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8 MAI 1945 University/ Guelma

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Department of Letters and English Language

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كلية الآداب واللغات

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**U.S. Foreign Policy and the Legacy of the Cold War: Understanding the
Roots of the Russian-Ukraine War 2022**

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Anglophone Language, Literatures,
and Civilizations

Board of Examiners

President: Dr.Mlili Amina	(MCB)	8 Mai 1945 University- Guelma
Supervisor: Dr. ALI ZOUÏ Mahfoud	(MCB)	8 Mai 1945 University- Guelma
Examiner: Dr. ATY Mourad	(MCB)	8 Mai 1945 University- Guelma

Submitted by:

KHALDI Chaima

MENAIA Ahlem

Supervisor:

Mr. ALI ZOUÏ Mahfoud

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Dedication

The journey was not short, nor should it be. The dream was not close, nor was the road fraught with facilities, but I did it. I dedicate my graduation to the one whose name I carry with pride, to the one who reaped the thorns from my path to pave the path of knowledge to my “dear father”.

After the grace of God, what I am in is due to my father, the man who did not get even a fraction of what we got, and the man who strived all his life to be better than he did. To the invisible hand that removed the thorns from my path, and who bore every moment of pain I passed through and supported me in my weakness and frailty, “my beloved mother.” To my brothers Duha and Anis, and to the companions of the years, and to everyone who was a helper and supporter on this path. I am grateful to all of you, especially to the sister, besties and friend Racha, Fadwa and Sounds, to Hadil, Wiam and Yasmine. I would not have arrived without your grace after God.

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Dedication

This research paper is sincerely dedicated to my supportive parents who encouraged and inspired me in conducting this study. They have never let my side throughout the process and gave me strength and hope when I thought of giving this up. They provided me a great sense of enthusiasm; and perseverance in continuing this, without their love and assistance. This research would not have been more possible.

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Abstract

Since the independence of Ukraine in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States and its European allies made it a priority to incorporate this strategic country into the Western alliance and common military defense. This caused a long and tense dispute with Russia which resisted the increasing US influence in the region and considered Ukraine as its unique natural sphere of influence. The insistence of Ukraine on joining the NATO in 2004, made things more complicated. The tension between the US-led western block and Russia reached its peak when Russia started a large military operation in Ukraine in February 2022.

This dissertation traces the roots of this 2022 Russia-Ukraine war to the time of the Cold War conflict and the disintegration of the Soviet Union with a focus on the US policy regarding the tension over Ukraine.

ملخص

منذ استقلال أوكرانيا في عام 1991 بعد انهيار الاتحاد السوفيتي، جعلت الولايات المتحدة وحلفاؤها الأوروبيون من أولوياتها دمج هذا البلد الاستراتيجي في التحالف الغربي والدفاع العسكري المشترك. تسبب هذا في نزاع طويل ومتوتر مع روسيا التي قاومت النفوذ الأمريكي المتزايد في المنطقة واعتبرت أوكرانيا مجال نفوذها الطبيعي الفريد. زاد إصرار أوكرانيا على الانضمام إلى حلف الناتو الأمور أكثر تعقيداً. بلغ التوتر بين الكتلة الغربية بقيادة الولايات المتحدة وروسيا ذروته عندما بدأت روسيا عملية عسكرية كبيرة في أوكرانيا في فبراير 2022. هذه الأطروحة تتبع جذور هذه الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية في عام 2022 إلى زمن نزاع الحرب الباردة وتفكك الاتحاد السوفيتي مع التركيز على سياسة الولايات المتحدة فيما يتعلق بالتوتر حول أوكرانيا.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

9/11	The September 11 th Attacks
AFB	Air Force Base
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DC	Direct Current
DOD	Department Of Defense
EU	European Union
G7	Group of seven
G8	Group of Eight
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MIRV	Multiple Independently targetable Reentry Vehicle
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
SWIFT	The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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General Introduction

The end of the Cold War conflict in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union did not put an end to polarization and tense rivalry between Russia and the U.S-led Western block. In fact, the many unsettled issues and disputes and the imposed defector situation in some previous republics of the USSR made the relative stability after the war fragile.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of 15 independent states, including Ukraine, which got the attention of the world due to its strategic location between Russia and the European Union. This positioning, combined with its rich natural resources, has made Ukraine a focal point of competition between regional powers throughout history.

Since the independence of Ukraine in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United State and its European allies made it a priority to incorporate this strategic country into the western alliance and common military defense. This caused a long and tense dispute with Russia which resisted the increasing U.S. influence in the region and considered Ukraine as its unique natural sphere of influence.

The insistence of Ukraine on joining the NATO made things more complicated. The tension between the U.S-led western block and Russia reached its peak when Russia started a large military operation in Ukraine in February 2022. This thesis traces the roots of this 2022 Russia-Ukraine war to the time of the Cold War conflict and the disintegration of the Soviet Union with a focus on the U.S. policy regarding the tension over Ukraine.

Following World War II, Ukraine experienced significant changes that shaped its political and economic landscape. As the direct successor state to the USSR, Ukraine saw its influence within the Soviet Union increase, borders expand, and population demographics shift. The Soviet government and the Ukrainian people were forced to adapt to these profound transformations. During this time, there was a perception in the United States that the Soviets

were planning war, leading to a climate of conspiracy and suspicion. It was believed that supporting Ukrainian nationalist rebels could undermine Soviet control and serve American military aims. The Yalta Conference played a crucial role in defining Ukraine's borders, with Stalin securing the use of the Curzon line as Poland's eastern border, effectively keeping Ukrainian lands within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

Despite this, Ukraine became a founding member of the UN when it joined in 1945 as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, establishing itself as a distinct global entity. However, the post-war era brought a division of influence, as seen in the split between East and West at the Potsdam Conference. Although a dictator, Stalin's administration created a region with a strong Ukrainian national identity. Overall, Ukraine's journey post-World War II was marked by significant changes, geopolitical complexities, and the establishment of its own distinct identity.

On December 1991, Ukraine took independence and the United-States officially recognized it, and began to court it with various strategies and policies. Meanwhile, Russia wanted Ukraine to be in a state of instability to keep it away from the West and has had a firm stance against the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO. Russian contentions against NATO extension have rotated around two statements; first, that western powers gave a pledge that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe, and besides, that the west tried to 'drag' Ukraine into NATO.

The Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 can be understood as a result of the legacy of the Cold War and the complex dynamics between Russia, Ukraine, the European Union, and the United States. The economic development and aspirations of Ukraine, along with Russia's concerns about its influence and leadership, contributed to tensions. The actions of the U.S. government under President Joe Biden, which crossed previous red lines, played a role in escalating the conflict.

Hence, the conflict in Ukraine is a result of a complex interplay of various factors and interests. Russia's invasion can be attributed to several motivations, including the desire to protect Russian-speaking populations, concerns over NATO expansion, and a perceived threat to Russia's sphere of influence. This raises the question of whether Western actions, such as NATO expansion and promoting positive relations with Ukraine, may have played a role in escalating tensions. Overall, the complexity of the conflict emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of the various factors at play. It suggests that multiple actors and decisions have contributed to the situation and that analyzing the conflict requires considering historical, political, and geopolitical dynamics.

To underscore the importance of this study, it is crucial to acknowledge that the topic of U.S. foreign policy and the legacy of the Cold War, along with its main challenges, has generated significant discourse beyond the existing literature review. In addition to the extensive academic works dedicated to this subject, it is worth noting that experts, journalists, and politicians have actively engaged in discussions, offering diverse perspectives and opinions. Surrounding the efficacy and implications of U.S. foreign policy, with both proponents and critics expressing their views.

Multiple books and articles have tackled the U.S. foreign policy toward Ukraine crisis. Angela E. Stent, professor of government and foreign services and director of the Centre for Eurasian, Russian, and East European studies at Georgetown University; in her book *the Limits of Partnership* highlight the US-Russian relations from the 1990s to the early 2010s. Moreover, she highlights the complex and evolving nature of the relationship, characterized by periods of cooperation, tension, and competition.

Despite the historical and strategic dimensions of the U.S-Russian relations, both countries have common interests in areas such as nuclear safety and security, counterterrorism, and space exploration. Also, the Clinton administration focused on assisting Russia's post-

communist transition and defining its new international role. However, the expectations of re-establishing a strong partnership were not fully realized.

Likewise, in his book *the Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy*, Strobe Talbott, who was Washington's chief expert on Russia, highlights the positive personal diplomacy between Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. This diplomatic relationship, combined with Vice President Al Gore's communication with Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin, led to significant agreements resolving and alleviating disputes between Russia and the post-Cold War world.

These agreements included halting the sale of Russian rocket parts to India, removing Soviet-era nuclear missiles from Ukraine, withdrawing Russian troops from the Baltic states, establishing cooperation between Russia and NATO, paving the way for Baltic states to join NATO, and involving Russia in Balkan peacekeeping efforts. However, the relationship between Yeltsin and subsequent U.S. administrations deteriorated after 1997, and certain arms control agreements, like START II, were never implemented and eventually abandoned.

Along with these books, there are also newspapers articles containing news and details related to America Foreign Policy towards Russia and Ukraine such as Anthony Ramicone and Steven Woehrel, in their paper "The Ukrainian Crisis: A disputed Past and Present". They examine the Ukrainian crisis from various angles. Ramicone and his colleagues focused on the removal of the old regime, the unrest in Ukraine, the Crimean crisis, and the complex relationship between Russia and Ukraine. Woehrel, on the other hand, explores the historical competition between the United States and Russia and analyzes U.S. Foreign Policy reactions to the annexation of Crimea. Collectively, these sources provide insights into the multifaceted dynamics of the Ukrainian crisis and the involvement of different actors.

Besides, the U.S. political scientist John Mearsheimer has been one of the most famous critics of American Foreign Policy since the end of the Cold War. He argues that Western intervention and NATO expansion towards the East have heightened the potential for conflict and contributed to Putin's assertive stance. The famous political scientist Stephen Walt also predicted that an assertive Foreign Policy by the United States and the West could provoke Russia into invading Ukraine.

The Ukrainian crisis, while originating as an internal issue influenced by external factors, has had significant repercussions on both U.S-Russian relations and European Union countries. This research aims to highlight the foreign policy approach under Joe Biden's administration towards Ukraine and the legacy of the cold war. It examines how historical patterns are repeating themselves and the impact of foreign policy in Russia's occupation of Ukraine, which poses an existential threat that politicians should consider. These circumstances have the potential to ignite another cold war, which is highly undesirable.

The main aim of this research is to find answers to the following questions: Why did Vladimir Putin invade Ukraine? How did 2022 Ukrainian war start and how it relates to the legacy of the Cold War? What was the role of America in this conflict? What was the Russian justification of the war? Could this have been avoided? Is the legacy of the cold war ignited again, and are we witnessing a repetition of history?

For a better understanding of the topic, this dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter entitled "A Historical Background", briefly explains history of Russian and U.S. relations and analyses the major historical and political events, and the importance of Ukraine's geopolitical location and its relation with the U.S. before it became an independent state.

Post-Cold War Development and The U.S. Role, is the second chapter title which briefly explains the U.S. Foreign Policy and the actions taken towards Ukraine since independence and how the U.S. tried to pull it to the Western block. Moreover, it sheds light on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict over Crimea and Ukraine attempting to join NATO.

The third chapter “The Renewal of Hostilities and the 2022 War” looks into the circumstances of the 2022 conflict and searches for the complicated origins of this conflict and traces it back to the Cold War era focusing on the impact of U.S. Foreign Policy in the post- Cold-War era.

The research necessitates the utilization of historical analysis to comprehensively explore the various dimensions of the phenomenon under study and track the evolution of events over time. Additionally, a geopolitical analysis is essential due to the topic's inherent nature, which is influenced by the interplay between political motives, dynamics, and geographic location; Ukraine's strategic position as a key country. Moreover, the research employs descriptive and qualitative approaches to examine foreign policy priorities on a global scale, with a specific focus on Ukraine.

Chapter one

A Historical Background

The dissolution of the Soviet Union signaled the end of the legal existence of the (USSR), and that disintegration occurred in December 1991, following the issuance of the Supreme Soviet Council Declaration number (142-H), in which it declared recognition of the independence of the former Soviet republics and the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States to replace the Soviet Union.

As a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, fifteen independent states emerged, including Ukraine which was not expected to emerge for the rest of the world in general and for the United States of America in particular; With its independence, it emerged by its strategic location, which made it a double-edged sword, linking two great powers, Russia and the European Union, which is an ally of the United States of America. As a result of its location and abundance of natural resources, it has been the subject of competition between regional powers for centuries.

1.1. History of U.S-Russia Relations

The U.S-Russian relations have always been important in the international arena, because of the historical and strategic dimensions they represent, and they are not calm and depend on tension and attraction between them. But despite this, both have common interests in nuclear safety and security, counterterrorism, and space exploration. At first it was a relationship of interests, then it developed and changed with the events and the development of time until it became a propaganda relationship represented in the Cold War and its conflict.

Angela E. Stent, professor of government and foreign services and director of the Centre for Eurasian, Russian, and East European studies at Georgetown University, in her book *The Limits of Partnership* stated that Bill Clinton declared that what was happening in Russia was « The biggest and toughest thing out there. It's not just the end of communism, the end of the cold war. That's what's over and done with. There's also stuff starting stuff that's new. Figuring out what it is, how we work with it, how we keep it moving in the right direction: that's what we've got to do” (qtd.in Angela).

In fact, during the Clinton administration's eight years in office, assisting Russia's post-communist transition and defining its new international role consumed a large portion of its foreign policy efforts. U.S.-Russian ties were eventually defined by the close and frequently tumultuous personal relationships between the American and Russian leaders. In what became the second and more ambitious reset since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Clinton administration first created great expectations about re-establishing the U.S.-Russian relationship. But by the end of Clinton's two terms, these hopes had not been realized. They most likely could not have existed. It soon became apparent that the collaboration was at best a selective one in which competition and cooperation coexisted in varying degrees. Russia would not develop into a Western-style democracy, regardless of what transpired, and American influence on Russia's internal development would be limited (Angela13).

Moreover, this relationship faced more challenges than difficulties. One major challenge for America and Russia in the 1990s was dealing with their different visions of the post-Soviet space. The United States consistently supported the independence and sovereignty of the countries in the area that, for the first decade, it referred to as the Newly Independent States. It refused to recognize the Commonwealth of Independent States because it viewed

the organization as a Russian attempt to continue to exercise undue influence in its neighborhood.

Immediately after the Soviet collapse, as already noted, it dispatched officials to open embassies in every new state, which no other Western country had the resources to do. Because a number of these countries had had independence thrust upon them, they were eager for advice on how to set up their own constitutions and solicited American assistance. The United States insisted that Russia had no right to a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space. The Russian view, even during the early 1990s, was that these countries were part of what they dubbed the "near abroad," as opposed to real foreign countries that constituted the «far abroad," and that Russia had the right to a special relationship with them (Angela18).

In January 1993 Vladimir Lukin, the first post-soviet ambassador to the United States, said that relations between the former Soviet States and Russia "should be treated as identical to those between New York and New Jersey "(qtd.in Angela). Washington, however, was equally concerned about what may occur inside Russia, including the possibility of violence or starvation, the use of nuclear weapons, the transition to democracy, and other issues.

Clinton then concentrated on fostering his relationship with Yeltsin. Personal ties between Russian and American leaders have always been disproportionately important, given the existential challenges that the two nuclear superpowers faced and because of the absence of strong institutional ties between the countries. But the Yeltsin - Clinton relationship acquired an intensity and significance all its own, in part because of the outsized personalities of the two men (Angela19).

Strobe Talbott, who was Washington's chief expert on Russia in his book *the Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy*, has argued that Clinton hit it off with Russian

Boris Yeltsin, the president of Russia 1991-1999: The personal diplomacy between Clinton and Yeltsin, augmented by the channel that Gore developed with Yeltsin's longest-serving prime minister, Victor Chernomyrdin, yielded half a dozen major understandings that either resolved or alleviated disputes over Russia's role in the post-cold war world. The two presidents were the negotiators in chief of agreements to halt the sale of Russian rocket parts to India; remove Soviet-era nuclear missiles from Ukraine in exchange for Russian assurances of Ukraine's sovereignty and security; withdraw Russian troops from the Baltic states; institutionalize cooperation between Russia and an expanding NATO; lay the ground for the Baltic states to join the alliance; and ensure the participation of the Russian military in Balkan peacekeeping and of Russian diplomacy in the settlement of NATO's air war against Serbia. (9)

The Russian commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces, Gen. Col. Igor Sergeyev, visited U.S. military locations the week of November 28, 1993. Lt. Gen. Dirk Jameson, the 20th Air Force Commander at F.E. Warren Air Force Base and in charge of the United States' intercontinental ballistic forces, took him on a tour of military locations in South Dakota, including a de-activating launch facility and a deactivated launch control center. «So, they are able to see what we are doing as far as downsizing our ICBM force firsthand", said Col. Roscoe Moulthrop, 44th Missile Wing Commander at Ellsworth AFB. "They are trying to do pretty much the same thing."

On December 1, 1993, 125 missiles were decommissioned. The beginning of relations between Yeltsin and the administrations of George W Bush (1989-1993) and Bill Clinton (1993-2001) was good, but deteriorated after 1997. Meanwhile, Andrey Kozyrev, Yeltsin's foreign minister Both countries signed the START II arms control treaty in 1993, which prohibited the use of multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) on

intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Although both countries ratified the deal, it was never implemented and was formally abandoned in 2002, following the United States' withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile deal (Storbe189-213).

However, by 2002, the two countries' disputes had escalated. Russia became more active in international affairs, while George W. Bush pursued a more unilateral foreign policy (Angela 62-81). In order to move on with plans for a missile defense system, the United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002. Putin described the choice as a blunder. Russia strongly opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but did not use its veto power in the UN Security Council. Russia has viewed NATO's expansion into the former Soviet Union, as well as U.S. ambitions to secure access to Central Asian oil and natural gas, as potentially hostile encroachments on Russia's sphere of influence. Russian officials were implicated by the Russian government for instigating anti-Russian revolts during the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003 and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004. Putin observed encroachment into Russia's ancient domain (Angela 82-134).

Despite Russia's objections to NATO's further eastward expansion, President George W. Bush vowed full support for admitting Ukraine and Georgia to NATO in early 2008. Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, Grigory Karasin, warned that admitting Ukraine to NATO will result in a "deep crisis" in Russia-Ukraine relations, as well as a severe impact on Russia's relations with the 6 West ("George W. Bush").

In the same year, Russia declared Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia, saying that "expect the UN mission and NATO-led forces in Kosovo to take immediate action to carry out their mandate [...] including the annulling of the decisions of Pristina's self-governing organs and the taking of tough administrative measures against them"("In Quotes"). Whereas, Russian President Putin described the recognition of the

independence of Kosovo by the United States and other Western countries as "a terrible precedent, which will de facto blow apart the whole system of international relations, developed not over decades, but over centuries", and that "they have not thought through the results of what they are doing. At the end of the day, it is a two-ended stick and the second end will come back and hit them in the face"("Putin calls"). And of course, Russia in March 2014 used this declaration as a justification to recognize the independence of Crimea, citing the so-called "Kosovo independence precedent"(Ilya).

The United States revealed intentions in March 2007 to establish an anti-ballistic missile defense site in Poland as well as a radar station in the Czech Republic. Both countries were former Warsaw Pact members who had rejected Communism and Russian meddling. According to U.S. officials, the system was designed to safeguard the U.S. and Europe against possible nuclear missile assaults by Iran or North Korea. Russia, on the other hand, saw the new system as a possible threat and, in response, tested the RS-24, a long-range intercontinental ballistic missile that it claimed could destroy any defense system (Gottemoeller).

Putin warned the United States that the heightened tensions might transform Europe into a ticking time bomb. Putin warned on June 3, 2007, that if the US developed the missile defense system, Russia would consider directing missiles towards Poland and the Czech Republic. months later, Vladimir Putin paid a visit to Iran 7 to discuss Russia's assistance to Iran's nuclear program and "insisted that the use of force was unacceptable"(Halpin).

On October 17, Bush said, "if you're interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon, «which was seen as a message to Putin ("White House"). A week later, Putin linked US plans to build a missile defense system near Russia's border to the Soviet

Union's deployment of missiles in Cuba, which triggered the Cuban Missile Crisis (Kressaty et al).

Russia declared in July 2008 that if the United States erected an anti-missile shield near its border, it would have to respond militarily. "If an American strategic anti-missile shield begins to be deployed near our borders, we will be forced to respond not diplomatically, but with military-technical means," the Russian foreign ministry said. Later, Russia's UN envoy, Vitaly Churkin, stated that "military-technical means" did not imply military action, but rather a shift in Russia's strategic posture, possibly by redeploying its own missiles. In the same year months after When Russia and Georgia fought a five-day war over the Russian-backed self-proclaimed republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, bilateral relations between the U.S. and Russia grew even more tense ("Russia Warns"). Tensions continued to rise, even during Putin's third term (2012-2015).

In May 2012 Russian general Nikolay Yegorovich Makarov stated that a preemptive strike on missile defense systems in Eastern Europe may be used to put pressure on the US over Russia's demands ("Russia's Military"). Almost a month later, NORAD fighters intercepted two Tu-95 Bears in the air defense zone off the coast of Alaska, where they may have been training, hitting Fort Greely and Vandenberg Air Force Base (Gertz). Later on, in August a submarine of the Akula class was discovered to have performed a patrol in the Gulf of Mexico without being noticed, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the U.S. Navy's anti-submarine warfare capabilities ("Silent Running"). Again, in the same year, months later The Magnitsky Act, which "[imposed] U.S. travel and financial restrictions on human rights abusers in Russia," was signed by U.S. President Barack Obama.

Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, enacted a law on December 28, 2012, that forbade any citizen of the United States from adopting children from Russia (Staff). The United States and Russia concluded an agreement in mid-September 2013 that the Syrian chemical weapons will be placed under international control and eventually destroyed; The accord that was shortly after included in UNSC Resolution 2118 was warmly received by President Obama. The Obama administration came under fire for using the chemical weapons agreement as an ineffective stand-in for the military response that Obama had vowed in the event that the Syrian government deployed chemical weapons (Lewis).

In an interview with David Gregory of NBC's Meet the Press; According to George Robertson and many others, Obama's inability to fulfill his 2013 "red line" and take the threatened military action seriously damaged both his and the United States' credibility with Putin and other international leaders. Moreover, the Edward Snowden case, and because of the political asylum he obtained from Russia in 2013, exacerbated tensions between the two countries and also led to the cancellation of a meeting between Obama and Putin, which was scheduled to take place in early September 2013 at the Moscow headquarters (Raf).

Viktor Yanukovich's government in Ukraine was overthrown in February 2014, and on the basis of a contentious referendum held on March 16, 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. The United States had proposed a UN Security Council resolution that would have ruled the referendum unconstitutional; on March 15, Russia vetoed it, China abstained, and the other 13 Security 9 Council members supported the measure. Former high Ukrainian officials from the Yanukovich administration testified in court in Moscow in 2016 that they believed the fall of the government was the result of a coup d'état planned and supported by the U.S. government (tojsiab).

George Friedman, head of Stratfor, denies the allegation that he agreed that this was the «most blatant coup in history," which the Russian publication Kommersant claims was taken out of context (Friedman). In early March 2014, responding to press queries on Russia's moves in Crimea, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry stated, "This is an act of aggression that is completely trumped up in terms of its pretext. It's really 19th century behavior in the 21st century, and there is no way, to start with, that if Russia persists in this, that the G8 countries are going to assemble in Sochi. That's a starter"(David).

The United States and its partners in the G8 political forum terminated Russia's membership on March 24, 2014(Smale and Shear). Russia dismissed the judgment as insignificant and U.S. President Barack Obama ruled out any Western military engagement in Ukraine at the end of March 2014 (Staff).

Trump admitted that Russia's takeover of Crimea would be difficult to reverse; however, he characterized Russia as a "regional power" that did not pose a significant security danger to the United States. When asked about Obama's statement in January 2016, Putin stated, "I think that speculations about other countries, an attempt to speak disrespectfully about other countries is an attempt to prove one's exceptionalism by contrast in my view, that is a misguided position" (Tyushka).

The Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 was passed by the United States towards the end of 2014, and targeted at denying specific Russian state enterprises of Western money and technology while simultaneously sending \$350 million in armaments and military equipment to Ukraine, and the application of yet another round of sanctions by the US president's executive order (Baker). Moreover, Relations between Russia and the U.S, which condemned Russia's actions, were at their lowest point since the Cold War's conclusion in 2014 as a result of the crisis in Ukraine (Koren).

Added to that when Joe Biden was vice president, he pushed the Ukrainian government to stop importing Russian natural gas and to get rid of pro-Russian intermediaries like Dmitry Firtash from the nation's natural gas industry (Baker).

Due to several reasons, and the past events and decisions taken in the past periods by both sides, it seems that the situation has not and will not stabilize between the United States and Russia, and it seems that there is a new era of conflicts, conflicts and skirmishes coming, or rather that it did not end in the first place in order to start again.

1.2. U.S. Relations with Ukraine before its Independence

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic's direct successor state is Ukraine. This state was different from what it had been before the Second World War. Its influence on Soviet politics and economy increased, its borders were significantly widened, and the population makeup of the nation changed. The Ukrainians and the Soviet government were forced to adapt to the extreme change. Harry Rositzke, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) station chief in Munich, describes: “Everyone thought the Soviets were plotting war and that we had to have an early warning of their plans if we were to surviveIt was conspiracy-time in Washington, and the CIA took the brunt of it” (qtd. in Burds 8).

The environment of the time suggested that the United States had changed its strategy to back Ukrainian nationalist rebels in order to undermine Soviet control. As a result, it was envisioned that the latter would support American military aims aimed at weakening the Soviet Union's situation while also serving as American intelligence's eyes and ears. One of several strategies used in a clandestine campaign against Stalin had the stated purpose of using nationalist insurgents (Burds 9-10).

Paul Robert Magocsi, an American professor of history, political science, and Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, in his book *A History of Ukraine the Land and Its Peoples* Points out that Stalin was adamant that the Soviet frontiers be extended westward to include regions gained during the German and Soviet takeover of Poland at the start of the Second World War as well as territories obtained from north to south. The previously independent nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the Karelian region of Finland, the northern Bukovina and Bessarabia that had been in Romania, and the Belarussian and Ukrainian provinces that had been a part of Poland were among these territories. The first summit meeting between Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill took place in Teheran from November 28 to December 2, 1943, and Stalin was able to secure their support for his demands (685).

In terms of Ukraine, the three Heads of State agreed to the new Soviet-Polish border at the Yalta Conference, where Stalin managed to secure the use of the Curzon line as Poland's eastern border, keeping all of the Ukrainian and Belorussian lands within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence ("The Cold War (1945–1989)" 5). The agreement and cooperation came to an end during this time. The perspectives of the three Great Powers had not yet diverged. The USSR agreed to the U.S.'s declaration of war against Japan, which provided Roosevelt with the opportunity to carry out his plan to establish the UN on April 25, 1945 (5).

Ukraine afterwards joined that body's international organizations as a founding member. Ukraine also established itself as a distinct entity on the global scene (Magocsi 695). At Potsdam, however, the globe was split into two zones of influence, each of which sought to prepare for the post-war era (Kramer 19). This became evident in the middle of 1947 when East European nations were prohibited from accepting Marshall Plan help (19).

On the one hand, the rebuilding of heavy industry was the focus of a single objective during the fourth five-year plan (1946–1955), and by 1950, the state's industrial output had surpassed prewar levels (Cook 1279). However, during the fifth five-year plan (1950–1955), the government was able to make such a significant improvement by canceling foreign investment and reducing consumption (Yekelchyk 202). Because of a lack of investment, ineffective collectivization², and adverse meteorological conditions like a terrible drought in 1946 and a famine in 1947, agriculture grew more slowly than industry (Yekelchyk202).

Despite being a dictator who was assassinated, Stalin is regarded as the founder of modern-day Ukraine. During Stalin's administration, a region with a strong Ukrainian national identity was created (Kotkinov). Stalin told the 10th Party Congress: “Clearly, the Ukrainian nation exists and the development of its culture is a duty of Communists” (qtd. in Kotkinov). Serhy Yekelchyk, a Ukrainian Canadian historian of Ukrainian and Russian history, adds that while the Ukrainians' old nationalist ambition of achieving the union of the Ukrainian territory did not materialize, the Stalinist unification did.

1.3. The U.S. Attempt to Court Ukraine in the Immediate Aftermath of Independence

After the Soviet Union fell apart in December 1991 and Ukraine became a sovereign nation, the United States of America upgraded its consulate in Kiev to an embassy on January 29, 1992, realizing the country's geopolitical importance ("Background Notes"). Informal relations between the United States of America and Ukraine date back to the early days of the Cold War when the Ukrainian independence movement cooperated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the Soviet Union and there was cooperation on the part of many ex-fascists. There were approximately 85 Ukrainian agents who were dropped in a covert operation over Soviet soil by the CIA in the early 1950s, who were supposed to

spark a nationalist uprising in the Ukrainian SSR. But the operation failed; however, two-thirds of the agents were arrested or killed on the spot. But the Americans did not realize the failure of the operation until years later (Michel).

For a very long time, Ukraine was ruled by foreign nations, primarily Poland and Russia. As a result, Ukraine is frequently regarded as an appendage to a larger state structure in historical works, such as the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, or the Soviet Union, rather than as a separate entity. For instance, it was usual for Russian or Polish historians writing in the nineteenth century to include all territories that were once a part of Russia or Poland in their respective national historical narratives. As a consequence, some regions, like Ukraine and Belarus, were referred to as countries without a history in many Russian, Polish, and later, Western-language accounts. Despite that, Ukraine became independent, and this was not expected for the rest of the world in general and for the United States of America in particular (Magocsi 12).

Following Ukraine's freedom, the United States of America began to court it with its policies. In fact, the United States of America and independent Ukraine had friendly and strategic ties, and the success of Ukraine's transition to democracy and a thriving market economy was highly important to the United States of America (subtelny600).

The Ukrainian government started taking action in the fall of 1999 to revive economic reform that had been stalled for years due to a lack of a reform majority in the Ukrainian parliament soon after a period of economic decline shaped by high inflation and a continued reliance on state controls. The U.S. government welcomes the Ukrainian government's declaration that it is determined to carry out comprehensive economic reform, and the U.S. is dedicated to helping Ukraine stay on this course. When the U.S. government declared in September 2002 that it had verified a recording of President Leonid Kuchma's July 2000

order to transfer a Kolchuga early warning system to Iraq, bilateral relations took a hit. The move was untrue, according to the Ukrainian government. Ukraine and the United States now work together more closely and have an open conversation thanks to the democratic Orange Revolution in Ukraine (Andrew5-6).

The major goal of U.S. policy continues to be the realization and strengthening of a democratic, prosperous nation. Since independence, the United States has provided more than \$3 billion in aid. The goal of American aid to Ukraine is to advance political and economic change and to meet immediate humanitarian needs. The U.S. has continuously supported Ukraine's move toward establishing a free society and a thriving market economy (Subtelny600).

This is further confirmed by the United States' declaration of support for Ukraine's bid to join NATO in 2009. In meetings with other diplomats, American diplomats have consistently defended Ukrainian sovereignty, according to documents found during leaks of U.S. diplomatic cables in 2010(Bandera). But without neglecting not to mention the differences that occurred during the history of relations between the United States of America and Ukraine, such as the disagreement of the first of August 1991, which was during the Ukrainian independence movement, where then-US President George H.W. Bush gave the worst speech ever by an American CEO. In addition to that, the letter of the Crimean parliament on February 18, 2009, which he sent to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the President of Ukraine; in which he stated that it was inappropriate to open a representative office of the United States in Crimea and urged the Ukrainian leadership to abandon this idea. The letter was passed after he sent it. To the President of the United Nations General Assembly by 77 votes to 9 in a roll call, with 1 abstention. Without forgetting that the United

States maintains an embassy in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, and Ukraine maintains an embassy in the American capital, Washington, DC.

To round up, the unique strategic location of Ukraine between the continents of Asia and Europe, despite its rich resources, is one of the reasons for its exposure to many forms of occupation throughout its history, in addition to its natural resources. This made it the focus of attention of many countries. Despite all these advantages, it was reflected in a negative way. And its people, who were dreaming of a united nation and people, and more than that, should live in peace, but because of the current events in Ukraine, it turned out that this dream of theirs is far from being reached.

Chapter Two

Post-Cold War Developments and the US Role

Since the beginning of its foreign policy, the United States has had a considerable impact on the world and international relations. World War II, the Cold War, and the 9/11 attacks are just a few examples of historical events that have influenced US foreign policy. These events also determined the early U.S. foreign policy's goal, which was to build the country's economic and territorial interests. To accomplish its foreign policy goals, the U.S. has taken part in a number of multilateral organizations, including the UN, NATO, and the World Trade Organization.

These organizations were impacted by many domestic forces, including public opinion, interest groups, and presidential leadership. U.S. foreign policy is significantly influenced by public opinion, particularly when it comes to matters like wars and humanitarian operations. The military-industrial complex has influenced U.S. foreign policy decisions by advocating for defense spending and security measures.

2.1. Post- Independence US Relations with Ukraine

The US-Ukraine relations have always been prominent and important. The United States officially recognized the independence of Ukraine on December 25, 1991. The United States improved its consulate in the capital, Kyiv to embassy status on January 21, 1992. After Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union, diplomatic ties between the two countries were established. The success of Ukraine's transition to a modern democratic state with a flourishing market economy is very important to the United States. U.S. strategy is fixated on understanding and fortifying a majority rule, prosperous, and secures Ukraine

all the more firmly coordinated into Europe and Euro-Atlantic designs. The importance of the relationship between the United States and Ukraine is emphasized in the U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, which outlines expanded cooperation in areas such as energy security, democracy, energy security, economics and trade, and cultural exchanges. It also emphasizes the United States' ongoing commitment to bolstering Ukraine's engagement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Strategic Partnership Commission was established by the two nations to carry out one of the fundamental principles of the charter. ("Policy &History")

Former National Security Adviser; Brzezinski argued that a strong Ukraine would prevent the rise of a new Russian empire, strengthening regional and global security. Less usually mentioned are Brzezinski's 1994 assessment of Ukraine's vulnerability and his subsequent policy recommendations, which seem to have been adopted by succeeding U.S. administrations: American officials must acknowledge that Ukraine is on the precipice of collapse: the economy is in freefall, and Crimea is on the verge of an ethnic eruption that Russia is aiding. At the same time, there should be political guarantees from the U.S. about Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity.

With the signing of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the United States gave Ukraine "political assurances" not long after Brzezinski's piece was published. Twenty years later, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, U.S. officials have become more vocal about their support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders. . In 2019, U.S. relations with Ukraine became a prominent issue in U.S. domestic political affairs. In September 2019, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced that the House would begin an impeachment inquiry related in part to alleged presidential actions regarding Ukraine.

On December 18, 2019, the House of Representatives agreed to H.Res. The first article of impeachment in part accused the President of soliciting the Government of Ukraine to publicly announce investigations that would benefit his reelection, harm the election prospects of a political opponent, and influence the 2020 United States Presidential election to his advantage. The Biden Administration has sought to renew close relations with Ukraine, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken visiting Ukraine in May 2021 and Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm representing the administration at the Crimea Platform Summit in Kyiv in August 2021. (Cory Welt 26 27)

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2.2. Russia's Annexation of Crimea and the American Reactions (2014)

The Ukrainian Revolution was a significant step toward constructing a just state based on equitable wealth distribution and social justice; broke the Russian hold on this country, and the Ukrainian people finally achieved the true independence they had long desired. However, nothing is free, and Ukraine paid a high price for Putin's risky decision to annex Crimea.

The Russian annexation of the Crimea was the most seamless invasion in modern history because it ended before the outside world knew it had begun. Consultant for Defense and Security Studies Henrik Larsen viewed the invasion as a significant geopolitical rupture that violated Ukraine's 1994 Budapest Memorandum 1 promises to the other signatories regarding the country's territorial integrity as part of denuclearization. Russia was able to take control of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, which were hoping to join NATO or the EU. This made it impossible for these countries to do so unless they were willing to give up their separatist groups.(Larsen10.11)

The country became a situation in which the parliament was solely responsible for the government as a result of Yanukovich's departure along with key members of the government. These circumstances were ideal for Russia's invasion of Crimea and the subsequent military operations in Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia wanted Ukraine to be in a state of chaos and instability in order to keep it away from the West, keep it between a rock and a hard place where it was threatened with sanctions and war, and make Ukraine a "buffer state" between hybrid threats that made the crisis worse (Stepanenko and Pylynskyi 70). Toward the beginning of May, a local mandate was held in Donetsk and Luhansk requesting not to remain ward to Kiev. In addition, Moscow demonstrated its moral support but declined to offer any kind of military assistance (Trenin7).

It will be difficult for Ukraine to break free of its status as a "buffer state" because of the country's strategic location in East Central Europe and its history of being divided between the West and the East. Ukraine must pursue its national interests and demands to move further away from this false and outdated dichotomy in order to maintain its independence. On March 14, 2014, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov met in London to discuss the situation in Ukraine and attempt to halt the referendum in Crimea before it takes place as part of a series of talks aimed at showing support for Ukraine.

Russia was notified by the European Union and the United States that sanctions would be imposed on Moscow if the referendum went ahead. There was no peace plan to normalize the atmosphere in Crimea between the two negotiators, according to Western diplomats, who were skeptical of the talks. Kerry's proposition was to reaffirm U.S. support for Ukraine's regional honesty and dismissal of Russian addition of Crimea however the gathering demonstrated unproductive ("Ukraine emergency: Sergey Lavrov and John Kerry meet to discuss the vote on Crimea. The fact of the matter is that numerous European leaders have attempted to exert pressure on the Russian president, but the end result is that the crisis has become more complicated instead of leading to a diplomatic resolution.

On 16 March, an illegal mandate on freedom 2 was coordinated in Crimea, two days after individuals in the Dark Ocean promontory casted a ballot predominantly to withdraw from Ukraine for Russia and the consequences of the mandate made ready for Russia to add-on Crimea after a tactical mediation. Ukraine decided to keep its naval and military forces in Sevastopol to avoid bloodshed despite the significant loss and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea (Hedenskog 21-22). In addition, the White House stated that Obama "emphasized that Russia's actions were in violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial

integrity and that, in coordination with our European partners, we are prepared to impose additional costs on Russia for its actions" (qtd. in Walker and Harding).

The United States, in contrast to Moscow, did not conceal its political support for Kiev and gave the media ample coverage, particularly of the visits there by Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State John Kerry, and Director of Central Intelligence John Brennan and a group of U.S. officials. As a result, that was viewed by Russian media as a means of directing the actions of Ukrainian authorities. In an effort to control the situation in Ukraine, Putin and Obama had a phone conversation that led to zero-sum solutions. Putin was forced to accept the new circumstances when Petro Poroshenko 3, a major sponsor of the Maidan, won the presidential election on May 25, 2014 (Trenin 8). Russia's occupation and annexation of Crimea, as well as the overall chain of events that led to the crisis in Ukraine, surprised both the United States and its European allies (Larrabee, Wilson, and Gordon IV, p. 6).

Obama also "emphasized that Russia's actions were a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and that, in coordination with our European partners, we are prepared to impose additional costs on Russia for its actions," according to the White House (cited in Walker and Harding).

2.3. Ukraine's Bid to Join NATO (2020)

Since 2014, the Ukrainian government has prioritized closer integration with the EU and NATO. In 2019, a new constitutional amendment declared the government responsible for implementing Ukraine's "Strategic course" toward EU and NATO membership. The EU subsequently provided another €1.2 billion in loans to help "Limit the economic fallout" of the pandemic Ukraine also has close relations with NATO, which considers the NATO-

Ukraine relationship to be "One of the most substantial of NATO's partnerships." In 1994, Ukraine was the first post- Soviet state to join NATO's Partnership for Peace. Under ex-President Yanukovich, Ukraine adopted a non- bloc status, rejecting aspirations of NATO membership(*Ukraine25*).

In 2016, NATO endorsed a Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine "To implement security and defense sector reforms according to NATO standards." The CAP includes several trust fund projects "To support capability development and sustainable capacity-building in key areas." In June 2020, Ukraine became one of NATO's Enhanced Opportunity Partners, a cooperative status currently granted to six of NATO's close strategic partners. Ukraine supports NATO peacekeeping and maritime operations, and NATO's maritime Sea Guardian operation.

In recent years, the Ukrainian government has sought to deepen its relations with NATO. In 2017, Ukraine's parliament voted to make cooperation with NATO a foreign policy priority. Ukraine's 2020 National Security Strategy includes as a priority the development of a special partnership with NATO and the pursuit of NATO membership.

In 2021, President Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials called on NATO to grant Ukraine a Membership Action Plan, which they see as a stepping stone to membership. Closer integration with the EU and NATO does not appear to have enabled Ukraine to improve its near-term prospects for membership in these organizations(*Ukraine25*).

According to recent polls, more than half of Ukrainians support membership in the EU. The EU is unlikely to consider Ukraine a candidate for membership soon given Ukraine's domestic challenges, the conflict with Russia, the EU's own internal challenges, and the lack of support for further enlargement among many EU members Ukraine also faces a challenge to NATO membership. In 2008, NATO members formally agreed that Ukraine and Georgia would become members of NATO, but neither state has been granted a clear path to or

timeline for membership. Since 2014, about 40%-50% of opinion poll respondents support membership in NATO; these polls do not include occupied Crimea and Russia-controlled areas of eastern Ukraine, where support for NATO membership likely would be lower even in the absence of conflict(*Ukraine25*).

On 30 September 2022, Ukraine formally applied for NATO membership, with 69% of Ukrainians agreement (Ukraine-NATO Relations). Most notably, NATO membership would legally require allies to come to Ukraine's aid in case of attack - a prospect many won't broach. The result is that while Europe and the U.S. have plowed through one taboo after another since Russia invaded Ukraine in February - funneling mountains of lethal military equipment to Kyiv, slapping once unthinkable sanctions on Moscow, defecting from Russian energy - the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO remains the third rail of international politics. "Some very good friends of Ukraine are more afraid of a positive reply to Ukraine's bid for membership in NATO than of providing Ukraine with the most sophisticated weapons," said Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's foreign minister. "There are still many psychological barriers that we have to overcome" he told POLITICO in a recent interview. "The idea of membership is one of them." ("The West's").

Ukraine's leadership has argued that for all intents and purposes, it is already a member of the Western military alliance - and thus deserves a quick path to formal NATO membership. A number of Eastern allies are arguing for a closer political relationship between Ukraine and NATO, and they want a more concrete plan that sets the stage for membership. "My thinking is that it is basically unavoidable," said Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis, "That NATO will have to have a way to accept Ukraine." On the other end of the spectrum, France's Macron wants to take Moscow's perspective into account. "The ideal scenario would, of course, be a very simple sentence from NATO: 'OK,

we receive your application, we begin the process of considering it.' That would already be a major milestone achievement," said Kuleba, Ukraine's foreign minister, ahead of last week's meeting. Ukraine formally adopted a constitutional amendment in 2019 committing to pursue NATO membership. "If Ukraine is stuck in a stalemate, then NATO membership isn't gonna happen," said Max Bergmann, director of the Europe program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies ("The West's").

Anna Roininen holds a MA in International Relations & World Order from the University of Leicester and currently works as a Research Assistant Intern at the IIR; explains that the President Putin emphasized the humiliation Russia had suffered as a result of a series of hostile actions and broken promises by the West, including the eastward expansion of NATO, in his address on March 18, 2014, in which he justified the annexation of Crimea. The Kremlin views NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe as an anti-Russian project with the goal of encircling Russia and as the primary cause of the Ukraine crisis and the reemergence of tensions between Russia and the West(Anna).

Did NATO break its promises by provoking Russia's incursion into Ukraine? Russian contentions against NATO extension have rotated around two statements; first and foremost, that the section of previous Warsaw Settlement part states into NATO has disregarded a vow given by the Coalition before not to spread toward the east, and besides, that the West has tried to 'drag' Ukraine into NATO. But are these assertions accurate? The declaration that the West, first and foremost, has vowed to Russia not to grow NATO toward the east requires analyzing(Anna).

According to Russian officials, during the German reunification process in 1990, the governments of West Germany and the United States made a solemn promise to the Soviet Union that if the Soviet Union agreed to Germany's full NATO membership after the

country's reunification, NATO would not expand to include any other Eastern European states. While some commentators, such as Robert McNamara, James Blight, and Leon Sigal, contend that NATO violated its promise not to expand to the east, others, such as Mark Kramer and Michael Rühle, contend that NATO never made such assurances and that Russia's no-NATO-expansion pledge is nothing more than a myth that "perpetuates the false notion of Russian victimhood that provides Moscow with a convenient pretext to justify its policies." (Anna).

A promise not to expand NATO beyond Germany in 1990 is not recorded in writing. The content of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, which was signed in September 1990 by East Germany, West Germany, the USSR, France, and the UK, demonstrates that the negotiations on German reunification were solely focused on the future of the reunified Germany and did not include any discussion of the future composition of NATO, with the exception of in relation to eastern Germany. The only NATO commitment spelled out in the treaty was the provision; that stipulated that when reunified Germany joined the Alliance, the former East German territory would receive special military status, preventing the stationing of non-German NATO troops in eastern Germany(Anna).

The issue of NATO's expansion into additional Eastern European nations was not addressed in the treaty. James A. Baker who held the workplace of US Secretary of State in 1990 has rejected that he had the expectation to preclude the confirmation of new part states to NATO. In a 1997 phone interview with The New York Times, Mr. Baker noted that the West's insistence on integrating East Germany into NATO, "Thereby moving NATO eastward," defeats the entire claim of a no-NATO-expansion pledge. In a similar vein, Mikhail Gorbachev, who presided over the Soviet Union in 1990, has repeatedly denied that the issue of NATO expansion ever came up in the early 1990s (Anna).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that NATO leaders never promised not to include former Warsaw Pact nations in the Alliance. Second, it is necessary to investigate the assertion that the West has attempted to "drag" Ukraine into NATO. In his Foreign Affairs article titled "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," Realist scholar John J. Mearsheimer shares this viewpoint, stating that NATO expansion is "The central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West." NATO enrollment was a focal key objective of Ukraine during the Kuchma and Yushchenko organizations (Anna).

In May 2002, when the then-President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, publicly stated that Ukraine aimed to pursue NATO membership, Euro-Atlantic integration became Ukraine's first formal goal .At NATO's Bucharest Summit in April 2008, Viktor Yushchenko, who succeeded Kuchma as president in 2005, also made it clear that he wanted Ukraine to join NATO. He signed an application for NATO Membership Action Plan, then in an interview with the Times of London in November 2008, Mr. Yushchenko stated, "I am sure that the ball is not on the Ukrainian side of the field, Ukraine has done everything it had to do," emphasizing his commitment to enhancing NATO-Ukraine cooperation. We're committed to this speed. All the other things is an issue of political will of those partners who address NATO." At the Bucharest Summit, NATO decided not to provide Ukraine with a MAP because "questions still outstanding pertaining to MAP application." Ukraine, on the other hand, approached NATO. The organization of President Viktor Yanukovich that came to control in 2010 upset the favorable to Western strategies sought after by the first Yushchenko government(Anna).

In June 2010, the public authority of Viktor Yanukovich embraced a bill barring the objective of joining NATO from the country's public safety system and committing

Ukraine to a neutral strategy. In accordance with the wishes of the Ukrainian government, NATO continued to collaborate with Ukraine on reforms within the framework of the NATO Ukraine Commission. On his visit to Ukraine in February 2011 the then NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen focused on that NATO doesn't squeeze Ukraine to enlist in any military-political block and regards the country's non-associated status (Anna).

In conclusion, NATO's alleged equivocate and provocations are not the source of the crisis in Ukraine. Second, the evidence suggests that NATO has not pressured Ukraine into joining the Alliance. The Ukrainian side demanded closer cooperation between NATO and Ukraine during the Kuchma and Yushchenko administrations. When the Yanukovich administration decided in 2010 to exclude the goal of joining NATO from Ukraine's national security strategy, NATO respected that decision.

Chapter Three

The Renewal of Hostilities and the 2022 War

On February 24th, 2022, Russia declared what it called “special military operation” in Ukraine, this invasion caused some grand alliterations and changes internationally. Ukraine is a real concern for Russia because of the soviet dreams to be back like it was before. At first, they were just differences that raised some concern for the European Union without touching the comfort of the United States of America, recalling the decisions of The Ukrainian economic situation increased and developed in 2022, and this is what made it dream of surpassing the Russian neighbor and entering the negotiating line to join NATO until President Vladimir Putin’s decisions were manifested in increasing the number of military forces next to the Ukrainian border and forced with a huge military arsenal, which sounded the alarm in Europe and made the Western camp get out of its silence

This decision made the Russians take a step forward to fill the gaps to prevent the leakage of capitalism into the region and the loss of leadership and leadership economically and politically. On the other hand, the European Union and America or the West Pole expressed their happiness at Ukraine’s entry into the capitalist economic world, knowing that history is repeating itself and that these threats hint at a cold war that highlights an ideological struggle for capitalist or socialist control. What made the Russians get out of their line and break the red lines stipulated not to skip from previous decisions to new decisions from the U.S. government led by President Joe Biden.

3.1. The Russian Invasion

On February 24th, 2022, Russia launched a significant escalation of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War, which started in 2014, by invading parts of Ukraine. Prior to the invasion, Russian troops had amassed near Ukraine's borders, and Russian officials had repeatedly denied plans to attack Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a "special military operation" on this day to support the Russian-controlled breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, whose military forces had been engaged in the Donbas conflict with Ukraine. Putin stated that the objective was to "demilitarize" Ukraine. Putin expressed irredentist beliefs, disputed Ukraine's legitimacy as a sovereign state, and made unfounded accusations that the ethnic Russian minority was being persecuted by neo-Nazis in Ukraine. Shortly after, Russian airstrikes and a ground invasion were initiated from multiple fronts. Following the invasion, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared martial law and issued a general mobilization order in response to the Russian aggression (Chang-in).

The Russian invasion took place during an emergency meeting of the Security Council with the aim of defusing the crisis, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, had stated at the time: "Give peace a chance," Yet Russia invaded its neighbor Ukraine during Moscow's presidency of the Security Council for the month of February 2022, a country that enjoys veto power as one of the council's five permanent members". Ukraine requested the convening of an emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly, where the United Nations system does not allow resorting to the right of criticism - the veto, in which all countries enjoy equal representation. However, the decisions of the General Assembly are formal and remain non-binding ("It's Too Late").

The situation in Ukraine reveals the intricate dynamics of geopolitics, characterized by power imbalances and conflicting interests that often lead to conflicts. Geopolitical

interactions operate outside a universal set of rules, resembling an anarchic system where stronger nations can exploit weaker ones. The ongoing war in Ukraine is driven by various factors, including military adventurism and self-interested actions of leaders. However, it is important to approach this complex issue with a nuanced perspective, recognizing that geopolitical conflicts stem from multiple causes involving a multitude of actors. Political, economic, and historical factors have shaped the actions of both Ukraine and external powers involved in the conflict. While some leaders may exploit power imbalances, oversimplifying the motivations and circumstances surrounding the conflict would be misleading. It is crucial to analyze the broader geopolitical context, considering national interests, historical grievances, and power dynamics at play. By gaining a comprehensive understanding, we can strive for peace, diplomacy, and international cooperation to address the challenges presented by such conflicts (Chang-in).

Another significant factor contributing to the situation in Ukraine is the lack of democratic constraints on Putin within the Russian political system. However, it is essential to consider whether the United States and the West can be completely absolved of responsibility. Prominent American realists, including figures like Henry Kissinger and George Kennan, who crafted the strategy to contain the Soviet Union, have argued that peace and stability in the region could be achieved by acknowledging Russia's sphere influence (Chang-in).

During a summit in Bucharest in 2008, when US President George W. Bush formally sought to incorporate Georgia and Ukraine into NATO, Kissinger suggested that these countries should remain neutral rather than joining NATO. He expressed concerns that Russia might interpret NATO's eastward expansion as a signal of a fundamental shift in the established status quo. According to Moon Chung-in, chairman of the Sejong Institute, this

perspective raises the question of whether the United States and the West, by pursuing NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia, inadvertently contributed to the tensions and conflicts in the region. It suggests that a more cautious approach that considers Russia's concerns about its perceived sphere of influence could have potentially fostered greater stability (Chang-in).

In addition to that, the war in Ukraine evokes painful memories of Russia's aggression against Georgia in 2008 for the Georgian people. Several articles have highlighted similarities between these two conflicts, suggesting that the Kremlin has employed similar tactics in Ukraine as it did during the Georgian conflict (Seskuria). Indeed, many parallels can be drawn, particularly in the early stages of the conflicts, such as false claims of military withdrawal followed by the recognition of separatist regions. The strategy employed by Moscow in Ukraine had already been extensively tested in Georgia. Interestingly, Putin's presidential decrees recognizing separatist enclaves in Georgia in 2008 and those in Ukraine in 2022 were remarkably similar (“Before Ukraine”).

As the fighting progresses, notable differences emerge between the two countries (Gamkrelidze and Japaridze). Nonetheless, many Georgians perceive this war as yet another manifestation of Russia's revisionist agenda, aiming to overturn the post-Cold War power balance in the international arena and assert Russia as a dominant global power. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not the first instance where it has attacked a sovereign nation, challenged its legitimacy and posed a significant threat to the international order (“Russia Launches”). However, it is important to note that opinions on this matter vary, and the complexities of geopolitical dynamics make it difficult to attribute sole responsibility to any single actor or decision. The situation in Ukraine is shaped by a multitude of factors,

including domestic politics, historical grievances, and power struggles, which make it necessary to adopt a nuanced understanding of the events and their underlying causes.

As the global economic center shifts towards the East, Western researchers and commentators have perceived Russia as a declining power. However, despite this narrative of decline, there have been numerous reasons to raise concerns about the Kremlin's aggressive behavior in recent years. Russia's occupation and annexation of territories in Georgia and Ukraine have been widely documented. Furthermore, Moscow has expanded its influence over Armenia and Azerbaijan by deploying its "peacekeeping" forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. Russian forces also maintain a presence in Transnistria, a breakaway region of Moldova located along Ukraine's southwestern border. More recently, Russia has gained significant control over Belarus, as Alexander Lukashenko, Europe's last dictator, effectively handed over control of his country to the Kremlin in exchange for security guarantees for his regime. These developments have fueled apprehensions about Russia's ambitions and its willingness to exert influence beyond its borders (Åslund).

Despite the assurance given at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Ukraine and Georgia would eventually become NATO members ("Bucharest Summit"). The Western countries displayed reluctance in granting them a Membership Action Plan (MAP). This hesitancy was largely driven by the fear of provoking a negative response from the Kremlin. The effectiveness of the 2014 sanctions imposed on Russia following the annexation of Crimea can be debated, as they were arguably limited in their impact. Western nations maintained their partnerships with Russia in various sectors, including energy and finance, even after 2014. This continued engagement with Russia may have inadvertently encouraged the Kremlin to adopt a more assertive stance. The narrative of Western disengagement gained

further momentum following the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan (“Russia Launches”).

Speculation exists regarding the potential avoidance of the invasion of Ukraine if the West had not shied away from confronting Russia over its actions in Georgia. Some Western analysts and scholars have even asserted that Georgia bears responsibility for the 2008 war (“The August War”), citing provocation by Russian forces and the failure of then-president Mikheil Saakashvili to prevent the conflict. However, the recent missile strikes on Ukrainian cities invalidate this interpretation, highlighting its inaccuracies and potential harm. Such an interpretation may have led to underestimating the threats posed by the Kremlin regime over an extended period. Given this perspective, it is not entirely irrational to consider that Putin may have decided to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, capitalizing on the West's preoccupation with its internal challenges, potentially limiting its ability to effectively deter Russia (“Russia Launches”).

In January 19th, a month before the invasion of Ukraine, Stephen Walt, a Harvard University professor, published an article titled "Liberal Delusions Caused Ukraine's Crisis" in the magazine Foreign Policy. In his article, Walt accurately predicted that an assertive foreign policy by the United States and the West, driven by values and democracy promotion, could provoke Russia into invading Ukraine. He argued that while NATO's eastward expansion was justified on security grounds, it also aimed to spread Western values. According to Walt, it was foreseeable that Putin would perceive such moves as a threat to Russia's interests and his own rule, leading him to respond with aggressive military action. While the "sphere of influence" policy played a crucial role, Walt emphasized that Ukraine's internal politics were the decisive factor in causing the crisis (Chang-in).

Ukraine's current situation can be traced back to historical factors influenced by the actions of global powers. Since Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union in 1922, it has been home to two distinct groups with different religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. In the western regions, the majority of the population consists of Catholic believers who speak Ukrainian and identify more closely with Europe. In the eastern regions, there is a minority of Russian Orthodox believers who primarily speak Russian and assert their Slavic identity. The existence of these contrasting groups has created divisions within Ukraine, which foreign powers have exploited for their own interests. This can be seen in the events that unfolded during the 2014 crisis. At that time, Ukrainians dissatisfied with the country's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich, staged the Euromaidan uprising, expressing their desire for closer ties with Europe. Russia responded to this movement by annexing Crimea. The recent invasion by Russia can be seen as a continuation of this conflict. More than that the Ukrainian government had been taking assertive measures to remove pro-Russian rebels from the Donbass region in order to meet NATO's criteria for acceptance. In response, Russia intervened militarily under the pretext of protecting these rebels. Russia also recognized the independence of the separatist-backed governments in Donetsk and Luhansk, two regions in the Donbass, shortly before launching its invasion (Chang-in).

For the head of the Sejong Institution, the reason for starting the fire was the miscalculations of the leaders, whether it was president Putin's decision to invade or the initial actions of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, was initially praised for his efforts to promote peace and combat corruption. However, when faced with the Russian invasion, his handling of the crisis was seen as inadequate. He sent mixed messages, suspended NATO membership, and promised neutrality to Russia while pleading for nuclear armament from the West. Zelensky's contradictory rhetoric and failure to effectively manage the crisis worsened the situation.

Additionally, he had unrealistic expectations of obtaining military aid from both the United States and Russia. The lack of wisdom in changing the status quo in Russia's sphere of influence, internal political divisions in Ukraine, and Zelensky's crisis management shortcomings are seen as factors that could have potentially averted the tragedy of the invasion (Chang-in).

In summary, Ukraine's current situation is a consequence of historical divisions and the involvement of foreign powers. The conflict between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian rebels in the Donbass region, as well as Russia's intervention, can be seen as a continuation of the 2014 crisis. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought about significant changes in international dynamics. Contrary to President Putin's expectations, the EU and NATO have demonstrated unprecedented unity in their response, imposing extensive financial and economic sanctions against Russia. These measures have rapidly eroded Putin's reputation as an economic stabilizer and carry the potential to bring an end to his regime in the long term. However, while the sanctions have inflicted damage on Russia, they are intended to have lasting effects. In the immediate term, Ukraine requires immediate assistance to confront the full-scale invasion and address the heavy human toll. The heroism of the Ukrainian people is commendable, but ongoing support from the West will be crucial. Ukraine may already be considered a moral victor in this conflict, but the extent of the tragedy demands continued decisive action from the international community to confront Russia and alleviate the suffering caused by the invasion.

3.2. The American Stance

Western wisdom holds that Russian aggression is almost entirely to blame for the crisis in Ukraine. The argument goes that Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea in order to revive the Soviet empire, and he may one day pursue the rest of Ukraine and other

eastern European nations. According to this viewpoint, Putin's decision to instruct Russian forces to seize a portion of Ukraine was merely pretext for the removal of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014. The taproot of the difficulty is NATO extension, the focal component of a bigger methodology to move Ukraine out of Russia's circle and incorporate it into the West.

Simultaneously, the EU's extension toward the east and the West's moving of the favorable to a vote-based system development in Ukraine - starting with the Orange Upheaval in 2004 - were basic components, as well. Since the mid-1990s, Russian pioneers have resolutely gone against NATO expansion, and as of late, they have clarified that they wouldn't hold on while their decisively significant neighbor transformed into a Western stronghold. The illegal overthrow of Ukraine's pro-Russian, democratically elected president, which Putin rightly dubbed a "Coup," was the turning point for him. He reacted by seizing Crimea, a peninsula that he feared would be home to a NATO naval base, and working to destabilize Ukraine until it stopped trying to join the West. Putin's retaliation should not have been unexpected.

Putin made it clear and repeatedly that the West had been entering Russia's backyard and threatening its core strategic interests. In their attempts to turn Ukraine into a Western stronghold on the Russian border, leaders in the United States and Europe made mistakes. It would be even worse to continue this wrong policy now that the consequences have been made clear (Peng).

On January 19, one month before the invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. current affairs publication *Foreign Policy* published an article by Harvard University professor Stephen Walt headlined "Liberal illusions caused the Ukraine crisis." Walt prophesied in it that the U.S. and the West's aggressive values-based foreign policy would lead Russia to attack Ukraine, which proved to be correct. According to Walt, while security grounds were

claimed for NATO's eastward expansion, it was actually aimed at promoting the values of freedom and democracy. According to this researcher, it was easy to anticipate that Putin would see such initiatives as attempting to isolate Russia and undermine his leadership, and he would respond with brutal military force, Politics in the "sphere of influence" was a thing (Chang-in).

The constant boil in Ukraine is partly driven by the willingness and ability of the United States and European powers, such as Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, to support Ukraine and motivate Russia to end its aggression. In the scenario, international financial aid for Ukraine continues to be conditioned on speedy reforms, straining the society's ability to absorb a war and an economic crisis. On the military front, the scenario has the United States delivering increasing levels of training and other military assistance and NATO continuing to expand cooperation with Ukraine on defense reform. But American and European leaders still demur on stronger measures against Russia over its Ukraine intervention in the hopes of retaining Russian help on other major issues, such as the Iran nuclear talks or an ever-elusive resolution of the war in Syria. Other sovereign countries of the former Soviet Union and beyond are eyeing the Western response, its attention span, and the strength of its engagement. That, in turn, affects calculations regarding alliances and behavior, such as decisions about diversifying energy sources and trade.

Since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on the country. These sanctions have grown in severity and scope ever since Russia's war on Ukraine began in February 2022. Along with the European Union and other close allies, the United States has targeted Russian assets, international trade, the war-related economic sectors, and specific individuals and organizations engaged in sanctioned activities. The authorizations look to debilitate Russia's capacity to take up arms by hosing its monetary limit and economy, and by hindering its different areas, like industry, safeguard and energy,

from getting to innovation and sources of info. They are also intended as punishment for Russian elites and their associates who participated in a variety of war activities, including financing and disinformation. To apply the previously mentioned sanctions, the US helps out the EU through different fora, for example, the Exchange and Innovation Gathering, zeroed in on trade controls. The G7, which plays a crucial role in the flagship actions against the invaders, is a similar forum; The introduction of an oil price cap and the restriction of Russian banks' access to the SWIFT payments system are two examples.

The activities covered and individuals and entities targeted by the U.S. and EU sanction regimes differ, despite being frequently identical or similar. Even though all of these sanctions have hurt Russia's economy and long-term competitiveness, they won't happen as quickly as a military attack. In addition, Russia is actively and continuously attempting to avoid these sanctions, with assistance from its allies and trading partners, albeit to varying degrees. The European Parliament has been steadfast in its support of imposing severe sanctions on Russia and keeping them in place with regular revisions. Additionally, it has urged the EU Council to significantly expand the scope of sanctions and expressed its support for extensive transatlantic cooperation (Russia's War on Ukraine: U.S. Sanctions

/Think Tank /European Parliament). Individuals, banks, businesses, monetary exchanges, bank transfers, exports, and imports were all targets of the extensive sanctions. South Korea and Taiwan, a non-member state of the United Nations, both initiated sanctions against Russia following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

On 28 February 2022, Singapore reported that it will force banking sanctions against Russia for Ukraine attack, in this way making them the principal country in Southeast Asia to force sanctions upon Russia.

The EU imposed sanctions on several Russian oligarchs and politicians on February 28, 2022, and the Central Bank of Russia was prevented from accessing more than \$400 billion in foreign-exchange reserves held abroad. On the same day, the US Foreign Assets Control prohibited United Statespersons from engaging in transactions with the Central Bank of Russia, Russian Direct Investment Fund, the Russian Venture Company, and Kirill Dmitriev, an ally of Russia is being hit by this kind of financial nuclear bomb.

On March 1, 2022, the French finance minister Bruno Le Maire stated that the total amount of Russian assets frozen by sanctions was \$1 trillion. On April 20, 2022, the "Action Plan for Strengthening Sanctions Against the Russian Federation" was published by the Yermak-McFaul Expert Group on Russian Sanctions, which was organized by Zelensky. The document offers suggestions to the international democratic community for additional economic and sanctions aimed at compel the Russian leadership to end the war in Ukraine as soon as possible and to punish those who committed war crimes (international sanctions during the Russian invasion of Ukraine)

Russia earned more than £4bn in 2021 from diamond exports, the U.S. says. An employee pours rough diamonds into a funnel foreweighing. Russia earned £4bn a year from diamond exports However, most Russian diamonds are sent to countries like India to be polished, says Hans Merke of the International Peace Information Service think tank.

Major Russian banks have been removed from the international financial messaging system Swift, delaying payments for Russian oil and gas. The UK has frozen the assets of other Russian banks, and has banned Russian firms from borrowing money. Measures include: The EU stopped importing Russian coal and banned refined oil imports The U.S. and UK banned all Russian oil and gas imports Germany stopped the opening of the Nord stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia in December 2022, the EU andG7 set a maximum price of \$60 a

barrel for Russian crude oil. The EU has not imposed sanctions on Russian gas because it relies on it for about 40% of its gas needs. Can the world cope without Russian oil and gas? Targeting individuals More than 1,000 Russian businesses and individuals have been targeted by the U.S, EU, UK and other countries (Ukraine: What sanctions are being imposed on Russia?)

Gear worth more than \$30 billion has been sent to Ukraine by the United States. Ammunition is fired in an open field by weapons mounted on two military vehicles. The nation received Stinger air defense weapons and Javelin anti-armor systems quickly from the United States. The United States responded with howitzers, High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, and ammunition after Ukraine's military repelled the Russian assault on Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. The United States of America pledged a Patriot air defense battery and sent National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems to the nation as air defense remained a priority. As indicated by DOD figures, more than 54 countries from all over the planet have vowed more than 1,000 tanks and other heavily clad vehicles. More than 800 artillery systems, more than 2 million rounds of artillery ammunition, and more than 50 advanced Multiple Rocket Launch Systems have been delivered or pledged by them (Garamone, Jim. "U.S. Sends Ukraine \$400 Million in Military Equipment." U.S. Department of Defense, 3 Mar. 2023).

3.3. The Responsibility of the United States in the Conflict

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine is undoubtedly a complex situation, and it is widely agreed that there is no justification for war. Over the years, some political scientists have posited that Putin's aggression towards Ukraine can be attributed to Western intervention. This perspective suggests that certain actions or policies undertaken by Western nations may have contributed to heightened tensions and escalated the situation. However, it is essential to note that this is just one perspective among many, and opinions on the causes of the

conflict vary. The situation in Ukraine involves a multitude of historical, political, and geopolitical factors, making it challenging to attribute the conflict to a single cause or justification.

According to Putin, Russia's "special military operation" represents a significant turning point where Russia confronted a Western alliance, led by the United States, which aimed to exploit the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 to undermine Russia. However, Ukraine and Western nations argue that Putin lacks valid reasons for what they perceive as an imperialistic war of occupation. They contend that Russia's actions in Ukraine are unjustified and resemble historical instances of imperial ambitions ("it's time").

The political scientist John Mearsheimer has been one of the most famous critics of American foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. For years, he has argued that the decision by the United States to promote NATO expansion towards the east and foster positive relations with Ukraine has heightened the potential for conflict between nations possessing nuclear weapons. Additionally, this approach has contributed to the foundation of Vladimir Putin's assertive stance towards Ukraine. It is worth noting that back in 2014, after Russia's annexation of Crimea, Mearsheimer argued that the United States and its European allies bear significant responsibility for the emergence of this crisis (Chotiner).

Likewise, in an article by Moon Chang-in titled "The tragedy in Ukraine that could have been avoided" he also adopted the same facts saying that shortly before the invasion of Ukraine, a prominent article titled "Liberal illusions caused the Ukraine crisis" by Stephen Walt, a Harvard University professor, was published in the US current events journal *Foreign Policy*. In this article, Walt accurately anticipated that the United States and Western countries' assertive foreign policy rooted in values could potentially provoke Russia into invading Ukraine. Unfortunately, his prediction ultimately proved to be accurate (Chang-in).

The recent invasion of Ukraine has sparked renewed discussions about the complex relationship between the United States and Russia. Despite assertions from critics of Putin, who claim that he would engage in aggressive foreign policies in former Soviet republics regardless of Western intervention, Mearsheimer maintains his viewpoint that it is misguided for the United States to provoke him (Chotiner).

When Mearsheimer was asked about the situation with Russia and Ukraine, and his view and belief about how did the world get here, according to what was mentioned in The New York newsletter, his belief that all the problems in this case really started in April 2008, at the NATO summit in Bucharest, where then NATO issued a statement saying that Ukraine and Georgia would become part of NATO. The Russians made it clear at the time that they saw this as an existential threat, and drew a line in the sand. However, what happened over time is that we advanced to annex Ukraine to the West to make Ukraine a western fortress on Russia's borders. Of course, this includes more than just NATO expansion. NATO's enlargement is the core of the strategy, but it also includes EU enlargement, and it involves transforming Ukraine into a pro-American liberal democracy, and from a Russian perspective, this is an existential threat (Chotiner).

According to Costigliola, from the Russian point of view, there was an understanding, influenced by American officials, that NATO would not expand its presence towards the east after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Although this understanding was not formally stated in any agreement, it was the impression Gorbachev gained from the negotiations in 1990-91. This belief held significance for the Russians and continues to have an impact on people's perceptions (Phillips).

While Ukraine has not yet become a member of NATO, Russia perceives the inclusion of other countries along its borders and the Western nations' military assistance to those

countries as well as the United States' withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 as unfriendly actions. This has contributed to Russia's negative interpretation of the situation, and according to the Russian perspective, the United States is actively engaged in the war in Ukraine through its provision of military weaponry and intelligence support (Phillips).

Costigliola says: “The potential for the annihilation of both the United States and Russia in a nuclear war can’t be ruled out. With regard to the war in Ukraine, if diplomacy is not pursued and if unconditional surrender is unattainable, the only other alternative is catastrophe”. “From Putin’s point of view, the Russians were taken advantage of at the end of the Cold War”, “While we may not agree, that belief, widespread in Russia, is a reality that we need to contend with” (qtd. in Phillips).

Let's consider a hypothetical scenario: Suppose China establishes a military alliance with Venezuela and subsequently initiates efforts to expand this alliance towards the north by seeking the participation of countries in Central America and engaging in talks with Mexico. Naturally, these developments would generate resentment from the United States, as no nation would welcome the presence of potentially hostile forces on their borders. The Monroe Doctrine, essentially.

As attested again by the most famous critics of American foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. John Mearsheimer that if Ukraine were to become a pro-American liberal democracy and a member of NATO and the EU, it would be seen as unacceptable by Russia. He argues that the combination of NATO and EU expansion, along with Ukraine's alignment with the United States, is perceived by Russia as a direct threat to its interests. It is important to note that this viewpoint reflects a particular perspective on the geopolitical dynamics in the region. Some experts and policymakers argue that NATO and EU expansion can

contribute to stability and security by offering countries in Eastern Europe an opportunity to align with democratic principles and institutions. However, others contend that such expansions can be seen as provocative and increase tensions with Russia.

The three-prong strategy mentioned—EU expansion, NATO expansion, and fostering a pro-American liberal democracy in Ukraine—represents a geopolitical approach pursued by certain Western powers. This strategy aims to strengthen alliances and promote democratic values in the region. However, it is also crucial to consider the potential consequences and reactions from Russia, as seen in their opposition to perceived encroachments on their sphere of influence.

The situation is complex, and differing perspectives exist on the best course of action. Balancing the interests and security concerns of all parties involved is essential to prevent further escalation and find peaceful resolutions to regional conflicts. Diplomatic negotiations, understanding each side's perspectives, and finding compromises that address the legitimate concerns of all parties may be crucial in mitigating tensions and achieving stability in the region.

He also stated that: There's a big difference between how the United States behaved during the unipolar moment and how it's behaved in the course of its history. I agree with you when you talk about American foreign policy in the course of its broader history, but the unipolar moment was a very special time. I believe that during the unipolar moment, we were deeply committed to spreading democracy. With Ukraine, it's very important to understand that, up until 2014, we did not envision NATO expansion and E.U. expansion as a policy that was aimed at containing Russia. Nobody seriously thought that Russia was a threat before February 22, 2014. NATO expansion, E.U. expansion, and turning Ukraine and Georgia and other countries into liberal democracies were all about creating a giant zone of peace that

spread all over Europe and included Eastern Europe and Western Europe. It was not aimed at containing Russia. What happened is that this major crisis broke out, and we had to assign blame, and of course we were never going to blame ourselves. We were going to blame the Russians. So, we invented this story that Russia was bent on aggression in Eastern Europe. Putin is interested in creating a greater Russia, or maybe even re-creating the Soviet Union. (Chotiner)

Moreover; when he was asked about Kiev in the same article, he answered:

I don't think he has designs on Kiev. I think he is interested in taking at least Donbass, and maybe some other lands and eastern Ukraine, and in the second place, he wants to install a pro-Russian government in Kiev, one that is in line with Moscow's interests. He is even interested in taking Kiev for the purpose of regime change as opposed to conquering it permanently. But it is important to understand that it is different from the occupation of Kiev and hold on to it. (Chotiner)

The American diplomat George F. Kennan emphasizes the importance of understanding Russia's perspective in order to protect American interests, without necessarily agreeing with them. He argues that Russia has an inferiority complex compared to the United States and often resorts to aggressive actions due to its lack of soft power. Despite this, Kennan, a historical figure, recognized the need for diplomacy and a long-lasting understanding with Russia even after the Cold War. The ongoing war in Ukraine is highlighted as a critical issue that needs a compromise to avoid further casualties and destruction. The risk of escalation and the potential for a devastating nuclear war are mentioned, with him suggesting that these dangers should not be underestimated, as Kennan understood them (Phillips).

Kissinger said: “The dissolution of Russia or destroying its ability for strategic policy could turn its territory encompassing 11 time zones into a contested vacuum,” “It’s competing societies might decide to settle their disputes by violence. Other countries might seek to expand their claims by force. All these dangers would be compounded by the presence of thousands of nuclear weapons which make Russia one of the world’s two largest nuclear powers” (qtd, in (“it’s time”).

Mearsheimer thinks that: “there is a strategic and a moral dimension involved with almost every issue in international politics. I think that sometimes those moral and strategic dimensions line up with each other” (qtd, in Chotiner).

Finally, it can be said that Ukraine should pay serious attention to Russia's desires in order to avoid alienating them and facing potential severe consequences. It suggests that if Ukraine aligns too closely with the United States and its Western allies, Russia may perceive it as an existential threat and inflict significant damage on Ukraine, as is happening presently. Therefore, the strategists contend that Ukraine's strategically wise approach would be to sever its ties with the West, particularly the United States, and instead attempt to cooperate with Russia.

Politicians such as Mearsheimer suggest that if NATO had not expanded to include Ukraine, Crimea and Donbass would still be part of Ukraine today, and there would be no war. The possibility of a temporary settlement between Ukraine and Russia is mentioned, as the Russians may realize the challenges of occupying and managing Ukrainian politics. However, it is emphasized that they expect Russia to at least take control of Donbass and hopefully refrain from further occupying eastern Ukraine, as occupying the entire country would be impractical for Russia.

General Conclusion

The recurrent tensions that have always characterized the relations between the United State, Ukraine and Russia have their origins in the many unsettled issues from the end Cold War. This tension eventually led to a big war in 2022. This new conflict cannot be understood without linking it to the Cold War conflict whose end forced some unjust and abnormal situations and agreements.

Hence, the legacy of the Cold War has had a big impact on reigniting tensions between the U.S. and Ukraine on the one hand and Russia on the other. The unresolved issues and rivalries that started during the Cold War and were not settled down by its end like the planned missiles defense system, border issues, human rights violations, the dispute over Crimea, and the crisis in Ukraine; came back and contributed to the escalation of the conflict between the United States, Ukraine, and Russia.

This thesis highlights the contribution of the policies adopted by the USA in the continued hostilities and the renewal of conflict between Ukraine and Russia in 2022. It analyses the views of outstanding American scholars and former diplomats who criticized US foreign policy towards Ukraine and emphasized America's responsibility in the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war.

The United States narrative is based on its right to support Ukraine's territorial integrity and provide political and military help. According to this narrative, the Americans got involved because they wanted to promote democracy, human rights, and Western liberal values. They also wanted to counter Russia's influence in the area. The Americans saw the conflict as a test of their commitment to their allies and a way to show their determination against what they saw as Russian aggression.

From Russia's perspective, they justified the war by arguing they were protecting Russian-speaking people, their own security, and regional stability. However, it's important to

note that the war could have been avoided if all sides had tried to talk and find compromises, if the United States and the West had been more prudent about changing the status in Russia's sphere of influence, and if the Ukrainian president had been more adept at crisis management.

According to the Russian narrative, Putin invaded Ukraine for several reasons. Firstly, he wanted to protect the rights of ethnic Russians in Crimea and eastern Ukraine and ensure Russian influence in the region. Secondly, he didn't want Ukraine to get closer to the Western countries or join NATO and the European Union; while Ukraine did apply for NATO membership on 30 September 2023, when this was the main reason of his aggressive reaction to threat Ukraine.

Currently, the organization has a total of 30 countries; in this way, Russia feels a threat from NATO's expansion to the East and, above all, fears that Ukraine; a country within Russia's sphere of influence, will end up joining NATO which is considered by Russia an existential threat. So, Putin believed that taking control of Crimea and intervening in eastern Ukraine was necessary for Russia's interests and regional stability from his point of view.

For the worldwide community, the Ukraine crisis has serious implications for international relations, energy sources, and trade expansion. It resulted in various diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, economic sanctions on Russia, military support for Ukraine, international condemnation of Russia's actions, humanitarian aid, and discussions on peacekeeping initiatives.

While history can repeat itself in some ways, it's crucial to understand that each conflict is unique. The renewal of conflict between U.S.-backed Ukraine and Russia in 2022 was in a way the consequence of the failure of the international community to build a sustainable peace on solid and just grounds in the aftermath of the Cold War conflict which ended by the collapse

of the Soviet Union. The Cold War left the world polarized and tensions over influence and expansion continued haunting international relations.

It left ideological divide, proxy conflicts, regional power struggles, military buildup, and geopolitical tensions. There are risks of escalation and the possibility of a devastating nuclear war, highlighting the need for caution and diplomatic solutions. It's important for countries to learn from the past, seek peaceful solutions, and have constructive conversations to prevent further escalation and bring stability to the region.

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