and Ukrainian plans to obtain nuclear weapons. The truth, it now appears, is much less elaborate and much more terrifying. Putin's desire to annex Ukraine is the only justification for starting the worst European conflict since World War II. Putin wants to subjugate his neighbor and absorb it into a new Russian Empire, taking his cue from the past czars during a celebration honoring the 350th anniversary of the Russian on June 9 in Moscow.

His most recent remarks emphasize his imperial goals in Ukraine and build on previous, similar remarks bemoaning the collapse of the Russian Empire. He has publicly claimed that Ukrainians are truly Russians ("one people") and questioned the historical legitimacy of Ukrainian statehood for more than ten years. Putin has additionally charged Ukraine of encroaching on ancient Russian territory and charged the early Bolsheviks with botching the border between the Soviet republics of Russia and Ukraine (Dickinson).

Importantly, the biggest threat to peace and security in Europe since the conclusion of the Cold War is Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, gave a weird and occasionally insane address on February 21, 2022, outlining a broad number of complaints as justification for the "special military operation" that was revealed the next day. The speech focused on a much more fundamental issue: the legitimacy of Ukrainian identity and statehood itself. These grievances included the long-running disagreement over NATO expansion and the design of the post-Cold War security architecture in Europe. It was a reflection of the worldview Putin had long espoused, highlighting the enduring bond between Eastern Slavs, including Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Russians, who all have the same ancestry.

The importance that Putin and other Russian elites place on the idea of Russian-Ukrainian-Belarusian unity sheds light on how the current conflict came to be, particularly why Moscow was willing to risk a major confrontation on its borders when neither Ukraine nor NATO posed a military danger. It also implies that Moscow has more ambitious goals for dominating Ukraine than simply preventing it from joining NATO. These goals likely include control over the country's politics, armed forces, and economy (Mankoff).

Dibb argued that Russia has a special relationship with Ukraine due to its geography, history, and culture. This is especially true due to Kiev's special status in Moscow's perceptions as "the mother of Russian cities" and the birthplace of the Russian Orthodox religion. Even Russian liberals find it difficult to accept the idea that Ukraine is an independent state, but Vladimir Putin approaches things from the typical vantage point of a retired colonel from the KGB. He has a strong mistrust of NATO and its efforts to encircle Russia, and is aware of the former Soviet Union's decline in influence and stature, which he considers the greatest geopolitical calamity of the 20th century. He believes that Russia must defend its nationals who live in the former Soviet strategic zone.

Dibb claims that by extending NATO to Russia's borders, the West has misled Russia. If Ukraine joined NATO, NATO forces would be 400 kilometers away from Moscow, and Russia has lost tracts of land along its western approaches. Russia and Ukraine have long had a shared culture and religion, and the majority of Ukraine's eastern region is Russian-speaking, Russian Orthodox, and heavily industrialized, while its western region is Ukrainian-speaking, Catholic, and rural. If Ukraine joined NATO, the defense of Russian territory would be seriously jeopardized (Dibb 2-4).

Furthermore, the religious landscape in Ukraine mirrors the country's complicated political past with Russia, where the country's majority of Orthodox Christians are split

between a faction that is independent-minded and based in Kyiv and one that is devoted to its patriarch in Moscow. Despite the fact that Russian President Vladimir Putin partially justified his invasion of Ukraine as a defense of the Moscow-focused Orthodox Church, leaders of both Ukrainian Orthodox factions and the sizeable Catholic minority in Ukraine are vehemently condemning the Russian assault (Smith).

Understanding Putin's reasoning entails comprehending how he views Russia's relationship with Ukraine. According to Putin, Ukraine is a fake, inferior state that is unworthy of sovereignty. He sees Russia's purpose and position in international politics through an imperialist lens and thinks it should rule over others; he sees spheres of influence as the norm rather than as an anomaly. His skewed account of Ukraine's history feeds the myth that what was lost with the fall of the Soviet Union can be regained. Russia is attempting to drag Ukraine away from the European Union and NATO alliances and back into its orbit, which Putin is seeking to re-establish, like a controlling spouse in a broken marriage. Tragically, this invasion will result in significant losses for Russia and Ukraine (Soodavar).

Putin claimed that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people" in a lengthy essay he wrote in July 2021. He also said that the West had ruined Ukraine and pushed it out of its sphere of influence through a "forced change of identity."When Putin announced his decision to recognize the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics last Monday while expressing doubt about Ukraine's own sovereignty, he did so in an emotional and anguished speech to the nation. But Ukrainians, who have in recent years sought closer ties with Western organizations like the European Union and NATO, have resisted the idea that they are merely the West's "puppet." In truth, Putin's attempts to reintegrate Ukraine into Russia have failed (Mackintosh).

The claim made by the Ukrainian government that ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers are experiencing "genocide" in the Donbas, which Ukraine, the US, and EU member states vehemently deny. The Minsk accords, peace agreements mediated by Germany and France that intended to stop the conflict there through a political settlement, were scuttled when Putin recognized the separatists' self-styled republics days before the invasion. The "demilitarization" of Ukraine, he claimed, was one of the invasion's goals. As a result, it would be unable to join NATO, whose expansion into nations that were once under the control of Russia is seen by Putin as a threat to that country's interests. The "denazification" of Ukraine, he claimed, was another objective (Donahue and Krasnolutska).

After what he sees as Russia's humiliation by the United States and the West following the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin aims to be remembered as the man who made Russia great again. Even though analysts disagree on which explanation is correct—that he truly believes Russia and Ukraine are one country that should be united, that he wants to re-establish the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union, or that he simply wants to stop further NATO enlargement in its tracks—this broad achievement-oriented goal encompasses the majority of explanations for Putin's decision to invade Ukraine.

2.1.2 The Global Response

An important event, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, prompted responses from several nations and international organizations. There are diplomatic tensions and economic sanctions against Russia as a result of the annexation of Crimea by that country and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine.

2.1.2.1 EU Response

On February 24, 2022, Russia began its invasion of Ukraine. Russia was accused of "grossly violating international law," and the EU threatened to impose massive and severe consequences on Russia for its action," according to a statement released by the European Council (the heads of state or government of the 27 EU Member States) on the same day.

Many experts believe that Russia's invasion of Ukraine marked a turning point for the European Union, upending the security order in Europe. However, in a recent study, we argue that the EU's response has been more of an epiphany than a turning point, giving the union and its member states a reality check about how far European foreign policy co-operation has advanced in recent decades.

The EU's response to the invasion demonstrates the power of its foreign-policy framework to conduct effective group diplomacy. It has implemented a wide range of financial, commercial, and personally targeted sanctions against certain people. It has put in place a range of macro financial and other financial-support measures, including aid for refugees both inside and outside the boundaries of Ukraine. Most significantly, it has offered a €2.5 billion financial aid plan using the recently established European Peace Facility for direct military aid to Ukraine (Mauer et al.).

The ruthless war of aggression waged by Russia on Ukraine and the unlawful annexation of its Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions are both fiercely condemned by the EU and its member states. Additionally, they denounce Belarus' complicity in Russian military aggression. Russia needs to swiftly end this horrific conflict. For as long as it takes, the European Union will continue to stand with Ukraine and offer its unwavering support.EU leaders urged Russia to immediately halt all military operations, unconditionally

withdraw all troops and military hardware from Ukraine, and to completely respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence on a number of occasions. They emphasized Ukraine's freedom of choice ("EU Response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine").

Following Russia's illegitimate and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the European Union countries rapidly enacted sanctions that were unprecedentedly severe, working closely with allies such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Japan. An unprecedented collection of measures targeting the core sectors of the Russian economy and the political elites have been produced as a result of the quick succession of 10 packages of EU sanctions enacted since then ("Ukraine: What Sanctions Are Being Imposed on Russia?").

2.1.2.2 United States' Response

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United States and its allies around the world have launched a series of progressively severe sanctions that are meant to fully cutoff Russia from the international community and cause serious economic harm. On the afternoon of February 24, Biden declared that the US would impose penalties on Russian financial institutions, including isolating the biggest Russian banks from the US financial system, as well as on Russian elites close to Putin. Additionally, America will impose export restrictions on some technologies. The sanctions that the West had warned Putin about would be "massive" were then added by the United Kingdom and Europe (Kirby and Guyer).

Furthermore, The United States has committed more than $37.6 billion to security assistance since January 2021 to show our ongoing and unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. This includes the $36.9 billion that has been spent since February 24, 2022, when Russia began its deliberate, unprovoked, and deadly war against Ukraine. In order to help Ukraine maintain its territorial integrity, safeguard its borders, and

enhance interoperability with NATO, the United States has given more than $39.7 billion in security aid for training and equipment. Nearly 50 allies and partners have so far helped Ukraine with its security. Allies and partners have made numerous contributions to Ukraine, including 10 long-range Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), 178 long-range artillery systems, almost 100,000 rounds of long-range artillery ammunition, almost 250,000 anti-tank munitions, 359 tanks, 629 armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), 8,214 short-range air defense missiles, and 88 lethal unmanned aerial vehicles. Over $13 billion in security aid has been offered or committed by allies and partners globally since February 24 ("U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine").

President Biden and other international leaders reacted to the incident by denouncing it, announcing fresh penalties against Russian politicians and financial institutions, and committing an additional 7,000 US soldiers to Europe. They will increase the military presence that is intended to reassure Europe's allies that any attempt by Russian President Vladimir Putin to take the conflict outside of Ukraine will be handled with force (Lamothe).

Joe Biden proposed further sanctions against Russia and pledged to cooperate with allies to impede their ability to obtain technology, weaken their industrial capabilities, and modernize their military. The United States will target Russian leaders and their families in addition to sanctioning large Russian institutions. Russian moves, according to Biden, were in response to "outlandish and baseless claims that Ukraine was about to invade and launch a war against Russia." According to Biden, the aggressor is Putin; he chose to start this war, and now he and his nation will suffer the results (De Guzman and Barry).

2.1.2.3 NATO's Response

In order to maintain the stability of the Euro-Atlantic region, Ukraine must be strong and independent. Beginning in the early 1990s, NATO's relations with Ukraine have grown to

become one of the alliance's most important relationships. Since Russia's illegitimate invasion of Crimea in 2014, cooperation has increased in important areas. NATO and its allies have given unprecedented levels of support ever since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Strongly denouncing Russia's ruthless and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine, which seriously jeopardizes global peace and stability and is a flagrant breach of international law, NATO condemns it. NATO allies urge Russia to immediately halt the conflict and withdraw all of its troops from Ukraine, to adhere strictly to international humanitarian law, and to permit safe and unrestricted access for all those in need of humanitarian aid.

NATO has taken a clear stance in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders ever since Russia's illegitimate annexation of Crimea and destabilization of eastern Ukraine in 2014. The acquisition of Crimea by Russia is unlawful and illegitimate, and the Allies strongly reject it and will not recognize it. They also oppose its current occupation.

The largest effort at forcible annexation of European territory since the Second World War, NATO also denounces Russia's illegal September 2022 annexation of four regions of Ukraine: Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia. The rigged elections in these areas were forced upon Ukraine by Moscow. They are unrecognized by NATO and lack legitimacy. These areas have always been a part of Ukraine. The resounding condemnation of Russia's attempted annexations by the United Nations General Assembly sends a loud and obvious message that Russia is alone and that the world supports Ukraine in defense of the rules-based international order.

Due to Russia's unlawful and illegal annexation of Crimea, NATO Allies made the decision in 2014 to halt all actual civilian and military cooperation with Russia while

maintaining open lines of communication on a political and military level. In order to drain the Kremlin's war machine of resources since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Allies have imposed harsh sanctions on Russia. These restrictions are still being improved by allies in an effort to put further pressure on Moscow. These initiatives will make it more difficult for Russia to produce missiles, repair tanks, and fund its war.

Since 2014, the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) has held regular meetings in light of the direct threats to Ukraine's territorial integrity, political independence, and security. In light of Russia's illegitimate use of military force in November 2018 against Ukrainian ships near the Kerch Strait and Russia's threatening military buildup in April 2021, the NUC convened for exceptional discussions. In January and February 2022, the NUC held more extraordinary meetings at NATO Headquarters that were centered on Russia's military buildup and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine ("Relations with Ukraine").

NATO has harshly denounced Russia's assault in Ukraine, calling it "the biggest security threat in a generation." The Alliance demands that Russia end hostilities right away, withdraw all of its forces from Ukraine, and work toward a diplomatic settlement that is peaceful. NATO has made it plain that it will neither send troops to Ukraine, which is not a member of NATO, nor impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine, in order to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia. Most of the arrangements for the transfer of arms and supplies to Ukraine (by individual NATO Allies) and the application of unprecedented sanctions are made outside the NATO framework. NATO has significantly improved its own deterrence posture, with huge deployments, to thwart further Russian aggression and reassure its Allies ("Russia's War on Ukraine: NATO Response").

2.1.2.4 China's Response

China's reaction to the war can be explained by a number of variables. The Chinese government is attempting to reconcile a number of conflicting objectives. Its pattern of action is presumably the result of calculations of the different cost-benefit trade-offs of close alignment with Moscow in each of the four domains mentioned. Up to this point, China has been willing to back Russia, but it has mainly done so in regions and ways those have involved little expense. However, at least three variables that are not mutually exclusive may be influencing Beijing's general pattern of response. Even while there was some early conjecture that this would happen, none, which is interesting, expected a change or reorientation in that position anytime soon.

Beijing has been most helpful to Russia in the early stages of the war in the informational and diplomatic spheres, while its position on the economy has fluctuated based on self-interest and military cooperation has remained largely stable. Beijing's position on the conflict in Ukraine appears to be influenced by its perception of the necessity to oppose and counter the US, as well as internal politics in the PRC and how the developing conflict in Ukraine may influence or shape a future Taiwan issue. Beijing has generally supported Moscow; albeit, there are restrictions on the cost Beijing is ready to bear (Greitens).

To sum up, the global response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine was multifaceted and complex, reflecting the seriousness of the crisis and the determination of the international community to uphold the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Even though the conflict is still going on, the international community's response has served to lessen its effects and assist the Ukrainian people in their fight for peace and stability.

2.1.3 Life in Ukraine

Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, begins an invasion of Ukraine on February 24 from the north, east, and south. According to him, the "special military operation" aims to "demilitarize" and "denazify" the nation in order to protect ethnic Russians, stop Kyiv from joining NATO, and maintain it inside Russia's "sphere of influence." A country with a democratically elected government and a Jewish president whose ancestors perished in the Holocaust is being attacked illegally, according to Ukraine and the West ("1 Year after the Invasion Began, a Timeline of Russia's War in Ukraine").

The biggest humanitarian disaster in Europe since the Second World War has been brought on by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The relocation, loss of houses, and disruption of millions of livelihoods have already resulted in the loss of thousands of lives. Like so many others, we are horrified by the humanitarian catastrophe that is developing and the effects of this horrific war.

An enormous humanitarian crisis is being brought on by the invasion of Ukraine. More than three million individuals have already sought asylum in neighboring countries, in addition to the agony and suffering felt by those inside Ukraine and the corresponding numbers of displaced persons. It will be a monumental effort for the international community to assist, shelter, and host these unhappy people, as it has been in other significant conflicts and refugee crises, such as those in Syria and Yemen (Smit et al.).

Nearly 8,000 civilians have died, 11,000 have been injured, and millions have been displaced since Russia invaded Ukraine one year ago this week. Power outages are another frequent occurrence that can continue for hours or even days. Rockets are being shot down in the air all the while. "We need to avoid losing the fight. We must endure the war," argues

Ivan Gomza, a political science professor at the Kyiv School of Economics (Sutherland and Stohr).

Zelenskiy stated in a somber nighttime video message in early February that "the situation has become tougher" With 86% of them still in favor of continuing resistance, Ukrainian civilians are unwavering in their defiance of Russia. Over 8 million Ukrainians have fled their country since the Kremlin began its intervention and the U.N. reports over 7,000 civilian deaths and 11,500 civilian injuries. The U.N. has appointed investigators to determine whether Russia's attacks on Ukraine's vital infrastructure constitute war crimes. For those who remain, daily life has been made impossible by power outages, missiles and drones have targeted energy infrastructure, landmines threaten civilians, homes, schools, and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed, and landmines continue to pose a threat. The claims of assaults against civilians over the past year have been dismal and consistent, despite the Kremlin's denials that they are a target. People in Ukraine continue to live in cities far from the front lines, despite air raid alerts. Restaurants have developed ways to prepare food and serve customers, while those closest to the conflict must lead harsher lives to survive. Millions of people have rebuilt their lives abroad (Collett-White et al.).

The protracted war with Russia has had a significant impact on daily life in Ukraine. Location has an impact on the scenario. While pre-war life has mostly returned for citizens in Kyiv and much of the western half of the country, the terror and destruction of Russian attacks are still a reality for people in the east and south, where most of the fighting has taken place. The majority of the frontline towns and villages are now deserted and exhibit extensive damage. Even worse conditions exist for Ukrainians living under Russian occupation. Some foreigners have established lives in Ukraine and have made the decision to remain despite the difficulties.

2.1.4 Chernobyl

One of the deadliest nuclear mishaps in history, the Chernobyl disaster, is still a hot topic today. Unit 4 of the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl was destroyed on April 26, 1986, by a rapid power surge that occurred during a reactor systems test. Massive amounts of radioactive material were released into the environment as a result of the accident and the ensuing fire. Chernobyl's nuclear power plant accident was the result of a badly designed Soviet reactor and major errors committed by the facility operators. It was a direct outcome of Cold War isolation and the absence of a safety culture that followed (World Nuclear Association).

A nuclear power plant in Ukraine is called Chernobyl. The 1,000-ton roof of one of the plant's reactors was destroyed by two enormous explosions after a routine test at the power plant disastrously went wrong, releasing 400 times as much radiation as the atomic bomb unleashed on Hiroshima. Two workers perished in the blasts of the greatest nuclear disaster in history, and at least 28 more perished from acute radiation exposure within months. Thousands of people would eventually start to exhibit health problems, including cancer, as a result of the fallout. The Chernobyl accident revealed the Soviet government's lack of openness to the Soviet people and the international community, in addition to stoking anxieties about the risks of nuclear power. The meltdown and its consequences cost the Soviet Union billions in clean-up expenses, resulted in the loss of a major energy source, and significantly damaged national dignity ("Chernobyl").

It was a singular occurrence and the only nuclear power accident in recorded history to result in radiation-related fatalities. Because of the unique nature of the reactor's architecture, the disaster had limited bearing on the rest of the nuclear industry outside the former Eastern Bloc. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, it did, however, result in significant improvements

to industry cooperation and safety culture, particularly between East and West. According to the former president Gorbachev, his liberal reform initiative Perestroika played a less significant role in the collapse of the Soviet Union than the Chernobyl disaster ("Chernobyl Accident 1986").

2.1.4.1 Causes of the Chernobyl Disaster

At the Chernobyl nuclear power facility in Ukraine, the Number Four RBMK reactor lost control during a test at low power, causing an explosion and fire that destroyed the reactor building and released a significant amount of radiation into the atmosphere. The uranium fuel in the reactor overheated and melted through the safety barriers because safety precautions were disregarded. The so-called containment structure, a steel and concrete dome over the reactor itself intended to trap radiation in the case of such an accident, is absent from RBMK reactors. As a result, radioactive substances such cesium, iodine, strontium, and plutonium were dispersed over a large area. As air entered the reactor core of the RBMK, the graphite blocks used as a moderating material caught fire at high temperatures, which also helped to release radioactive elements into the environment ("The 1986 Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident").

The Chernobyl nuclear power plant's director decided not to attend a safety test since it was considered so routine. However, it swiftly went out of control when a sudden power spike and a buildup of steam caused a sequence of explosions that destroyed the reactor (Greenspan).

2.1.4.2 Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

One of the most radioactive locations in the world is the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. The 2,000-ton (1,800 metric tons) cap of one of the station's reactors was blown off in two

explosions during a calamitous meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine; this left the area covered in radioactive fuel and reactor debris. The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone was established as a no-go zone around the catastrophe on May 2, 1986, by a Soviet Union commission. Officials had already ordered the evacuation of the neighboring city of Pripyat by April 27, but further orders to evacuate everyone still inside the zone were issued in May. Before the evacuation was completed, about 200,000 individuals had been evacuated from the exclusion zone over the course of the ensuing weeks and months (Serhii).

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2.1.4.3 Effects of the Chernobyl disaster

The Chernobyl accident caused serious radioactive consequences almost immediately, and 134 workers received significant radiation doses (0.8-16 GY). 19 of them passed away between 1987 and 2004; 28 of them died within the first three months. The majority of the 530,000 registered recovery operation employees received doses ranging from 0.02 GY to 0.5 GY between 1986 and 1990. The disaster also heavily contaminated territories in Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine with radioactive material, changing people's livelihoods for

a very long time. Significant changes in the economy, society, and politics resulted from the disintegration of the former Soviet Union ("The Chernobyl Accident").

At least 1800 recorded cases of thyroid cancer in children between the ages of 0 and 14 at the time of the accident have been reported, which is significantly more than is typical. Young children's thyroid glands are especially prone to absorbing radioactive iodine, which can cause malignancies that can be treated surgically and medically. Studies on the health of the registered cleanup personnel (also known as "liquidators") have not revealed any links between their radiation exposure and an increase in other cancers or diseases. The psychological effects of Chernobyl were, and continue to be, broad and severe. As a result, there have been cases of suicide, alcoholism, and indifference. According to UNSCEAR, 20,000 incidences of thyroid cancer in 18-year-olds were diagnosed between 1991 and 2015, with 5000 of those cases most likely brought on by high radiation doses. Comparisons with the general population are tricky because of the uncertainty surrounding the responsible percentage and the impact of annual screens and active follow-up.15 diagnosis turned out to be deadly ("The 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident").

According to several international studies, people exposed to radiation from Chernobyl have high anxiety levels and are more likely to report unexplained physical symptoms and poor health (Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission). Research is still being done on how the accident affected the nearby forest and fauna. Because so many trees turned reddish-brown and died after being exposed to high amounts of radiation, an area of around four square miles came to be known as the "Red Forest" in the immediate aftermath of the accident. Chernobyl's catastrophe cost $235 billion and had a severe impact on the economy and politics. Belarus lost 5% of its farmland and allocated 22% of its budget to disaster relief. Even though Chernobyl is now a well-liked tourist attraction, Russia has not advanced past its

history or its technology. In Russia, 11 RBMK reactors are still in operation as of 2019 (Blakemore).

The Chernobyl tragedy in 1986 was a terrible incident that caused terrible hardship and resulted in the deaths of numerous first responders. Even though individuals exposed as children and emergency and recovery workers are at a higher risk of radiation-induced illnesses, the vast majority of people are not at risk of experiencing catastrophic health consequences as a result of the disaster. From a radiological standpoint, the majority of people have fairly positive future health prospects, and the future generally appears to be hopeful.

2.2 Russia Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

The Treaty was approved on 7 July 2017 by the United Nations conference, which was convened in New York from 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017. The treaty contains a detailed list of restrictions on engaging in nuclear weapon activities, including research and development, testing, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, use, and even the threat of use. It must be available for signature by all States at the United Nations headquarters in New York as of September 20, 2017, in accordance with its article 13 ("United Nations Treaty Collection"). The treaty is negotiated by more than 130 states, as of September 23, 2022, 91 states have signed the treaty and 68 have ratified it. Although the prohibition treaty alone won't get rid of all nuclear weapons, it can aid in further delegitimizing them and bolstering the political and legal norm against their deployment ("The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at a Glance").

2.2.1 Nuclear Deterrence

The symbiotic relationship between the military deterrence principle and the development of nuclear weapons gave rise to the philosophy of nuclear deterrence. The

history of the first dates back thousands of years. The latter was only introduced in 1945. Before engaging in conflict, armies and navies have long been thought to serve the political and psychological purpose of intimidating an opponent with the prospect of using military force, either to stop it from taking unwanted actions or to coerce it into behaving in a certain way. The development of Soviet nuclear weapons, intercontinental bombers, and later missiles as delivery vehicles eliminated the United States' historical territorial immunity protected by two oceans, forcing the two sides to reevaluate their positions on the relationship between the political and military uses of nuclear weapons. The concept of nuclear deterrence gained prominence in American military strategy. Naturally, it was based on actual nuclear forces and operational strategies for using them. The notion that nuclear weapons primarily serve a political rather than a military purpose was developed as a result of this qualitative shift (Arbatov).

In other words, nuclear deterrence is a strategy used by nations to prevent war by maintaining a nuclear arsenal. The idea behind nuclear deterrence is that the threat of retaliation with nuclear weapons will dissuade an enemy from attacking, as the consequences of such an attack would be catastrophic. The concept of nuclear deterrence emerged during the Cold War, when the United States and Soviet Union were engaged in a tense arms race. Both sides built up massive nuclear arsenals, but neither side was willing to use them for fear of provoking a devastating response. While some argue that nuclear deterrence is an effective way to prevent war, others question its effectiveness. One argument against nuclear deterrence is that it only works if both sides believe the other is rational and can be deterred. If one side believes the other is irrational or suicidal, nuclear deterrence may not work. Another argument against nuclear deterrence is that it creates a dangerous situation where any mistake or miscalculation could lead to a catastrophic nuclear war. Additionally, the

possession of nuclear weapons by multiple nations increases the risk of accidental or unauthorized use (Mearsheimer).

Russia was forced to rely on deterrence, particularly nuclear deterrence, in containing security threats in the 1990s. This was due to changes in the international military-political situation, such as technological development and Western military intervention, which forced a review of the role of Russia's strategic weapons in global and regional deterrence. A theory of de-escalation emerged in 1999 to make use of nuclear capabilities efficiently against a conventionally superior adversary. In the 2000s, Russian theorists focused on how nuclear and conventional capabilities could be used in combination to more effectively deter both conventional and nuclear threats. Strategic deterrence became commonplace in this second stage of the evolution of Russian deterrence thinking. A third stage, starting from 2010, saw an expansion of the thinking around strategic deterrence to include non-nuclear and non-military components. Russia's nuclear weapons deter aggression by threatening to inflict unacceptable damage on any potential aggressor in a retaliatory strike. In the case of aggression or war, nuclear weapons could be used to de-escalate and terminate combat actions on terms acceptable to Russia (Bruusgaard).

Regarding this matter, the Russian President Vladimir Putin announced his invasion of Ukraine on February 24, he also made a more nebulous threat: "No matter who tries to stand in our way or … create threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history". Another part of his speech seemed to make his meaning clear. "Today's Russia remains one of the most powerful nuclear states," Putin said. As justification for the invasion, Putin also made claims that Ukraine was on a path to build its own nuclear arsenal. "There's no evidence of that at all," said Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists (Dhanesha).

Sunday, February 27th, 2022 KYIV/MOSCOW (Reuters) - Sunday, in response to a torrent of Western retaliation for his war on Ukraine, which claimed it had blocked Russian ground forces from striking its largest cities, President Vladimir Putin put Russia's nuclear deterrent on high alert. Putin was accused by the United States of escalating the conflict through "dangerous rhetoric" since there were indications that the biggest attack on a European state since World War Two was not leading to quick victory but rather to a broad and coordinated Western response. Less than four days after it began, the invasion has sparked an unparalleled Western political, strategic, economic, and corporate response in scope and cohesion." With this war on Ukraine, the world will never be the same again," EU's foreign policy chief Josef Borrell wrote in an opinion piece in the Guardian newspaper". It is now, more than ever, the time for societies and alliances to come together to build our future on trust, justice and freedom. It is the moment to stand up and to speak out. Might do not make right. Never did. Never will," he said (Tsvetkova).

The EU has increased its political, humanitarian, financial, and military assistance to Ukraine and stands unified in its steadfast support for that nation. The European Commission works closely with the nations that border Ukraine to help them protect those who are fleeing the invasion ("EU Assistance to Ukraine").

2.2.2 Nuclear Abolition and Disarmament: A World without Weapons

The reduction or abolition of nuclear weapons is known as nuclear disarmament. The ultimate goal might be a nuclear-weapons-free society with no nuclear weapons at all. The process leading to complete nuclear disarmament is referred to as denuclearization. The grave risk posed by nuclear war and the existence of nuclear weapons has led to the adoption of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. Nuclear disarmament proponents assert that it would reduce the likelihood of nuclear conflict, particularly if it occurred accidently. Nuclear

disarmament is opposed by those who claim that it would weaken deterrence and increase the frequency of conventional warfare. The United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty is being supported by a coalition of non-governmental groups called the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Another organization, Global Zero, works to eradicate nuclear weapons from the planet (O'Hanlon).

2.2.2.1 Nuclear Weapons Outcomes

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons ever created by humans. The use of nuclear weapons can cause catastrophic damage to both human life and the environment. The goal of nuclear abolition and disarmament is to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the world, thus preventing the possibility of their use and ensuring global security, because they are extremely powerful explosives. The bombs get their energy from either splitting atoms or joining the tiny particles inside the atoms together. That's also why a nuclear bomb is sometimes called an atomic bomb (BBC). The atomic bomb and nuclear bombs are potent weapons that generate explosive energy through nuclear processes (History.com Editors); where (Roser, Max, et al.) confirm that these weapons have the potential to kill millions of people directly and, most likely, billions of people indirectly through their effects on agriculture.

During World War II, scientists created the first nuclear weapons technology. Only twice in the history of warfare have atomic bombs been used, both times by the US against Japan at the close of World War II, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 killing over 200,000 people. Following that conflict, there was a time of nuclear proliferation, when several countries have developed nuclear weapons. And during the Cold War, the US and the USSR engaged in a global nuclear arms race for supremacy (History.com Editors). Nuclear weapons are being eliminated from the world's arsenal as a whole, but this process is taking

longer than it did in the previous 30 years. Additionally, these reductions are only taking place as a result of Russia and the US continuing to deactivate previously retired warheads.

2.2.2.2 The Current State of Proliferation of Weapons

The number of warheads in worldwide military stockpiles, which includes warheads assigned to operational forces, is once again rising, in contrast to the total number of nuclear weapons. The US is still gradually reducing its nuclear arsenal. The inventories in France and Israel are comparatively steady. However, it is believed that Russia, China, India, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom are all boosting their stockpiles (Federation of American Scientists).

The fact that there are fewer weapons now than there were during the Cold War does not change the fact that these weapons still pose a serious threat to civilization. The United States and Russia together control more than 90% of the world's nuclear arsenal, which consists of 6,000 warheads, 1,584 of which are deployed. The conflict between the United States and Russia is a major factor in the slow pace of nuclear arms reductions. Thankfully, the two countries have decided to renew their lone bilateral arms control agreement, known as "New START." However, Russia has made it clear that it will only continue its nuclear disarmament if US missile defenses are similarly legally restrained. These and other issues, particularly during times of crisis, might trigger an arms race and increase the likelihood of a nuclear conflict if left ("Nuclear Weapons Worldwide").
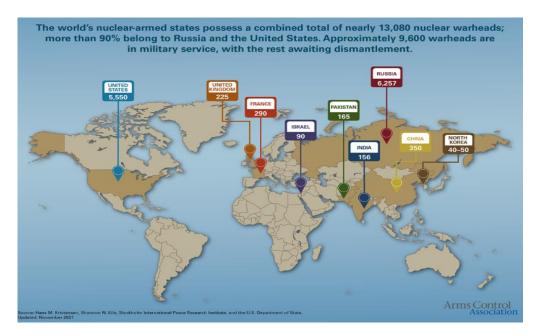
Fig.1. 2021 Estimated Global Nuclear Warhead Inventories.

Source: Hans M. Kristensen, Shannon N.Kile, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and US Department of state.

2.2.2.3 Nuclear Abolition and Disarmament

Nuclear abolition and disarmament refer to any one of four different ideas in international relations: (1) the forced destruction or reduction of a nation's armament following a war (the Versailles Treaty's [1919] provision requiring Germany and its allies to disarm is an example of this idea); (2) bilateral disarmament agreements governing particular regions (naval disarmament in this sense is represented by the Rush-Bagot Agreement between the United States; (3) the total abolishment of all weapons, as promoted by idealists and occasionally by governments; (4) the limitation and reduction of national armaments by means of general international agreement through international organizations like the League of Nations in the past and the United Nations in the present. The phrase is currently used the most frequently in this last sense ("Disarmament: Definition, Varieties, & Facts").

According to Kjølv Egelandin his article "A theory of nuclear disarmament: Cases, analogies, and the role of the non-proliferation regime" nuclear disarmament is one of the

UN's oldest aspirations and is legally binding under the Non Proliferation Treaty. The goal of abolition commands large popular support across continents. However, there is no consensus on the drivers of nuclear relinquishment and no theory of how it could be achieved in practice (Egelandin).

In another article to him, "Who stole disarmament? History and nostalgia in nuclear abolition discourse" , Egeland states that influential disarmament advocates have recently argued that continuing to advance toward the nominally shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world requires reviving the cooperative spirit and methods that were prevalent in the late 1980s and early 1990s. According to this argument, proponents of abolition should concentrate their efforts on reinvigorating the tried-and-true arms control strategy that was put in place after the Cold War. Because in the other side, more convincing theories of nuclear proliferation have been formulated and tested through careful examination of historical cases of practice (Egeland). Also, the failure of the current nuclear-weapon states to show any signs of abandoning their dependence on these weapons invites other countries to join the nuclear club, which only leads to an increase in the risk of a nuclear catastrophe, Thus making the issue more complicated (Krieger).

2.2.2.4 Arguments in Favor of Disarmament

In an article that presents original data from a public opinion survey of United States citizens to examine the relative effectiveness of the most popular arguments in favor of disarmament. The study found that the least convincing arguments for abolishing nuclear weapons related to the costs of maintaining a nuclear arsenal, the humanitarian impact of using nuclear weapons, and the threats of nuclear terrorism and nuclear war. The most convincing argument concerns nuclear-armed "rogue states" and the possibility of nuclear

accidents. Political stakeholders and civil society actors may use these findings to frame their public messages more effectively (Rosendorf et al.).

In December 2014, Pope Francis stated at a symposium on the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons in Vienna, Austria, that "nuclear deterrence cannot be the basis for peaceful coexistence between states". According to a Vatican official, the Holy See is seriously debating whether owning nuclear weapons in the modern multipolar world are ethically acceptable, according to Sojourners in Vienna. The official cited Pope John XXIII as saying, "Nuclear weapons should be banned," and said that the moment has come to support nuclear abolition. The Vatican released a statement titled "Nuclear Disarmament: Time for Abolition," which claimed that "the structure of nuclear deterrence is less stable and more worrisome than at the height of the Cold War," and that "the very possession of nuclear weapons, even for purposes of deterrence, is morally problematic". The Vatican's "evolution" on the subject of nuclear abolition—from its hesitant support of deterrence to its new commitment of nuclear abolition—is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. Since the end of the Cold War, the idea of deterrence has served as the moral justification for nuclear weapon possession, provided that nuclear states make significant efforts to reduce and eventually get rid of these weapons (Rice).

2.2.2.5 Russia Resurrects Nuclear Proliferation

However, the threat of nuclear war has returned to the forefront in Europe in 2022. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, has threatened to use his nation's nuclear weapons since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February of the same year in an effort to force Ukraine to submit to his demands and prevent NATO from intervening. In almost 40 years, this is the most major endeavor at extended, systematic, and deliberate nuclear coercion against NATO and its allies (de Dreuzy and Gilli).

Russia's unwillingness to disarm was evident when the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, announced that a delegation from Kyiv would meet Russian officials without preconditions on his country's border with Belarus, but it was far from clear Putin was ready to entertain talks that did not involve compliance with his demands that Ukraine accept partition and disarm (Roth et al.).

2.2.2.6 NATO and US Response to Russia Position

NATO has responded to Russia's nuclear rhetoric by criticizing it as "dangerous and irresponsible "(Reuters). The US response to the Russian nuclear attack would likely involve a collective effort with NATO to take out every Russian conventional force that can be seen and identified on the battlefield in Ukraine and Crimea, according to retired Gen. David Petraeus (Mitchell). So when, will the last episode be, how will it be, and by whom? But now we can just say that nuclear abolition and disarmament are critical for ensuring global peace and security, and preventing the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war. Achieving this goal will require sustained international efforts, cooperation, and dialogue, as well as innovative solutions to address the challenges and concerns surrounding nuclear disarmament.

2.2.3 The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), also known as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has improved global security and prosperity for more than 50 years. The NPT serves as the cornerstone of the worldwide nuclear nonproliferation framework thanks to its three tenets of nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Treaty was first put into effect in 1970, and in 1995 it was made permanent. With 191 States Parties today, the NPT is almost ubiquitous. The NPT has over the years contributed to the prevention of new states acquiring nuclear weapons, provided the confidence required to facilitate cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and

promoted a security environment that has allowed for dramatic reductions in nuclear stockpiles and is necessary for future advancement on nuclear disarmament ("Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty").

2.2.3.1 What is (NPT?)

"The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is an essential pillar of international peace and security, and the heart of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime..." UN Secretary-General António Guterres on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the NPT's opening for signature, 24 May 2018, Geneva (NPT Conference 2020 – EN). The NPT is a multinational agreement with three components that aims to stop the spread of nuclear weapons: non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful nuclear energy. The "grand bargain" between the nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon nations is made up of these components (The Nuclear Threat Initiative).

In other definition, the NPT is a treaty which is signed in 1968 (Office of the Historian), and according to Kimball and Bugos it became operative in March 1970. On 11 May 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely ("Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)"). It aims to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Two groups—non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) and nuclear-weapon states (NWS), which include the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom—are used to describe the 190 states-parties that make up the treaty (Kimball and Bugos). The Treaty permits the Parties to meet every five years for the NPT Review Conference (RevCon), which examines how the Treaty is being implemented. Meetings of the NPT Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) are held each of the three years prior to a RevCon ("Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty").

2.2.3.2 The Three Pillars of the NPT

Three pillars serve as the foundation for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): nonproliferation (Pillar I), disarmament (Pillar II), and peaceful uses of nuclear energy (including nuclear research, technology, and applications) (Pillar III) (kirsten and zarka 1). These mean 1: States that don't already possess nuclear weapons won't do so. 2: States with nukes will work toward disarmament .3: Under safeguards, all states have access to nuclear technology for peaceful reasons ("NPT - the Nuclear Threat Initiative").

2.2.3.3 Parties to the NPT

So, as we already mentioned, Its 190 states-parties are divided into two categories: Nuclear-weapon states (NWS); which include the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom (Kimball and Bugos). Except for the five countries known to have nuclear weapons, all NPT signatories are considered non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) (Twenty 4). And with only South Sudan, India, Israel, and Pakistan are remaining outside the treaty (Kimball and Bugos).

2.2.3.4 NATO, US, Russia, EU Positions

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has always been in compliance with NATO's nuclear agreements. The foreign ministers of NATO nations firmly backed the US claim that Russia was in breach of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 2018. Along with supporting the US position on Russia's adherence to numerous treaties, the EU and European Parliament have participated in discussions and initiatives pertaining to arms control and non-proliferation (NATO). Kirsten and Zarka state that the IAEA has a specific verification function to ensure that NNWS's commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are being met, despite not being a signatory to the NPT,

additionally; it aims to hasten and increase the contribution of atomic energy to prosperity, health, and peace (1).

2.2.4 The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a nuclear agreement that was supported by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was passed on July 20, 2015.

2.2.4.1 What is (JCPOA) and who are its participants?

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's Nuclear Program (JCPOA), which was signed in Vienna on July 14, 2015, was the result of diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) that began in 2006 under the leadership of the EU High Representative. The JCPOA calls for the complete relaxation of UN, EU, and US nuclear-related sanctions and is intended to guarantee that Iran's nuclear program will be only peaceful ("Nuclear Agreement – JCPOA").

2.2.4.2 What were the goals?

The P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council ;China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States+ Germany) sought to halt Iran's nuclear development so that world countries would have time to react. Iran had previously pledged to forego nuclear weapon development, but when the Pahlavi regime was toppled in 1979, they secretly continued to work on this technology. The P5+1 had been talking with Iran for years before the JCPOA, providing incentives to end uranium enrichment. Iran looked to the JCPOA for relief from the international sanctions that had robbed it of more than $100 billion in revenue from its economy between 2012 and 2014 (Robinson).

2.2.4.3 How Has the Conflict in Ukraine Impacted Negotiation on the JCPOA?

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiations have been impacted by the war in Ukraine in a number of ways. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has not affected American considerations on the JCPOA negotiation process (Sariolghalam), however Russia's position negatively affects the already dim prospects for a JCPOA revival, when Russia by the beginning of January 2023 according to estimates from the Ukrainian government, had employed about 660 Shahed drones built in Iran against Ukraine. Russia continued to have a contract with Iran for a total of 1,750 drones, and it is likely that it is still expecting delivery of another 300 drones.62 Due to Western countries. The fate of the nuclear agreement is now inexorably linked to Iran's new military trade with Russia after allegations that Iran's sale of unmanned aerial vehicles violates UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which supported the JCPOA, emerged ("Russia's invasion of Ukraine" 8).

The Iranian nuclear talks are progressing quickly in Vienna, while the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues and concerns about the possible use of chemical or nuclear weapons rise. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), often known as the Iran nuclear agreement, which the US withdrew from in 2018 under President Donald Trump, is the stated goal of these talks, though Iranian oil appears to be the main source of lubrication. Western powers are in a severe need of fossil fuels because Russia's oil and gas are currently subject to sanctions but are still flowing. TRNN contributor David Kattenburg speaks with CODEPINK co-founder Medea Benjamin and Executive Director of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Elena Sokova about the complicated geopolitical pressures the Russian war in Ukraine and US domestic politics are putting on discussions regarding the Iran nuclear deal and a nuclear-free Middle East (Kattenburg). Overall, it appears that the JCPOA negotiations have become more complicated as a result of the

situation in Ukraine, particularly in light of Russia's position and the implications for US Middle East policy (Bobkin).

The strategic environment is further complicated by the development of new nuclear weapon systems like hypersonic missiles and underwater drones, which raises questions about the intentions and capabilities of the Russian military. The lack of transparency in Russia's nuclear modernization initiatives and the few opportunities for communication and collaboration increase mistrust and the chance of error.

Chapter Three

The Implications of the Russian Nuclear Threats

Many nations have expressed concern about Russian nuclear threats, particularly in the wake of the Russo-Ukrainian War. In Eastern Europe; the security situation is unstable due to tensions between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia, which might quickly lead to nuclear war. Russia's nuclear threats were apparently intended to force Ukraine to submit and for Western nations to stop providing support. If Russia is confronted or endangered, much alone defeated or degraded, the deployment of nuclear weapons is not just feasible but likely. Concerns about the likelihood of a nuclear war have been sparked by the assumption that Russia may utilize nuclear weapons Destroyer (Taylor).

3.1 Russia's war on Ukraine and Nuclear Threats

Russia bombed Zaporizhzhia, the biggest nuclear power plant in Ukraine, one week after the invasion. In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this event examines nuclear reality and risks. The presence of nuclear weapons in Russia's arsenal and the extent to which the world is aware of the quantity and quality of weapons at Vladimir Putin's disposal constitute the other obvious threat. Experts and decision-makers discuss how the war is affecting Ukraine, the region, and the world in these series of events. This activity takes into account:

a. What nuclear capabilities does Russia possess?

b. What dangers could possibly unstable nuclear reactors represent in the conflict?

c. How may the nuclear threat be used to escalate or de-escalate the war? ("War on Ukraine: Nuclear Threats and Realities").

As the world marks one year since Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine, The risk of nuclear war is at its greatest point, with overt nuclear threats being issued over the crisis and more threatening language from the nuclear-armed states and their allies. Where a number of leading Russian figures, including President Vladimir Putin who have threatened to deploy nuclear weapons in both overt and covert ways, as Russia has stated it will halt the implementation of the New START pact with the US only days before its one-year anniversary ("Nuclear Risk: Russia Suspends NEW Start, One Year on from the Russian Invasion of Ukraine"). Russia's nuclear threats appear to mirror a few shifting priorities in the Russo-Ukrainian war, including preventing NATO and Ukraine from expelling Russian forces and preventing NATO from enforcing a "no-fly zone" over Ukraine (Sukin).

Through a number of actions and words, the Kremlin explicitly added a nuclear element to the Ukrainian conflict. On February 24, Putin threatened that third-party attempts to "obstruct" Russia would have dire repercussions, and on February 27, he declared that Russia's deterrent forces, including its nuclear arsenal, would be placed on a "special regime of alert." Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated that a third global war would be nuclear, as Russia conducted military drills involving nuclear submarines in the Barents Sea and mobile intercontinental ballistic missile launchers in Siberia. Moscow's nuclear threats drew sharp criticism from the West, which charged that Moscow was inventing false threats to support additional aggressive action. While issuing similar public threats and keeping its own nuclear alert level at a low level, Washington warned Moscow against using nuclear weapons in Ukraine (Horovitz and Wachs 1-2). Horovitz and Wachs consider that Putin's use of nuclear threats to terrify Western governments and the public, is very dangerous having serious drawbacks, such as further undermining the stability of Europe and the international security system (1).

3.2 Nuclear Issues in the Ukraine Crisis

After the scenario of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict continues, Putin's statements and his nuclear threats, West intervention the likelihood of Russia using nuclear weapons is a topic of debate among experts. However, there is no definitive answer, so it remains an open question (myre).

3.2.1 Russia is Unlikely to Use Nuclear Weapons at this Time

According to the majority of nuclear experts, the likelihood of Russia actually using a nuclear weapon is still considered to be minimal (myre). As the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared, "The risk of nuclear weapons being used in the Ukraine conflict has lessened for the time being" (BBC). And Pavel Podvig, a senior researcher at the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research who tracks Russia's nuclear forces said "we are at this fairly dangerous junction," and he added that he thinks the likelihood Russia would use a nuclear weapon is "extremely low" (Brumfiel).From the other side, in his article« Why Hasn't Putin Used Nuclear Weapons? », Joseph Cirincione Rules out the possibility of Putin using nuclear weapons, being Putin has now lost the wars for Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson, suffering three significant strategic setbacks and Ukrainian forces have even conducted long-range operations deep inside of Russia itself against his military in the areas he unjustly acquired. So why hasn't he used nuclear weapons to reverse his defeats? (Cirincione)

Cirincione also mentions that Officials from the United States have taken the following three actions to stop the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine: They have established an international coalition that warns Russia that starting a nuclear war will cost a generational price, and "they have made clear to Putin that we will not allow him to destroy the democracy of Ukraine." They have also made the case to Russia that crossing the nuclear line would have catastrophic consequences, including numerous economic, diplomatic, cyber, and

conventional military responses from the U.S. and its allies. Additionally, Putin has received specific warnings not to cross the nuclear line from his closest allies, China and India (Cirincione).

Putin himself has stated that he would be willing to use nuclear weapons to defend Russian territory, but he has also denied having any plans to use them in Ukraine and has indicated that deploying nuclear weapons to attack Ukraine would be futile (cirincione), declaring "We see no need for that," "There is no point in that, neither political nor military", so that he claimed that his earlier threat to use "all means available to protect Russia" wasn't intended to be taken as nuclear saber-rattling but rather as a response to Western pronouncements regarding the use of nuclear weapons by those in power ("Putin Says 'no Need' for Using Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine").

He specifically brought up the British politician Liz Truss' August statement that she would be prepared to deploy nuclear weapons if she were prime minister of Britain, which he claimed alarmed the Kremlin, "What were we supposed to think?" Putin said. "We saw that as a coordinated position, an attempt to blackmail us" (Associated Press). All of the above is just one point of view, but not the only one.

3.2.2 Russia is Likely to use Nuclear Weapons at this Time:

The possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons in its war with Ukraine is possible; Russia's potential deployment of nuclear weapons has been the focus of a protracted and contentious discussion. This is partially due to conflicting information coming from Russia itself. Russian nuclear response scenarios are only briefly described in published nuclear doctrine.

According to Chatham House, Although Russia frequently stresses its willingness to use nuclear weapons; its primary goal is to get the most useful use out of having them. This

warning builds on an extensive and extremely successful campaign by Russian influencers overseas that threatens an almost certain nuclear war if Russia's goals are thwarted. By weakening Western resolve to resist, these threats aim to give Russia more operational leeway without actually starting a conflict. This campaign has been successful in giving the idea that Russia has a very low threshold for nuclear use and that a variety of situations or "provocations" could lead to the country crossing that threshold (Akimenko).

NATO website states that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has brought the threat of nuclear war back to the forefront in Europe. According to renowned nuclear scholar Robert Jervis' theory, Crimea has become sufficiently "Russian" during the previous eight years as a result of Russia's de facto possession of it to justify the threat of using nuclear weapons to preserve it. Although Ukraine has employed force against targets in Crimea, there hasn't yet been any nuclear escalation or fresh Russian nuclear threats. Due to the historical significance of the naval station of Sevastopol as the base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, Russia places a significantly greater strategic value on Crimea than other occupied Ukrainian territories. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, may come under political pressure to take dramatic action if Ukrainian forces are successful in retaking territory in Crimea (de Dreuzy and Gilli).

The Heritage Foundation reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin has hinted that the conflict in Ukraine may lead to Moscow using nuclear weapons. This threat is essentially an attempt to frighten Western audiences and damage Ukraine's ties to its West supporters. However, it is impossible to be certain that Russia will not use nuclear weapons, as Russia has established a language structure for their use. To prevent their use, it is best to plan for probable decision points and make efforts to prevent their usage. Putin has stated that Russia may use WMDs to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and ensure the safety of the Russian people. The conflict in Ukraine is cast in existential terms, with Putin and his backers claiming that if NATO "seizes" Ukraine, Russia will follow. The Kremlin believes that

NATO's goal is to disintegrate Russia, and if Russia doesn't take on NATO in Ukraine, NATO will take on Russia. In a broader sense, Russian doctrine is unmistakable: Russia considers itself engaged in a world war with the West, extending to its political culture, language, and territory. The West, according to the Kremlin, is waging proxy conflicts in Ukraine and other border states, rather than in Africa or Asia as it did during the Cold War (Seely).

Nevertheless, If Ukraine does not use nuclear weapons; the war in Ukraine has raised concerns about the safety of the country's nuclear facilities. During the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, there had been fights at both Chernobyl and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Just 500 miles from the Chernobyl disaster site, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station in southern Ukraine has been regularly attacked, heightening the prospect of a serious accident. The most dangerous times occurred when the plant was forced to use diesel generators for cooling while losing external power as a result of shelling. The creation of a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the plant has been suggested by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has regularly voiced its worries regarding the shelling of the plant. With specialized Russian military soldiers guarding it and nuclear experts on the scene, Russian forces have assumed control of the nuclear plant in Ukraine. The IAEA has suggested creating a perimeter around the plant for nuclear safety and security (Faulconbridge).

To clarify more, Putin's threat might still result in a mistake if one party misinterprets the other or things spiral out of control, even if it is only designed to serve as a warning rather than an indication of any current desire to deploy the weapons. It is concerning that few of Putin's advisors are prepared to be honest with him, and that he has grown distant and out of touch. Some worry that he's making irregular decisions. However, some believe that if he did go too far, those in higher positions of authority might decide not to follow orders. Even if the

chances of a nuclear war have increased marginally, they are still very low ("Ukraine Conflict: What Are the Nuclear Risks?").

To sum up, it is quite concerning that Russia could invade Ukraine with nuclear weapons. The use of such weapons would have disastrous repercussions for the security of the entire world as well as for Ukraine and its neighbors. The decisions that would need to be made in the event of a Russian nuclear strike on Ukraine are unprecedented, and there is now a far greater chance that something disastrous will occur.

3.3. The United States Concern over and the Nuclear Issue

In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War, the United States has been concerned about the potential for nuclear proliferation. The United States government has continuously denounced any activities that would promote the spread of nuclear weapons and urged all parties concerned to abide by international non-proliferation agreements and guarantee the security of nuclear materials. The United States has also been closely collaborating with international agencies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor and evaluate the situation surrounding the hazards of nuclear proliferation in the area. These initiatives are meant to stop nuclear weapons from being obtained or used without authorization. The attack on Ukraine by Russian President Vladimir Putin may convince other non-nuclear states that they require nuclear weapons in order to ensure their security. However, contrary to popular belief, the impact of the Russian invasion on the likelihood of subsequent proliferation does not seem to be as dire.

3.3.1 US Historical Involvement

Putin has shown a troubling willingness to breach the nuclear use taboo that has been in place since 1945, damaging strategic stability and undermining the nuclear nonproliferation framework. He has threatened to use nuclear weapons to further his goals. As a result of Russia's most recent choices to suspend adherence to the New Strategic Arms Reduction

Treaty (New START) and station nuclear weapons in Belarus, there may be an increase in nuclear hazards. The priority for the United States and its allies must be to defeat Putin, restore Ukrainian sovereignty, and uphold the rules-based system while carefully managing the risks of nuclear escalation (Vershbow, "How the United States and NATO").

In Ukraine's early years of independence, removing its nuclear arsenal was the primary priority for the United States. Although Washington supported the transfer of the nuclear weapons to Russia, it also understood some of the Ukrainian government's concerns. Starting in early 1992, Washington aggressively engaged both parties in separate discussions over the problem and its linked issues, such as payment and security guarantees.

Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, including both strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems, were left on the soil of four newly independent governments when the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991: Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine. Even more dispersed Soviet tactical nuclear weapons existed. During the early part of 1992, Moscow rapidly attained the repatriation of all tactical nuclear weapons to Russia. Additionally, Moscow quickly achieved bilateral agreements with Belarus and Kazakhstan about the dismantling or removal of strategic nuclear weapon systems on their soil (Vershbow).

The decision to give up the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal and its perceived security benefits were influenced by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and Ukraine's assertion of state sovereignty in 1990. The United States and Russia had to find terms acceptable to Ukraine on security assurances and compensation. The Budapest Memorandum, compensation for the HEU in the nuclear weapons, and assistance in eliminating strategic delivery systems on Ukraine's territory were offered by both countries. The U.S. approach was concerned that Ukraine's failure to eliminate the nuclear weapons would create a divide between the West and Ukraine, potentially preventing normal relations. Ukrainian officials wanted links with the West during uncertainty in their relations with Moscow and Russia.

The costs of retaining nuclear weapons would have been nearly impossible for the new Ukrainian state to bear, as many missiles and warheads were nearing the end of their service life. The nuclear arsenal might confer prestige on Ukraine but also make Kyiv a nuclear pariah state. The real security purpose of the weapons was unclear, and the risks of a major military clash were low.

3.3.2 What is at stake for the US in Ukraine?

The military troops that Russia has gathered along its border with Ukraine are a menace to both that country and its NATO partners in Eastern Europe. Additionally, they pose a danger to international democratic norms and U.S. interests. Energy markets would be disrupted, the current supply chain crisis would worsen, and considerable U.S. trade and foreign investment would be at stake in the event of a land conflict in Europe. Failure to stop Russian aggression and deal with its destructive energy policies would erode the confidence of the United States 'friends as a dependable security partner and give China permission to engage in its own Pacific aggression.

As the war in Ukraine grinds on, the West is shifting from soft power to hard power. After Russia's war in Ukraine began on February 24, the West launched a financial attack on the invading country. But as the conflict continues, it is shifting the focus of its support to supplying Ukraine with more and heavier weapons. So is a diplomatic solution still possible, and what is next for the Western response to the Ukraine war?

The situation in Ukraine is "the most acute example of that risk" and the chance of using a nuclear bomb is higher now than it has ever been since the height of the Cold War. Russian leaders have threatened to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine and the NATO countries that support Kiev. This potentially existential risk is primarily caused by the lack of discussion, the breakdown of the disarmament and arms control framework, dangerous

language, and covert threats ("Risk of Nuclear Weapons Use Higher than at Any Time since Cold War").

Russia has repeatedly warned of using nuclear weapons in Ukraine, with Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines stating that the odds are low. However, former defense attaché Kevin Ryan believes that these threats are serious and that they are not likely to happen. Ryan believes that if the Ukrainian counteroffensive gains significant territory, the possibility of a Russian nuclear strike becomes very real. He believes that President Putin will use nuclear weapons to avoid being seen as a loser in the war, with a probability of over 50% (Kotsonis and Chakrabarti).

Putin has warned "ominous consequences" for anybody who interferes with Russia's invasion of Ukraine since the beginning of his adventure (Putin).[1] His devoted deputies amplified these warnings by urging nuclear annihilation on the NATO capitals (Ilyushina et al.). Thus, the United States and its NATO partners were warned from the start that if their backing for Kyiv led allied forces into contact with the Russian invaders, a nuclear escalation could result. Such a direct pledge of nuclear use hadn't been made since the worst of the Cold War.

A particularly ominous threat from Russian authorities has been reiterated to NATO and the countries supporting Ukraine. They have stated that Russia might yet use nuclear weapons. On Russian television, experts advocate the use of tactical or strategic nuclear weapons against the United States or Great Britain, the two countries that supply the majority of Ukraine's armaments. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, added in a speech from last September, "I am not bluffing" (Kotsonis and Chakrabarti).

The Ukrainian crisis has caused the United States to closely monitor the potential nuclear repercussions of the conflict, declare opposition to the use of nuclear weapons, and

face difficulties in nuclear arms control negotiations. The nuclear power plants in Ukraine have also been impacted by the fighting.In terms of regional security, safeguarding international interests, sovereignty and territorial integrity, democracy and human rights, and strategic considerations, the United States places a high priority on Ukraine. Through different forms of assistance, such as financial, military, and diplomatic support, the US has shown its commitment to Ukraine.

However, during the next weeks, Putin backed down. He asserted that he had never contemplated using nuclear weapons in his speech to the Valdai Discussion Club in late October and said that doing so would be "pointless" from a military standpoint. This renunciation of nuclear threats may have been in reaction to pressure from China, India, and other allies who were growing more concerned with Putin's carefree nuclear threats. US threats of "catastrophic consequences" for any Russian use of nuclear weapons may have dissuaded Putin even further.

3.3.3. Countering Russia's Nuclear Threats

The Biden administration has been hesitant to provide specifics in response to the possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons, utilizing strategic ambiguity to avoid escalating the conflict. US officials have repeatedly warned of severe consequences should Moscow deploy nuclear weapons in its war in Ukraine, but they have not explicitly stated what those consequences would involve. They have also said they are taking talk of nuclear weapons seriously but have not publicly shifted the country's nuclear posture in response.

Experts argue that the U.S. approach is the right one, especially given the uncertainty around how serious Russian President Vladimir Putin is with his threat. David Kramer, who spent three years as deputy assistant secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs during the George W. Bush administration, said there is no need to tell Putin what exactly

they would do. He added that we should be mindful when a nuclear power threatens use of nuclear weapons, but we should not be deterred from what we need to do.

President Biden set the tone for the White House in a "60 Minutes" interview earlier this month when asked about the consequences of Russia using nuclear or chemical weapons in its war in Ukraine. He said that it will be consequential and that their actions could determine what response would occur. Since Biden's interview, Putin has raised the prospect of a nuclear response if the Russian homeland was attacked or if its opposition used nuclear weapons. He has also pressed ahead with a plan to officially annex major portions of Ukraine, potentially laying the groundwork to claim attacks on so-called new Russian territory as provocation for a nuclear strike.

White House officials have taken a uniformly vague approach in recent days when asked about a potential response to nuclear aggression by Russia. National security adviser Jake Sullivan said the White House had made the consequences of such action clear, but it would not engage in a "rhetorical tit-for-tat." Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Biden administration has a plan in the event Russia resorts to nuclear weapons, but he would not elaborate. The Pentagon maintained that the government keeps a whole host of capabilities and proven processes to address any potential threats of that kind. Defense officials have not seen any major change or movement by Russia to ready its nuclear forces in any way.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine William Taylor said this message is a smart one, adding that U.S. officials are likely preparing responses to several different scenarios, if they haven't already. Key Putin ally Dmitry Medvedev doubled down on the message, warning that the Russian leader's recent threat was exactly as stated and "definitely not a bluff."Medvedev also laid out a scenario of a nuclear strike on Ukraine, claiming that NATO would be too concerned with "nuclear apocalypse" to directly respond to the attack. He said

that Russia has the right to use nuclear weapons if aggression with the use of conventional weapons threatens the very existence of the state without asking anyone's permission, and without long consultations.

Despite the bluntest official warning thus far and raising the specter of a Russian nuclear strike, Washington continues to take these threats seriously, but has not seen anything that would cause the Americans to adjust their own nuclear posture at this time. Due to its historical ties to the Soviet Union and its status as a major participant in the international security environment, Ukraine is of strategic importance. A period of unipolar American supremacy ended with the crisis in Ukraine, and a new era of great power rivalry began. The result of the battle and the use of nuclear weapons have an impact on the balance of power and international security. Reaffirming the crucial role that nuclear weapons play in the crisis is Russia's readiness to invade Ukraine, a NATO ally nation. This emphasizes Ukraine's importance in light of NATO's security concerns. Overall, Ukraine is a nuclear hotspot of interest to both Russia and the United States due to its nuclear past, Russia's possible use of nuclear weapons, and the ramifications for international security and relationships.

The conflict is still ongoing a year into it and the stakes have increased. International assistance coordinated by the United States continues to be crucial to Ukraine's ability to maintain its self-defense. A loss to Russia would not spell the end of unrest; rather, it would mark a fresh start for both Europe and the world. If aggression wins, particularly as a result of the allies of Ukraine exhibiting waning determination, both China and Russia will see no limits to advancing their objectives. The time has not come for the United States, Europe, or Congress to change their stance on supporting Ukraine.

The ongoing arms race between the US and Russia may soon be a casualty of Russian President Vladimir Putin's unprovoked invasion of independent, non-nuclear Ukraine and his increasingly reckless nuclear threats. In February, Putin announced that Russia would suspend

the implementation of the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), the last remaining bilateral treaty capping U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals. The Russian Foreign Ministry blamed the United States for undermining talks to resolve differences over New START with its "hostile policy towards Russia."

Russia will no longer share detailed data on its nuclear stockpile or allow the resumption of on-site inspections, but the Kremlin says it will comply with the central limits of New START, which is set to expire in less than three years. If the two sides fail to negotiate new arrangements to supersede or succeed the treaty, there will be no limits on the world's two largest nuclear arsenals for the first time since 1972. Without New START, Moscow and Washington could quickly double the size of their nuclear arsenals by uploading additional warheads on ballistic missiles.

The United States, its allies, and many other states have strongly condemned Putin's suspension of New START and called on Russia to change course. The Group of Seven industrialized countries declared that the overall decline in global nuclear arsenals achieved since the end of the Cold War must continue and called on Russia to engage in substantive discussions in line with its nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) disarmament obligations. A loud group in Congress, led by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), introduced legislation that calls for the United States to withdraw from New START, increase the size of its already massive nuclear arsenal, and only allows a future treaty with Russia if it restricts all types of nuclear warheads and if China is included. Such action would neither advance U.S. interests nor increase U.S. negotiating leverage vis-à-vis Russia. Rather, it would lend credence to Putin's cynical disinformation campaign about who carries blame for the breakdown of nuclear arms control, further escalate already high tensions with a dangerous Russia, undoubtedly encourage China to ramp up its efforts to expand and diversify its nuclear arsenal, and undermine the security of U.S. allies in Europe and Asia.

Cotton is among those who seem to believe that in order to deter a Russian or Chinese nuclear attack, the United States must grow its nuclear arsenal to a size greater than the combined Russian and Chinese arsenals. The current U.S. nuclear arsenal still exceeds in number and destructive capability to hold a sufficient number of adversary military assets at risk to deter an enemy nuclear attack. Fielding even more nuclear weapons will not produce a more stable balance of nuclear terror.

To prevent nuclear arms racing, nuclear proliferation, and nuclear war, the United States must exercise prudent nuclear restraint and seek an executive agreement or reciprocal unilateral arrangement verified with national technical means of intelligence. World leaders should urge China, France, and the United Kingdom to freeze the size of their nuclear arsenals as long as Russia and the United States meet their most fundamental disarmament responsibility, which is to engage in good faith negotiations to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race (Kimball).

3.3.4. U.S. Deterrence Options

From sanctions to lethal assistance for Ukraine, the Biden administration has a number of options at its disposal to prevent an invasion by Russia. Leading a group of Republicans who have sponsored legislation to dissuade Russia by enacting expensive sanctions and giving Ukraine military support is Senator Risch, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. President Biden and Senate Democrats have not yet made it known that they are prepared to deploy some of the strongest deterrents before an invasion, like as more penalties on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Through sanctions in 2019, Republicans in Congress put an end to the pipeline's construction. Construction might restart if the Biden administration altered American policy and lifted further penalties. A bill that would have required the Biden administration to impose punitive sanctions on Nord Stream 2 was defeated by Senate Democrats after caving

to pressure from the White House. Democrats contend that the wisest course of action is to threaten to halt pipeline development if there is an invasion, assuming that it will be able to do so at that time. They fail to take into account the clear deterrent impact of lowering Europe's dependency on Russian energy in the first place, which we might do by stopping the Biden administration's assault on American energy production and letting American providers to assist in supplying Europe's need for natural gas ("What Is at Stake in Ukraine").

3.3.5. The Role of U.S. Diplomacy

Concerns about a nuclear arms race have increased in light of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the subsequent suspension of the New START deal. According to Rose Gottemoeller, the United States has a specific commitment to employ diplomacy to bring down the nuclear temperature because nuclear weapons constitute an existential threat to civilization. She covers the nuclear danger, the value of diplomacy, and the two main toolkits of diplomacy and negotiation in this article: fostering communication and paying attention to the process.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union faced constant conflict, with Washington and Moscow not cooperating to resolve issues. The Middle East was a hotspot, with battles between Israel and its Arab neighbors. During the Six-Day War in 1967 and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, both sides increased their strategic nuclear forces readiness, known as DEFCON 3 ("DEFCON Defense Condition - United States Nuclear Forces"). In Vietnam, Soviet air defense forces worked alongside North Vietnam to shoot down U.S. fighter aircraft "Soviet Troops Said to Have Killed U.S. Pilot in Vietnam". Despite numerous crises, the two capitals managed to negotiate to constrain nuclear weapons.

Cold War history demonstrates the importance of avoiding nuclear threats and controlling nuclear weapons. The United States and Russia possess the largest nuclear arsenals, with the closest competitor, China, having around 400"Status of World Nuclear

Forces". The US and Russia should take the lead in preventing the Ukraine crisis from escalating to nuclear use. However, Putin and his deputies have decided to set aside this history and have raised the nuclear temperature to levels not seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis 60 years ago. They have refused to implement the New START treaty, showing their disinterest in bringing down the nuclear temperature.

For Russia, even existential threats to humanity have tactical political value, and nuclear weapons can be used as leverage to get the Kremlin what it wants in Ukraine. Putin has even dismissed the importance of Russia's continued survival, stating that a world without Russia is not worth preserving (Gessen). China and India have also recoiled from such apocalyptic visions, with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi publicly expressing their disapproval of nuclear weapons involvement in the Ukraine war ("India Prime Minister Modi Tells Russia's Putin That Now "Is Not an Era of War""). These voices are valuable, as they are more likely to be heard in Moscow than the United States and its allies. However, America and its allies have a continuing responsibility to bring down the nuclear temperature despite Putin's efforts. As Lawrence Freedman argues, "Anything that generates caution and apprehension has possible deterrent effects, even when the behavior to be avoided has to be inferred" (Freedman).

The US is encouraging caution and worry through strategic signaling, such as bomber demonstration flights, nuclear missile tests, and drills, in the Kremlin ("American B-52 Bombers Make Low Sweep over Stockholm"). However, it has shown caution to avoid escalating military operations. These messages are being strengthened through diplomatic channels, as seen by the recent trip to Ankara by CIA Director William Burns ("CIA Chief in Ankara Meeting with Russian Counterpart, U.S. Official Says"). To stop Russia from using nuclear weapons, the Biden administration is combining military force with diplomacy.

High-level orders are occasionally withheld, however, either as a result of the challenging political climate or because of hostility that precludes leaders from speaking directly to or directing their negotiators. This was mainly the position between President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin during the initial stage of the Ukraine conflict in 2022. Early on, Biden accused Putin of being a war criminal; the Kremlin responded that such statements were unacceptable (Bose). Because of this, they were unable to participate in direct discussions, and they were only minimally ready to accept any demands made by their governments. In fact, these two powerful individuals in this situation grew resentful of one another and refused to cooperate on matters where they could have otherwise found common ground.

Nowhere is diplomacy more crucial than in the nuclear sphere, where escalation must be prevented at all costs. Threats of nuclear use pose an existential risk to humanity. Therefore, they ought to be handled as issues that are crucial and top priority for mankind as a whole. They are neither "rewards for bad behavior" or "responding to nuclear blackmail," and efforts to remedy them are not either.

In order to effectively dissuade Russia from using nuclear weapons, it is essential to emphasize the severe consequences of doing so. In order to regain independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, the US and its allies will keep arming and training Ukrainian forces. Ukraine must be steadfast in aiding it reclaim its land in order to urge Russian leaders to halt the conflict, evacuate troops, and engage in political solution negotiations. By doing this, it will be possible to hold Russia responsible for its war crimes and prevent a third invasion.

As they could regard the US's attention on the Ukraine conflict as a chance to further their nuclear goals, North Korea and Iran are keenly watching the West's attitude against Russian nuclear coercion. Intercontinental and shorter-range ballistic missile launches by North Korea in 2022 have increased, and Pyongyang has abandoned its prior pledge to

disarmament. These tests are meant to deter the US and South Korea from conducting joint military exercises on the Korean peninsula. The North Koreans may be preparing to give Russia conventional weaponry and ammunition in exchange for financial assistance and the lifting of sanctions, which would make Pyongyang more resistant to talks about scaling back its nuclear programme and more provocative in conducting more tests (Vershbow).

Iran has risen to the threshold of becoming a nuclear weapon country by enriching uranium to near weapons grade, reducing the value of reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). With Russia increasingly relying on imported Iranian drones in its war against Ukraine, Moscow may decline to convince Tehran to comply with its JCPOA obligations. The US and its allies will need to consider additional forms of pressure on Tehran to discourage a decision to break out of the deal, which may be the only way to head off unilateral Israeli military action to destroy or damage the Iranian program.

3.4. The Implications of Such Nuclear Threats

The threat of nuclear war has returned to the forefront in Europe in 2022. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, has threatened to use his nation's nuclear weapons since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February of this year in an effort to force Ukraine to submit to his demands and prevent NATO from intervening. In almost 40 years, this is the most major endeavor at extended, systematic, and deliberate nuclear coercion against NATO and its allies. Concerns have been voiced regarding the likelihood of a nuclear exchange between Russia and the West as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is widely believed that several senior Russian politicians have threatened to deploy nuclear weapons in their speeches. Concerns about the possibility of a nuclear disaster have also been sparked by the controversy surrounding the safety of the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (de Dreuzy and Gilli).

Accordingly, the "nuclear apocalypse" is getting "closer," Dmitry Medvedev, the Russian Federation's deputy chairman of the Security Council, said on March 23. Despite its obliqueness, this statement is one of many that Russian officials have made that imply the threat of using nuclear weapons on Ukraine and the NATO countries that support Kyiv. Since the commencement of the Russo-Ukrainian War in early 2022, Moscow has used this deadly rhetoric, making threats that are outspoken, frequent, and harsh.

These threats have largely been successful, possibly because the West recognizes that they are credible signals of Russian willingness to escalate if the bright lines it sets are crossed. Russia's nuclear threats appear to reflect a few evolving priority objectives in the Russo-Ukrainian war, including discouraging NATO from implementing a "no-fly zone" over Ukraine and preventing NATO and Ukraine from driving Russian forces out. There are nevertheless restrictions on what Russia may accomplish using nuclear threats (Sukin).

Nuclear weapons can be employed in crises in two different ways: to dissuade (deterrence) and to compel (compellence), what many nuclear researchers have long contended is confirmed by preliminary data from the present conflict in Ukraine: nuclear weapons are an effective tool for deterrence but frequently a poorer instrument for coercion. Russia's nuclear threats against Ukraine were apparently intended to force Ukraine to submit and for Western nations to stop providing support. The NATO Allies have avoided direct engagement in Ukraine from the start, including the establishment of a no-fly zone. Some Allies have also restricted the types and ranges of weapons delivered to Ukraine, possibly to lower the risk of escalation (de Dreuzy and Gilli).

Importantly, Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was accompanied by President Putin threatening to use nuclear weapons against anyone who tried to intervene. Since then, repeated overt and veiled threats from Russian officials have been

issued in response to increases in military support for Ukraine from the US and Europe, as well as violations of the commitments to disarm of the nuclear-armed states who are members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The increased risk is reflected by the decision of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to move the Doomsday Clock forward to 90 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been. These threats compound the risk of nuclear weapons use and demonstrate the flawed nature of nuclear deterrence, which has brought us a year of brutal, devastating warfare. On February 21st, President Putin announced Russia is suspending its implementation of the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty with the US, New START, connecting this decision to the conflict in Ukraine in his speech. ICAN has called on Russia to immediately return to full compliance with the agreement and continue to adhere to nuclear weapons limits ("Nuclear Risk: Russia Suspends NEW Start, One Year on from the Russian Invasion of Ukraine").

To clarify more, Concerns have been voiced regarding the likelihood of a nuclear exchange between Russia and the West as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Possible repercussions of nuclear threats made during Russia's invasion of Ukraine include:

Nuclear weapons testing: In order to send a strong message to Ukraine and its backers that this confrontation is becoming existential, Russia may conduct nuclear weapons tests. This would show its will and capacity.

Usage of strategic nuclear weapons: Using a strategic nuclear bomb against Ukrainian civilian targets or Ukraine's nearby foreign allies is Russia's most escalatory option. The power of such an attack would be hundreds of times greater than that of a tactical weapon attack. Russia wants to make it obvious to the world that using nuclear weapons will never advance its expansionist goals (Gannon).

Nuclear coercion: Russia's nuclear threats were reportedly made to pressure Ukraine into submission and to stop receiving aid from Western nations (de Dreuzy and Gilli).

Nuclear extortion: President Putin threatened to use nuclear weapons against anyone who sought to intervene and then put the country's arsenal on high alert prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Since then, it appears that Russian leaders have threatened to deploy nuclear weapons repeatedly in both overt and covert ways ("Nuclear Risk: Russia Suspends NEW Start, One Year on from the Russian Invasion of Ukraine").

Concerns about the Cold War: The most concerning scenario is undoubtedly Russia using nuclear weapons. It rekindles Cold War fears in the midst of a hot conflict that is testing how the West will respond to a Russian invasion of a European nation that is not a member of NATO but has unheard-of Western support (Jenkins).

Additionally, using nuclear weapons would subject Russia to universal condemnation, further isolating it from the rest of the world. It would impact everyone's calculations and Russia's standing in the world forever. The prospects of Russian politicians and billionaires who have benefited from their privileged positions in Russia would be particularly jeopardized. Would the military and oligarchs in Russia agree to that? One thinks that relevant warnings about the serious consequences of using nuclear weapons have been conveyed to their Russian counterparts by Western military and political officials (Jenkins).

According to Politico, According to Viktor Orbán, the prime minister of Hungary, the likelihood that the conflict in Ukraine may spread to other countries is increasing. Speaking on the state-run Kossuth Rádió, the leader of Hungary attacked Western governments and charged Ukraine's friends with fomenting a conflict for commercial reasons. The possibility of "a local war" evolving into "a world war," according to Orbán, has never been greater (Bayer).

Moreover, furthermore, since the end of the Cold War, the world has never been closer to a Great Power War than it is now thanks to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Since the summer of 2022, there has been less anxiety that Russia will resort to nuclear weapons to turn around its deteriorating situation in Ukraine, but escalation is still a cause for concern. The Putin administration's stability may be threatened by Russia's inability to advance, leading Moscow to consider a risky escalation. Although unlikely, an expansion of the war to NATO is still a possibility, and Kyiv may take hazardous measures of its own to break the impasse. The Biden administration and its European allies have shown extreme caution when it comes to the risks of escalation, but either Kiev or Moscow may decide to accept the risk of a bigger fight, which may turn into World War III (Farley).

In short, Russia has heavily relied on nuclear threats to carry out its invasion of Ukraine, turning the conflict into a grave nuclear crisis with significant ramifications for the international nuclear order and its two pillars of nuclear deterrence and nuclear restraint. It is clear that these two interconnected systems, each of which attempts to restrict nuclear possession and reduce the risk of nuclear use, are adversarial and complementary to one another. Although there have always been tensions between these systems, the war in Ukraine has made them worse than ever before. While the system of restraint is undercut by showing what occurs to a country not protected by nuclear deterrent, the system of nuclear deterrence appears to be proving its value by compelling Russia and NATO to exercise caution. Given Ukraine's 1994 decision to forego a nuclear option in return for security guarantees from nuclear nations, the latter lesson is especially striking. Beyond what is explicitly stated in its nuclear strategy, Russia uses nuclear threats to facilitate escalation and raises the possibility of using nuclear weapons tactically against Ukraine. Thus, the outcome of the conflict in Ukraine will be crucial in determining the role that nuclear weapons will play in the

architecture of global security and in resolving the conflict between deterrence and restraint systems (Budjeryn).

In summary, Russia's use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic effects on the Ukraine, the surrounding countries, and maybe the entire world. Russia's nuclear signals and coercion have significantly damaged the international security order. Nuclear weapons are the most potent deterrent currently in use.

Conclusion

Since World War II, there has never been a security crisis of the scale of that caused by Russia's unjustified war of aggression. And there is still no sign of a resolution. In addition, since the Cuban Missile Crisis, the world has never been this near to nuclear war, and Russian President Vladimir Putin's war of choice has cast doubt on the future of East-West arms control talks and global attempts to stem the spread of nuclear weapons.

A lot is on the line in this conflict, which goes beyond Ukraine's survival as an independent state. Russia has challenged many of the fundamental principles of the international order on which European and global security have long been based—principles like respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, no changing of borders by force, and freedom for nations to choose their security arrangements, including treaties of alliance.

Putin has shown a troubling willingness to breach the nuclear use taboo that has been in place since 1945, damaging strategic stability and undermining the nuclear nonproliferation framework. He has threatened to use nuclear weapons to further his goals. As a result of Russia's most recent choices to suspend adherence to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and station nuclear weapons in Belarus, there may be an increase in nuclear hazards.

Russian nuclear saber-rattling has been successful in limiting the types and quantities of conventional weaponry that the US and its allies have sent to Ukraine, even if Russia has not yet carried out its nuclear threats. For as long as it takes, the US and its allies will back Ukraine, hoping to deter or stop Russia from escalating the conflict, especially to a nuclear level. Self-control has, however, frequently resulted in increased Russian aggression, as shown in recent strikes on vital civilian infrastructure and the power networks in Ukraine.

While the United States and its allies must carefully manage the risks of a nuclear escalation, the US's top priority must be to defeat Putin, restore Ukrainian sovereignty, and uphold the rules-based system.

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