

KINNAIRD COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, LAHORE



**GEOSTRATEGIC POLICIES OF RUSSIA UNDER PRESIDENT
VLADIMIR PUTIN: SECURITY IMPLICATIONS ^{FOR} ON CRIMEA AND
UKRAINE (2012-2023)**



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VLADIMIR PUTIN: SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR CRIMEA AND
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADIZ	Air defence identification zone
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
MDIZ	Maritime defence identification zone
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PFP	Partnership for Peace
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UK	United Kingdom
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
URC	Ukraine Recovery Conference
US	United States

USAID United States Agency for International Development

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on analyzing the geostrategic policies of Russia under the influence of President Vladimir Putin that he used to make Russia a super power by countering the influence of West in Post Soviet states. President Vladimir Putin aims to emerge as a supreme leader in the world. Russian geostrategic policies are being analyzed through John Mearsheimer's Offensive realism theory which explains that Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin is trying to ensure its survival by considering the world anarchic where everyone else also struggling to maximize their interests and power. So, the Russian geostrategic policies also focusing to maximize its power that mostly influenced by historical experiences, global power dynamics and regions dynamics especially after the disintegration of Soviet empire. This study will also contribute to learning about what geographic and geostrategic significance Crimea and Ukraine hold for Russia. To achieve its goals, Russia has conducted offensive measures such as military interventions in Crimea in 2014 and in Ukraine in 2022, and wants these two territories to get under its control completely. In this way, this study adds to the geostrategic field by explaining Russian realistic interests' and implications on Ukraine and Crimea. Descriptive approach is used to analyze the Qualitative data to describe the Russian geostrategic policies by exploring the different parameters of Russian interests, policies and challenges it faces in implementing them. And both primary and secondary sources are used for the collection of data to analyze the historical claims of Russia on Near Abroad states, its struggles for achieving ontological security and international recognition of a superpower. The study also reveals the challenges that Russia faced to fulfill its interests realistically. Russia has faced resistance from the World primarily the west as they support Ukraine. Russia is paying costs of its intervention in Crimea and Ukraine due to the sanctions imposed by the West that have negatively impacted its economy. Russian intervention on the other hand, has severe implications on Ukraine and Crimea causing a great damage to their economy, military, politics and local communities which eventually is making the whole Eurasian region unstable.

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CHAPTER- 1

1.INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin adopted a strategy of greater Eurasia to regain the Russian status of a global power. In historical context, the term "Eurasia" refers to a geopolitical ideology that emphasizes the spiritual and geographical linkages that unite the many communities across the vast plains of Asia and Europe. As Russia is geographically located in Asia and Eastern Europe, the main aim is to promote Eurasianism under Russian leadership. Vladimir Putin became the president of Russia in 1999 and wanted to make an effort to lead the world. President Vladimir Putin has faith that the best way to achieve real security for a state is to maintain political authority in the state and make that state a global power to secure its geopolitical interests. In Russia, President Vladimir Putin implements this strategy to achieve his goals. The main aims of the Russian geostrategic goals under the presidency of Vladimir Putin are to regain its influence on the post-soviet states that Russia lost after the disintegration of the Soviet Empire and to counter the western influence such as NATO and EU in the Eurasian region because this helps to achieve a global power status. Russia also uses imperial claims to implement its strategic policies through different tactics in Crimea and Ukraine. Russia also becomes offensive to meet its strategic policy ends due to the challenges that Russia faced from US, NATO, and EU. The implications of Russian geostrategic policies threaten the security of the Eurasian region in political, economic, and social aspects, especially by intervening in Crimea and Ukraine. Russia intervened in Crimea in 2014, and now in 2022, attacked Ukraine to counter NATO influence. Russia uses the region to meet its geostrategic interests which creates instability in Ukraine and Crimea.

After the disintegration of the USSR, Russia lost its power and influence in the region and diverted its attention toward western civilization after the Cold War. But in the 21st century, under the Presidency of President Vladimir Putin, Russia moved back to the policies that Bolsheviks took when he came into power in 1917 and established the Soviet Union. In this way, Russia was able to maintain its Eurasian spirit. And by adopting communism in 1917, Russia also prevented the arrest of its civilization by outside forces. In 2008, Russia intervened in Georgia to stop the expansion of NATO to secure the region from western powers. Currently, Russia is following its

historical approaches and intervening in the political, economic, and social affairs of Crimea and Ukraine.

Crimea and Ukraine in the Eurasian region have great significance for Russian empowerment. The influence of Russia on Crimea and Ukraine enables Russia to secure its economic and political interests by connecting Russia to the world markets. So, the Russian geostrategy reflects maintaining its only hegemony in the region, especially in Ukraine and Crimea by countering any influence of Western powers. But the implications of the Russian geostrategic policies threatened the sovereignty and regional integrity of Crimea and Ukraine and also resulted in economic, social, and political instability which made them less resilient and more vulnerable in the Eurasian region. This also attracts other powers to get a chance to intervene and influence in Crimea and Ukraine for their geopolitical interests.

The geostrategic policies of Russia can be pursued in terms of Offensive realism theory. The theory was proposed by John Joseph Mearsheimer, in his book “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics” in 2001 and is related to the neo-realist school of thought. It holds that states are disposed to conflict and competition because they are, power maximizing, self-interested, and have fear of other states. Further, the theory argues that states are obliged to behave in this manner in order to survive in the international system. It is based on assumptions including that the states are rational actors and promote their interests and value their survival above all else. Offensive Realism emphasizes that great powers are key players in international politics and each power has some offensive military capability.

In the case of Russia, it is intervening in the Eurasian region particularly in Ukraine and Crimea to pursue its strategy as it wants to hold control in the region to maximize its power and become a key player in the World. Russian intervention in the economic, political, and social affairs of Crimea and Ukraine creates instability in the region out of which Russia wants to extract its geopolitical interests. According to the offensive realistic view, Russia acts as a rational actor and intervenes in Crimea to take control of the Black Sea to secure its political and economic interests. Ukraine also refused to develop close ties with Russia to avoid Russian influence and become closer to the Western powers. If Ukraine had accepted a partnership agreement with the European Union and NATO especially, this would have been a hostile act towards Russian interests. So, this made Russia to become violent and do military intervention there to achieve its security.

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to learning about and evaluating the regional implications of the Russian geostrategic policies on Crimea and Ukraine. On one side, Russia claimed to secure the Eurasian region through cooperation in political, economic, and social spheres due to historical and imperial ties with the region. On the other side, Russia aimed to influence the Eurasian region specifically on Crimea and Ukraine to secure its own political and economic interests that are essential to ensure Russia's global status that it had before the Cold War. Russia's geostrategic policies pose a threat to the sovereignty and regional integrity of Crimea and Ukraine as Russia becomes aggressive to counter the influence of western powers like NATO in the region. The implementation of the Russian strategy and policies threatened the security of the Eurasian region. As a result, it is curious to understand the complexities of geopolitical interests and struggles of Russia that manipulate the territories of Ukraine and Crimea for its gain, and whose implications harmed this region adversely. In this way, this study adds to the geostrategic field by explaining that a country's security and capacity to exert influence locally or internationally may be strongly influenced by its geographic characteristics and also the Russian realistic interests and offensive behavior and their implications on Ukraine and Crimea.

1.2 PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is

- To explore the geopolitical significance of Ukraine and Crimea for Russia.
- To explore the geostrategic policies of Russia under President Vladimir Putin's era since 2012.
- To identify the geostrategic interests of Russia and its imperial claims in the Eurasian region, particularly in Ukraine and Crimea.
- To critically assess challenges that Russia is still facing to implement its geostrategic policies under the presidency of Vladimir Putin.
- To analyze the practical implications of the Russian geostrategic policies on the political, economic and social security of Ukraine and Crimea.

1.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What geostrategic approach was adopted by Russia under President Vladimir Putin since 2012?
- What are the steps that Russia takes to achieve its strategic policies in Ukraine and Crimea since 2012?
- What are the challenges for the Russian geostrategic interests and the implications of the war in Ukraine on Russia since 2012?
- How did the Russian realistic interests in rising as a global power impact the political, economic, and social security of Ukraine and Crimea since 2012?

1.3 NATURE OF THE STUDY

Qualitative research type used to describe and analyze the Russian geostrategic policies under the Presidency of Vladimir Putin by exploring the different parameters of Russian interests and foreign policy and their impact. Russian efforts to intervene in different states made it more offensive. The revisionist policies of Russia behind the geopolitical interests made Ukraine and Crimea more complex and critical. The descriptive approach is used here to analyze the previous and current facts about the Russian geo-strategy but with no control over the parameters and explain the variables that are relevant to the geostrategic approach of Russia. And both primary and secondary sources are used for the collection of data in the research.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Shahzada Rahim Abbas argues that Russian civilization is different from western civilization. Slavophiles claim that Russia is a part of Slavic civilization but neo-Eurasianist have broadened this concept by involving Eurasian communities with Russian Slavs. Russia maintained its spirit of Eurasianism by adopting communism in 1917 to restrict the influence of alien forces. The geostrategy of Russia is influenced by heartland theory of Halford Mackinder and Nicholas J. Spykman's rimland theory which signified the Eurasian region. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia aimed to reintegrate into the post-Soviet states. Current Russian foreign policy emphasizes the Eurasian hegemony in economic, political, and social spheres. Russia took

economic initiatives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia for its influence as soft power. Russia facing challenges by NATO expansion in Eurasia with EU support. Russia found China's BRI to be a trustworthy partner but China's influence in the region also needs to counterbalance by Russia (ABBAS, 2020).

Dmitri Trenin analyzes foreign policy approach of Russia during 20 years of President Vladimir Putin's rule. His goals focused on preservation of Russian unity and to restore its status as a global actor. He called for Russian membership in NATO, had a vision of building Greater Europe, and attempted to become US' important ally and what not. Some successes of its rule include that in 2000s Russia transitioned towards economic growth. The armed forces' reforms in 2010 strengthened country's defense. He also established bilateral relations with China, strategic partnership with Japan and India as well. Economic integration with CIS states, that Vladimir Putin launched with the Customs Union reflect Russian interests. EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) was also launched during his rule. However, there are some failures such as the shift from Greater Europe to Greater Eurasia. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has weakened its partnerships with the European states, which are important if Russia wants to emerge as a global player (TRENIN, 2019).

Yiannos Charalambides stated that Russia put forward a revisionist strategy to change the status quo for its geopolitical interests. Through its policy, Russia wanted to prevent NATO expansion which threaten Russian economic and political security and to maintain its position as the dominant power in Eurasia. To achieve its goals, Russia intervened in Georgia in 2008. The policy was continuous with the intervention in Crimea and Ukraine. Russia increased its influence in the Caucasus region during Armenia and Azerbaijan conflict in 2020 by deploying its forces in Nagorno Karabakh. This increased the dependency of the region on Russia. The historic ties of Russia with Eurasia and China's support of Russia helped to peruse its policy. The economic sanctions on Russia due to its intervention in Ukraine not only damaged Russia's economy but also the EU and NATO states that depend on Russia for oil and gas (Charalambides, 2022).

Babak Rezvani analyzes Russian foreign policy goals under the presidency of Vladimir Putin and its geopolitical interests. Russia's foreign policy's main objective is to regain the regional control in post-Soviet space. In the theoretical framework, foreign policy of Russia analyzed through the lens of neo-realism and idealism. In the idealist framework, Russia intervened in the post-Soviet

states to secure their security but in the neo-realistic framework, Russia acts as a rational actor to secure its imperial interests and political and military power. Moreover, Rezvani explained that Russian interventions in Crimea and Ukraine more than just the imperial interests. The interventions are the reactions to US or NATO influence in the region which threatened the Russian interests in the Black Sea (Rezvani, 2018).

Ahmed Hassan Majhool Al-Hasnawi analyzes Russia's intervention in Ukraine that reflects the importance of cultural and ideological factors as a means to increase geopolitical expansion in the 21st century. Russia still views Ukraine as a part of its territorial boundaries due to importance of Crimea and Black Sea. The Russian intervention was started when Ukraine refused to develop close ties with Russian federation and moved towards Western bloc through NATO. Moreover, the author calls this intervention as a Hybrid War in which Russian federation is using all the tactics to get the complete hold of the Ukraine. Moreover, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is serving as a way for major powers to fulfill their geopolitical interests. The United States and the Europe are pursuing their interests through promoting liberal democratic values in the Ukraine. These actions will reduce Russia's interests in the Eurasian region particularly in Ukraine. The author also analyzed that western powers will provide diplomatic support to Ukraine and sanctions by these powers are not enough to stop Russia (Hassan, 2022).

Alexander Lukin analyzes that Sino-Russia cooperation paves way for Russia to fulfill its interests in Eurasia. He considers that linking the EEU with Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative, through creating free trade area in the EEU zone, will support Vladimir Putin's vision of Greater Eurasia. To turn Russia into an independent power center, it is important to build strong ties, and Russia is doing it through cooperation with Asian economies that include China, and South Korea and Japan as well as ASEAN states. According to the author, the Russian rise in Eurasia will fill the vacuum created after the USSR collapse. While, on the other, China is taking interest in pursuing a greater Eurasian partnership because it wants to counter the presence of the US and maintains its strong position in World (Lukin, 2020).

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – OFFENSIVE REALISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Theoretical framework is a structure that describes the theory to answer research problems in the study. It also provides a specific perspective through which a research topic is examined. Theories of international relations can contribute to understand that how international systems operate. Moreover, these theories also explain that how different countries interact with one another and perceive the globe. Every state opts different ways and acts in selfish manner in order to pursue its national interests and to maximize its power to maintain a position in World Politics. States sometimes also take offensive actions to achieve their goals. However, their behavior in different situations such as How to behave during conflict and what policy should be adopted, is determined under different theories and models of Politics. However, Selfish and Offensive acts of states can be analyzed under theoretical framework of Offensive Realism proposed by John Mearsheimer, which talks about Power Maximization, Anarchic world, and rationality of actors in the realistic world. He analyzed the world where states initiated offensive or violated measures to pursue their interests and for power maximization. The Offensive Realism is used to analyze the Russia's geostrategic policies. The goals of the Russian new geostrategy are to fulfill its interests of power maximization and becoming a strong and global player to secure long lasting survival in this competing world where the other states also struggling to dominate and control the world. For this purpose, Russia took offensive steps in the implementation of its geostrategic policies such as deploying military troops in Crimea and Ukraine.

2.2 OFFENSIVE REALISM

Offensive Realism, a sub-theory of neorealist school of thought in International Relations, was first proposed by John Joseph Mearsheimer in his book 'The Tragedy of Great Power Politics' in 2001. The theory holds that states are inclined to conflict and competition because their nature is selfish. They acquire maximization of power due to fear of their counter states. Also, it says that states behave for their survival in international system. Through his theory John Mearsheimer

explains that why relations between states of modern state system are bound with conflict. His contributions provided that how anarchic global system is responsible for insecurity among states and great power wars. Along with him, Fareed Zakaria, Robert Gilpin and Randall Schweller are the prominent thinkers of offensive realism.

2.3 KEY ASSUMPTIONS OF THEORY

John Joseph Mearsheimer focused on the five major assumptions to explain the offensive realism in the international system.

Key assumptions of Offensive Realism

Assumptions	Description
International system is anarchical	First, International system is anarchical and there is no "government of governments" for enforcing laws and punishing criminals and offenders in global political system.
Uncertainty	Second, a state can never be assured of what other states hold intentions or that they would not retaliate or use any kind of force against it. States also lack complete knowledge of one another's intentions, which can be changed at any point. Good intentions can easily turn bad and vice versa.
Need to survive	All states possess the need of survival in order to stay in the international system. Although the state's autonomy, is also significant to achieve its goals, but survival always comes first.
States are rational actors	Fourth, states are rational actors in the Global political system and they think carefully about their external circumstances and selecting the approach that looks to achieve their fundamental goal of survival.

Possession of military	Lastly, John Mearsheimer argues that states always possess some military capability that allows them to harm and possibly to obliterate one another.
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Source: Done by Researcher

2.4 POWER AND OFFENSIVE REALISM

John Mearsheimer believed that military power is most significant element and is "the ultimate ratio of international politics," hence it is crucial to consider it while analyzing world politics.

Additionally, he says that land power is also crucial because territorial control, which is the most significant asset in a world of territorial governments, requires land armies. According to John Mearsheimer, States are bound in limitless power struggle in anarchic global system. In order to increase their security, they constantly seek to maximize power, wealth and influence. There is a believe that a state that has more power is more secure and is more likely to survive for long time than a state who is less secure. Offensive Realists consider that anarchic system and power distribution is like invisible hand that make all states or major powers to maximize their power and influence in the World despite any kind of differences. It is the international system that encourages states to do so by creating attractive incentives and states look for opportunities to counter and get stronger than their rival states and to become a global hegemon. They believe that aggressive foreign political, economic and military policies are required to expand or gain opportunities for gaining power, and to weaken rivals by going to preventive wars and delaying tactics. According to Mearshimer, only a state that is misguided will believe that it possess sufficient amount of power and will pass up chances of being a regional or global hegemon in this anarchic system. He says if a state will not try to maximize its power and influence over others, the other states will take advantage of it and become more powerful. Consequently, a major power determines in becoming the hegemon rather than an equal among its fellow great powers. All States are in continuous competition and struggle with each other to for gaining power since their aim is to maximize it as much as they can. While other realists believe that through power a state can emerge as global hegemon, but John Mearshimer argues that it is not possible for any state to become a global hegemon. He says that the best a great power can achieve is becoming a regional hegemon and be the only key player only in its part of the globe and possibly can have control

over the nearby regions. Hence, he considers that the main strategic aim of a state must be to become a hegemon in the region. Moreover, States that aim to achieve regional hegemony opt tactics to prevent great powers in other World regions from repeating their success; they keep a check on aspiring hegemons in other regions out of concern that a rival great power that rules its own region will be an especially potent adversary that can cause trouble in the apprehensive great power's region. Additionally, in order to balance each other's influence, regional hegemons give preference to that there shall be at least two big powers in other areas.

2.5 STATUS QUO IN OFFENSIVE REALISM

Offensive realists consider that global hegemons are the only status quo governments in the international system because hegemon is defined as a state that is powerful enough to dominate all other states of the international system. Major Powers are most of the times not satisfied with already distribution of Power. States never know what the other state's objectives are. This include whether the other state can accurately assess its military and economic strength or is going to make use of its resources and launch offensive operations to boost its relative power. It is mostly difficult for a state to actually understand how much relative power is sufficient for it to hold over its enemies to ensure its security and also to assume the level of power it needs for the future.

Offensive realism theorists explained that states always want to gain influence and power even if there is no immediate threat. It is because they cannot predict from where or when the next threat may come. States usually adopt and always get ready for the worst-case scenario when evaluating other powers because of uncertainty about intentions and worry about making a mistake. States always have a fearful, distrustful, and suspicious attitude towards each other and have the same opinion of one another. As a result, there is perpetual competition in security, even among those states that have no incentive to do so.

The majority of offensive realists believe that all great powers possess revisionist intentions. They contend that revisionist states frequently side with the more powerful power rather than striking a balance with it (Dominic D P Johnson, 2016).

2.6 PREFERENCE OF WAR AND EXPANSION

Conquest, according to offensive realists, is profitable. According to Mearsheimer, war is a principal way in terms of acquiring power, although it might be costly and states that start wars win them 60% of the time. Offensive realists believe that systemic imperatives force states to grow. Expansion and conquest frequently increase state security, can yield enormous benefits, and prevent other states from gaining more power. Further, Mearsheimer also talked about concept of hegemonic warfare and when states opt for balancing or buck passing for acquiring more power. A great power is more likely to conduct a hegemonic war when the balance of power is substantially tilted in its favor. This situation is known by Mearsheimer as "unbalanced multipolarity." A run for hegemony at that juncture has the best prospects of succeeding despite the expected balancing attempts of other powers, hence from the perspective of a potential hegemon, a strategy of hegemonic conflict is the best option (Toft, 2005).

According to Mearsheimer's theory, the nearly equal distribution of global power prevents any two large nations from establishing global hegemony. He argues that it is illogical to wage a hegemonic war in a bipolar world since the other great power has the resources to defend itself and block the other's ambitions for hegemony.

Buck-passing is impossible with bipolar system because there is no involvement of third party/power to catch the buck. Therefore, to maintain balance among them remains the only method to restrain the other big power's objectives. Buck passing, on the other hand, is more likely to occur in balanced multipolarity since each power can be confident that aggression can be restrained by another big power. However, the second explanatory component in the theory, which the state's geographic position, determines whether a particular state decides to pass the buck or maintains balance. Because it would be first in line if the other great power decided to strike, the closer a great power is to a rival, the more likely it is that the two will balance. Buck-passing is more likely, however, when there are natural obstacles or buffer states between a specific great power and its competitors.

Moreover, the pursuit of better security, according to Gilpin, and Zakaria, motivates states to pursue conquest for achieving, political, geographical, military, and economic expansion. According to realists, expansion is promoted by four conditions i.e a) when military technology

advantages the aggressor; b) when governments are able to add a considerable amount of power resources cumulatively; c) when relative power is anticipated to diminish, which supports preventive conflict; (d) when there is a multipolar power structure, which enables nations to defeat adversaries piecemeal and causes errors in judgement and uncertainty over the precise allocation of relative power. However, Robert Gilpin, who contends that great countries are not mindless aggressors, also argues that a major state will attempt to alter the international order. This is true so long as the anticipated advantages outweigh the anticipated drawbacks. The state will also continue its political, territorial, and economic growth until the marginal costs and benefits of further expansion are equal. But if the system is not profitable, no state will attempt to reform it (Snyder, 2002).

In general, offensive realism justifies that states are compelled by the system to maximize their relative power because it is necessary for their survival and to compete in international politics. Similarly, Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin also adopted a grand strategy to dominate on the Eurasian region. purpose is to revive its history when Russia as Soviet Empire rule over the Eurasian region and the main interests is to regain the status of global power that ensure its security in the international politics.

2.7 OFFENSIVE REALISM AND RUSSIAN GEOSTRATEGIC POLICIES

Like other countries, the main objectives of Russian foreign policy are also to maximize its power and secure its political, economic and social interests for its state survival in the complex and competitive international system. For that purpose, Russia is in struggling to become a global power. It is not easy for Russia to achieve its state's goals in the world where the other states also struggle and compete for their interests that often contrasted and contested with Russian interests. Russia also seen threat by the West specially from US that as an active actor seeks to influence on the rest of the world unilaterally. So, Russia behaves offensively in the international system to secure its interests in the realistic international arena. This offensiveness is seen in the geostrategic policies of Russia. Basically, Russia lost its power after the disintegration of USSR that it had once at the time of Soviet Empire which also gave Russia the status of world super power. Today, Russia wanted to regain its status of global power and prestige and for that Russia adopted a geostrategic approach in the Near Abroad that are basically the independent Soviet Republics. And to pursue

its geo-strategic policies, Russia follows the offensive realism school of thought of the international relations to ensure its future prestige and state's survival.

Basically, Geostrategy is the relationship between the geographic characteristics of a certain region and military strategies, and predicting of potential effects that military actions may have in relation to particular geographic locations. The geo strategists' task is to determine how the interests of the participating states are impacted by the geographical chessboard. The relevance of geostrategic thinking is reflected in the fact that it is necessary to maneuvers in order to protect a state's interests from being outperformed. This requires fusing the three-dimensional nature of warfare (land, naval, air) with characteristics of the round earth. States like Russia heavily incorporate their geographic location into the formulation of their strategy to pursue its national interests.

The territorial imperative and the Russian leadership's desire to maintain dominance over the post-Soviet region as its only area of influence, is the most significant factor influencing Russia's foreign policy. Since 1991, and more precisely since 1999, there are two alternative geostrategic views towards the near abroad or post-Soviet region that put it into practice in Russia. One of them was based on the notion that the former Soviet Union states should be reintegrated on the principles of economic cooperation and sovereign equality, similar to the European Union. So, that Russia can dominate and control the region peacefully. For that purpose, several projects like the Eurasian Economic Community, Customs Union, and the Eurasian Economic Union were created to achieve this aim. The second perspective, lately described to as the "Russian world". This focused on bolstering the Russian nation-state and strengthening command on its "sphere of influence" from Moscow's unilateral actions. In the high-level official sources, this second strategy for reintegrating the post-Soviet region was hardly mentioned or addressed. But the Russian efforts in the post-Soviet region in 2014 and 2022 reveal that this vision was a top concern for influential Russian decision-makers. The main goal of Russian geostrategy to strengthening command on its sphere of influence urged Russia to counter the dominated role of foreign powers. The development of Ukraine's relations with the EU and NATO, along with the military assistance the US provides, show that this strategy is being carried out. This made Russia offensive practically to secure its interests where the others are also struggling to ensure long lasting interests for their states. The Russian Federation's operations in the Ukraine in 2022 are determined by the "historical trauma" of the Russian elite and by the aim of the "Russian world," in the form of new geostrategic

approach. Russia's early attempts to incorporate Ukraine into the EEU, which it had established in order to strengthen its links with surrounding countries. This reflects a desire to include Ukraine in Russia's goals for regional hegemony (Sivitsky, 2015). A great power's ambition to create regional hegemony should be taken into account while analyzing Russia's conduct during the Ukraine war given our knowledge of Offensive Realism. The utmost level of security is what is desired and the main goal is. Keeping a secure neighbours must be the primary goal, regardless of whether a great power tries to develop a sphere of influence or a regional hegemon. Russia linked its geostrategic policies with the state security. According to Mearsheimer, great powers have same objectives, particularly regional hegemony. They behave similarly when surrounding countries act in a way that threatens those objectives, regardless of their ideologies or other characteristics. In this context, Russia's actions throughout the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 and 2022, including its military incursions, are understood as they counter western influence (Alim, 2019).

The geostrategy and offensive realism, both focused on the security of a state that can be achieved through power maximization and creating a hegemony. Offensive realists believe that states should involve in conflicts to maximize their power geostrategists explain the relation between the geography and power that that geographic features can significantly influence a country's security and its ability to project influence regionally or globally. So, Russia used its geostrategic policies to initiate conflict and intervened in Crimea and Ukraine to maximize its power to ensure its security that is the main national interests of Russia. Russia basically pursuing its realistic geostrategic policies offensively.

According to the Offensive Realism, Russia will ensure its survival and security by regaining its global status, gradually by implementing its geostrategic policies. And if Russia face any hurdle in implementing its geostrategic policies, then Russia will act offensively. This is what exactly happened in Crimea and Ukraine. And we also focused on the state behavior, president Vladimir Putin behavior and his particle approach towards the world that is also realistic and also on practical implications of Russian geostrategy that are offensive. That's why we choose the offensive realism as a theory for this research.

CHAPTER 3

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IDEAS AND PRINCIPLES IN POST COLD WAR ERA AND NEW GEO STRATEGIC APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Russia faced a period of crisis both domestically and internationally after cold war. Numerous solutions were suggested to overcome the damage that Russia faced especially in the form of the disintegration of Soviet Empire when the cold war ends in early 1990's. For that purpose, Russia adopted a grand geostrategy under the presidency of Vladimir Putin for the 21st century to regain or achieve all power in economic, political, and social aspects and prestige that Russia lost. Grand strategy, in its simplest form, can be defined as a state's intentional attempts to integrate political, diplomatic, military, and economic methods to achieve its own national interests. Grand strategy is the reconciliation of ends and means and Russian geostrategic policies, likewise use different means to achieve its ends i.e., to pursue its national interests. Russia's geostrategic decisions are the consequence of a variety of factors, including geography, history, internal politics, society, and, of course, competition with other superpowers for global dominance but the ultimate objective is to protect national interests. Russian President Vladimir Putin, an autocratic and realistic leader, plays a dominant role in shaping the geostrategic policies of Russia. At first, Vladimir Putin was also pro-western in early 1990's. But soon his perceptions changed and he became more realistic due to anarchial nature of the world and defined the geostrategic approach accordingly that is basically to maximize its influence in the post-soviet states and contain the western influence in the region. According to him, Russia needs to struggle to "win" its own position in the international system. Russian geostrategy is defined by the struggle of Russia for its ontological or identity security throughout its history and to advance an international recognition of a global power that continuously refused by west. Furthermore, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasize and narrow down his general vision of the world towards the Eastern Europe due to historical and geographical linkages. The significance of Ukraine and Crimea in Eastern Europe and the increasing interests of foreign powers such as US or NATO shaped the geostrategic policies of

Russia under President Putin. And the ultimate goal of Russia behind its geostrategic policies is to secure national interests i.e., a global power status for the Vladimir Putin's regime and territorial, economic and political and identity security.

3.2 PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN VISION TOWARDS WORLD

There was a post-Soviet Russian identity problem after the end of the cold war, as several experts noted. The Soviet leadership had its own idea of Russia's place in a multinational society. But with the fall of the USSR, that interpretation was no longer valid. Russian intellectuals approached the issue of Russian identity with a renewed sense of urgency. Everyone in Russia could be wondering, "Who are we?" & "Where is Russia going?" (Evans, 2008). As it was evidently the case in the past in Russia, a nation with an autocratic past and weak democratic structures, and a secular heritage of authorization of power by the Tsar, and more recently, the Russian President Vladimir Putin, the head of state provide efficient strategies to numerous national challenges during times of profound crisis. Nearly all Russians expected a "strong hand" in the form of a leader to stop the internal conflict and win the respect of other major countries during the period of difficulties. In Europe. As the first President of the newly established Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin made an effort to surpass Gorbachev by developing a Westernized image. While Yeltsin's portrayal of reform was justified in theory as introducing elements of Western capitalism and democracy to Russia. But his policies were incredibly contradictory in practice. This is also the case with the current head of state of Russia when Vladimir Putin came to power. And his personality proved essential to Russian domestic developments and strategic options at the start of the new century. According to Vladimir Putin, the world is characterized by a constant, dog-eat-dog struggle that puts people in a position where they will do anything to succeed, even if doing so causes harm to others. This is known as the Hobbesian view of the world, which explains that people naturally contend and fight for their own interests, which is to dominate or control others and ask for respect from them. In Vladimir Putin's view, sustaining a competitive edge requires economic strength. Vladimir Putin has insisted repeatedly that Russia is a European state. Historically, it has shared its experiences and beliefs with the other European nations and also claimed that Russia advanced towards protection of freedom that is comparable to other European countries. Vladimir Putin's publications, before he was elected president of Russia, demonstrated his belief that economic development and modernization are essential for the state and may be facilitated by embracing

western economic tendencies. Russian President Vladimir Putin did not appear to be enthusiastic about integrating Russia's economy with West particularly USA. Vladimir Putin's desire for stronger ties with the Europe is made compellingly by the argument that selected incorporation of European institutions will allow Russia to have a modern and rich society that will be more completely integrated into the global economy (Evans A. B., 2008). Progressively Vladimir Putin personality resulting in a vision that is unclear and blends conventional notions of social equality with an authority and also with a partial acknowledgment of market economy trends. Thus, despite being brought up in a communist worldview, President Vladimir Putin was able to quickly adapt to post-Soviet Russian democratic tendencies by picking up the Western principles and incorporating them into his political expression (Ann-Sofie, 2014). As a result, he maintains the involvement in the global economy as it was necessary for significant economic progress. Russian President Vladimir Putin's leadership, however, is keen about "controlling and managing globalization while seizing its potential and a "greater role for the state" is required in order to cope with the benefits and difficulties that globalization presents for Russia.

3.3 PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN AND 21ST CENTURY

The present Russian leadership has recognized that significant worldwide changes have occurred during the past 20 years. The beginning of the new millennium or 21st century coincides with a profound shift in global trends in the last 20-30 years, coupled with what we term the post-industrial society, President Vladimir Putin writes in the "manifesto" written in 1999. The Russian President Vladimir Putin outlines the features of postindustrial society and challenges as a warning. He mentioned that these changes not only create opportunities to better human life but also new threats and challenges, including ecological disasters, criminal enterprises, drug addiction, and, most importantly, a widening gap between the developed world and the developing nations. In this regard, Russian authorities are aware that the country's and its inhabitants' interests are directly impacted by the present changes and the new global dynamics. Regarding this, the foreign policy proposal emphasizes that the globalization of the economy generates new worries for economically fragile countries, who are unable to respond to the of global, significant financial problems. The idea emphasizes an increasing exposure of the Russian economic and political system to outside forces, especially in light of the current status of the country i.e, economic and political crisis after USSR disintegration. Unlike his predecessor, President Putin

without a doubt recognized the pressure that globalization would put on governments and was able to see the objective economic processes that change the nature of competition in the global system. His assessment of the post-Cold War military and political changes, with a concentration on the US terrorist attacks of 2001, follows the same line of reasoning. The Russian President Vladimir said after the 9/11 attacks, "many people in the world saw that the cold war has gone. They knew that today there are different challenges, a different war is underway and the war with international terrorism. Undoubtedly, the devastating experience in the military in the Northern Caucasus, the wave of terrorist attacks all across country, and a persistent threat from Russia's "weak spot," i.e., Central Asia, must be taken into consideration when evaluating this shift in perception of the nature of security threats. When viewed from this angle, the Russian government's aggressive use of the "global war on terror" slogan aimed to both address terrorist threats present in Chechnya's immediate neighborhood as well as to justify its military action there. This method of reasoning helps to explain why the Russian government, authorized by President Vladimir Putin, decided to back US military actions against the Taliban rule in Afghanistan in late 1990s, a choice that would have been very inconceivable during the Cold War. In contrast to the frequently emotional responses of earlier Russian presidents, President Putin's realistic response to the terrorist strikes on the US signified a profound break. But the new Head of state President Vladimir Putin was aware that "new rules of the international system were being formed without Russia's involvement, the laws of the global system created after the Second World War and throughout the Cold War were fading." Russia's foreign policy perspective, which acknowledges a developing unipolar trend in the international order, which is primarily driven by the US military and economic strength, provides an obvious confirmation (Secrieru, 2006). Russian president Vladimir Putin has committed to reviving the Russian people. He believed that rather than being a victory for democracy over communism, the consequences of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Empire was a defeat for Russia (Ann-Sofie, 2014).

The modern world is not, however, idealistic, harmonious, or flawless in the eyes of the Russian President Vladimir Putin. In this regard, he noted that while many Russians had thought that the end of the bipolar conflict would immediately open the door to their nation's integration into the international economic system, the truth has turned out to be quite the opposite. Therefore, in his opinion, a combination of geopolitical and geo-economic aspects that are reflected in worldwide rivalry and competition for natural resources, capital, markets, and also global political and

economic power, characterize the current international system. President Vladimir Putin came to the conclusion that none of the states in the present global order desired to fight with Russia while also having no desire to aid it and he urges that Russia must fight for and ultimately "win" its own position in the international order (Secieru, 2006). For this purpose, Eastern Europe play a significant role to assist Russia in its struggle to win its own place in the international system and Russian President Vladimir Putin have special goals for the region accordingly.

3.4 PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN VISION OF GREATER EUROPE: AN EMPHASIS ON EASTERN EUROPE

Since 2001, Russian President Vladimir Putin has brought up the idea of a Greater Europe on several times. Between 2002 and 2011, the general outlines of the Greater Russia program's architecture gradually emerged. President Vladimir Putin proposed a Greater Europe made up of two integration blocs. The first one is the Western bloc of the European Union which include 27 European states, where Germany would hold the hegemonic position. The second one is the Eastern bloc, which would include the newly formed post-Soviet Republics and Russia. The two blocs would create a partially integrated zone of security, energy and economic cooperation, and human interactions by establishing agreements and creating cooperative organisations. The establishment of such a region, however, would not force Russia and its neighbours to progressively embrace European norms and values, nor would it restrict Russia's ability to balance between other global power centers in its foreign policy. The Russia would prioritize the development in Greater Europe's Eastern region, so that the Eurasian integration would take precedence over pan-European integration. For this purpose, Russian President Vladimir Putin promoting several major goals of Russia in Eastern Europe that are as follows:

1. Increasing Russia's potential by bringing in technology and wealth from Eastern Europe.
2. Enhancing Russian influence on European security, politics, and economies, especially through the development of cooperative relationships and asset exchanges.
3. Establishing Russian hegemony in the CIS region, gaining European recognition of this hegemony, and restraining US, Chinese, EU, NATO, and NATO-led economic and political expansion in the CIS region.
4. Reducing the US presence and influence in the Eastern Europe.

In this regard, Russia is aimed to focus on putting into action its primary concern project of Eurasian integration, which is based on organisations like the Eurasian Union or Custom Union (Menkiszak, 2013).

The revival of empire, global power status, and sphere of influence that Russia dramatically lost 30 years ago with the fall of the Soviet Union in December 1991 are assets that Russia wants to bring back and President Vladimir Putin plays a significant role to get back Russian prestige. For this purpose, Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin took several measures, from diplomacy and propaganda to cyberattacks and open war. This can be seen when Russia used force to seize two breakaway portions of Georgia in 2008, and most definitely after his takeover of Crimea in 2014 (Ash, 2022).

3.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF CRIMEA AND UKRAINE FOR RUSSIA

In Eastern Europe, the main focus of our study are Ukraine and Crimea that have great significance for Russia because of western increased influence in the region. The current East-West conflict over Ukraine has been drastically exacerbated by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. This turning what was primarily an economic and diplomatic issue, especially between US and Russia, into a major geopolitical catastrophe.

Ukraine is a post-Soviet state, and Crimea is a peninsula on its northern Black Sea coast. In implementing Russia's geostrategic goals, these regions are important. Strong political, economic, and cultural or social relations exist between Russia and Ukraine. Moreover, Russia also sees Ukraine as being crucial to its identity as there were around 8 million ethnic Russians in Ukraine and for its aspirations to become a global power.

Important aspects of Ukraine and Crimea for Russia are as follows:

Rich in resources: In the east, where Ukraine is located, the geographical boundaries are mostly open and flat which makes Ukraine as one of the most successful agricultural regions in the world.

Also, this country is rich in oil, gas, minerals, and Black Soil which adds a lot of wealth and in the Eastern Ukraine, Donetsk basin contains significant coal reserves and mines. Furthermore, due to the Chernobyl nuclear calamity in 1985, Ukraine became well-known all over the world. The nation also enjoys a number of nuclear power plants in addition to nuclear reactors and the nuclear

energy also accounts for 45.1% of the total consumption of the country and is therefore at risk from military attacks. The biggest nuclear power plant in Europe is the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station in Southeast Ukraine. This is also in top ten largest nuclear power plants in World. The nuclear power facility attracted Russia's attention, and it has even been under its authority since 2022 (Störk, 2015).

MAP 3. 1. NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN UKRAINE



Source: World Nuclear Association

Superpower image of Russia: Several Russian leaders believed that the independence of Ukraine from the empire was a historical mistake. This poses a challenge to Russia's position as a superpower after the disintegration of Soviet Union. Many people would view Russia losing control of Ukraine permanently and allowing it to drift towards the West as a severe blow to Russia's prestige worldwide. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, saw the escalating battle with Ukraine in 2022 as a part of a greater conflict with Western forces, who he claimed were attempting to destroy Russia.

Crimea: Crimean Peninsula's natural resources are worth \$10.8 billion. The Black Sea is thought to have abundant energy resources, many of which have a potential worth in the trillions of dollars.

Another important and vital economic channel for Russia that provides a direct connection to the world's markets is the Black Sea (Masters, 2022).

MAP 3. 2. NATURAL RESOURCES IN CRIMEA



Source: Platts ChornomorNaftogaz

The Black Sea is a key geostrategic site in the region for the Russian Federation, which keeps a watch on military and commercial ships there. Prior to Russia gaining control of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, Ukraine possessed the longest Black Sea coastline. Sevastopol is home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which is vital to Russia and Russia benefits militarily from its presence in the region. Russia could participate in tactical moves, as it did during the Georgian-Russian conflict in 2008 (Störk, 2015).

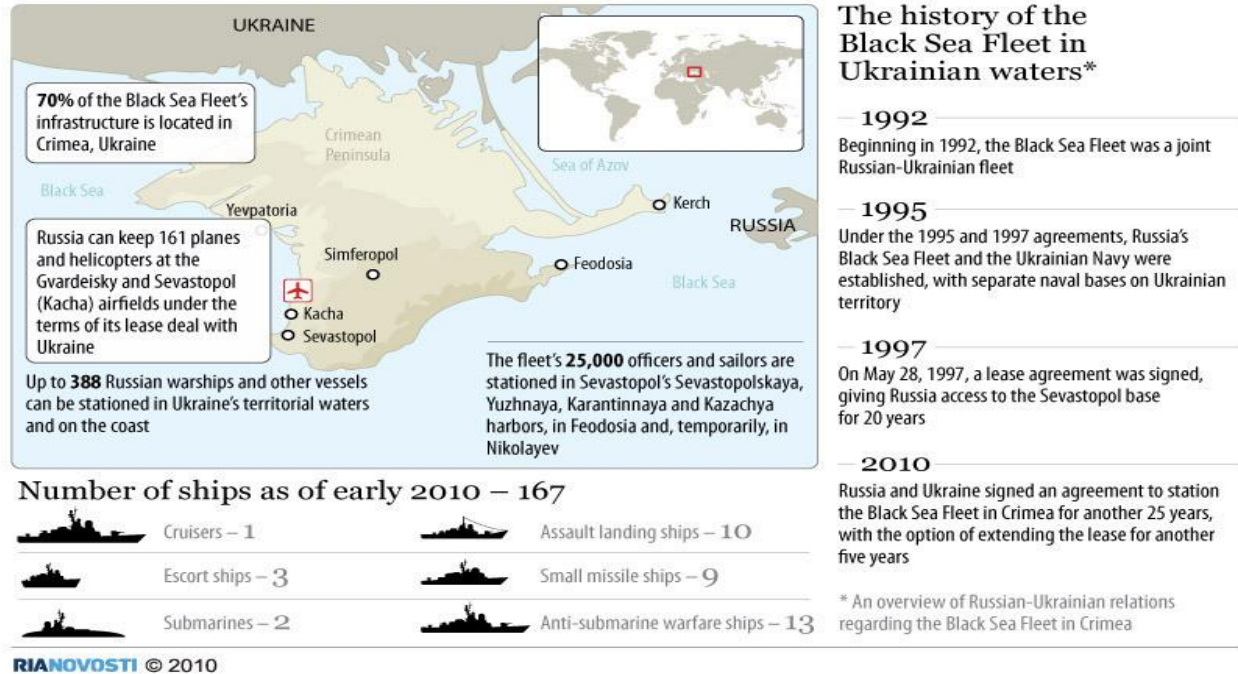
As one of the biggest naval bases in the Black Sea, Sevastopol is home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet and Russia has a strong military presence. It also features a warm water port, a natural harbor, and extensive infrastructure. The Black Sea Fleet, based in Sevastopol, offers Russia the ability to assert control over the Black Sea and its surrounds and serves as a compelling symbol of Russian strength or dominance. It serves as the operational hub for Russia's recently formed Mediterranean Task Force. Russia's influence and position in the region increased as a result of the Task Force's continued activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Black Sea Fleet is still capable of defending off maritime threats from other governments on the land to Russian interests

inside the Black Sea. This also provides Russia vital strategic defence capabilities as a result of holding sovereignty over the Crimea (Montfort, 2014).

MAP 3.3. BLACK SEA FLEET OF RUSSIA IN CRIMEA

Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine

The deployment of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea has been extended for another 25 years. Russia has the option to extend the lease by an additional five years



Source: Russian Council

Since 1853, Russia's geopolitical competitors have evolved little in the Black Sea area, with US and NATO who are taking the place who altered European countries as the dominant ones. In order to counteract and NATO and US eastward expansion and their activities in the Central and Aegean Mediterranean, the military source is only Crimea for Russia and the ultimate objective is to gain entry and the establishment of a military presence in that region (Toucas, 2017).

Trade and Energy: For a long time, Russia was the major economic or trading ally of Ukraine, but recently, things have changed radically. Before occupying Crimea, Russia sought to integrate Ukraine into its single market, such as the EEU. For many years, Russian consumers in Eastern and Central Europe received their natural gas through Ukrainian pipelines and Ukraine also gets most of its energy requirements supplied by Russia. The Ukraine is heavily dependent as a result. Late in 2022, despite the hostilities between the two countries, Russian gas still passed into Ukraine but the pipeline continued to be in severe risk.

MAP 3. 4. RUSSIAN GAS PIPELINE NETWORK PASSED THROUGH UKRAINE



Source: East European Gas Analysis, National Gas Union of Ukraine

Political sway: In 2004, Russia was eager to maintain its political influence in Ukraine after its favored political leader as Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich lost to a reformist challenger as part of the Orange Revolution. After voters rejected the Orange administration in 2010, with the backing of Russia, Yanukovich was elected president of Ukraine and the main aim of Russia to support him was to secure influence throughout the former Soviet Union (Masters, 2022).

Due to its geostrategic and geopolitical significance, Ukraine and Crimea among other Eurasian states play a dominated role in the geostrategic policies of Russian that focuses making Russia great again. That's why Russia even use assertive policies and offensive tactics in Crimea and Ukraine.

To recover its superpower position or carry out its geostrategic plans, Russian officials want to bring Ukraine, particularly Crimea, into an economic, political, and military zone under Russian control. Tensions occasionally developed in Crimea, the only region of Ukraine where ethnic Russians make up the majority of the population. Ukraine administration wanted an independent political, social and economic system without any Russian influence especially after orange revolution that's why they showed great interests to inclined with west. Up to 96 percent of Ukrainians are in support to join the EU, while 91 percent are currently in support of NATO membership and only 2% of people claim to have a positive attitude towards Russia, while 92 percent claim to have a negative one (Palikot, 2022). That's why they seek to stop Ukraine from moving towards west by fueling political unrest and encouraging economic problems, which would make it more expensive for the West to help Ukraine, which is also an essential Russian geostrategic goal. Russia is ready to pay a larger price than the US or the EU because Ukraine is more important to Russia and President Vladimir Putin than it is to the West (GRAHAM, 2017).

3.6 RUSSIAN INTERESTS IN UKRAINE AND CRIMEA

Russia under presidency of Vladimir Putin has been characterized as a revisionist country that is enthusiastic to restore its past prominent role and power that they basically lost. For Gerard Toal, a professor of International Relations, "It was always Vladimir Putin's intention to restore the Russian status of a great power in northern Eurasia. The end goal was not to re-establish Soviet Union. But the Vladimir Putin desire to make Russia great again or a super power."

Russia strengthened its control over a key base on the Black Sea by capturing Crimea in 2014 and in this way, Russia was also able to contain the western influence in the region. Russia can project power further into the other regions such as in Middle East, Mediterranean, and North Africa with a more advanced, powerful and larger military presence there.

In many ways, Russia's abrupt invasion of the Crimean Peninsula is a great attempt to increase its influence on the Ukraine government that was more inclined towards west. The apparent intention of Russia to acquire Crimea was not an end and seems like Russia is behaving in a more complex way. Therefore, it is important to interpret the situation correctly. By leveraging Crimea and the instability Russia has sparked in Ukraine's eastern and southern areas. Russia intends to pressure Ukraine into adopting a whole different form of government that fulfil Russian interests.

Federalization is a prospect that Russia prefers since it would allow Ukraine's regions as in extensive political as well as financial autonomy. This policy was promoted particularly those that are dominated by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians who speak Russian. Basically, a significant separatist movement emerged in Crimea following the official dissolution of the Soviet Union. They rejected affiliations with Ukraine and moving closer to Russia and Crimean leader Yuri Meshkov, the self-declared leader of Crimea, tried to reintegrate the region into Russia. He also builds strong political links with Russia but Leonid Kuchma, the president of Ukraine at the time, was able to settle the issue by enforcing a policy of moderation. Kuchma wisely avoided to use force to fight with separatists. He also providing inviting financial incentives to Crimean elites in return for their loyalty and support to Ukraine. Crimea was given autonomous status under the 1996 Ukrainian constitution. This was included a 100-member parliament and regional leaders who functioned under a Prime Minister of Crimea. The territory was officially known as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Although its institutions only have a relatively small number of rights that mostly relate to administrative, social, and economic matters and even the right to take legislative action is absent from the parliament. Russia believed that the internal disparities and unresolved issues in Crimea were useful instruments for influencing Ukraine strategic choices at the time. As a result, Russia began promoting existing pro-Russian groups, media channels, political parties and many more and the Russian strategy worked out very well and that became evident in 2006 when a NATO-Ukraine military drill in the area was halted by a large group of furious Russians from Crimea. Throughout this time, extremely powerful pro-Russian sentiments continued to rule Crimea (KONOŃCZUK, 2014).

Some scholars argue that Vladimir Putin became more determined to use military force to advance his foreign policy objectives as a result of the West's refusal to hold Russia accountable for annexing Crimea. Up to its invasion in 2022, Russia's strategic interests in the Ukraine also got more and more risky. Russia has increased negotiation power with Ukraine as a result of aiding the separatists' rebels. According to Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukrainians and Russians are "one people" who have the same historic and cultural area". So, the Russian invasion in Ukraine is not only to secure economic and political interests but also to secure Russian identity. This also shows Russia struggle for ontological security and international recognition of global status.

3.7 ROLE OF RUSSIA'S ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION SEEKING

Russian ontological security and struggles for international recognition play a dominant role in shaping the perceptions of President Vladimir Putin who made Russian policies accordingly and also explains the causes and implications of Russia's increasingly changing and assertive foreign policy.

The notion of ontological security, often known as security of identity, emphasizes that it is crucial to have a strong sense of who you are in order to maintain your emotional and cognitive orientation to the outside world. This approach implies a fundamental interconnection between ontological security seeking at different levels including individual, social, and governmental levels. In an ever-changing socio-historical setting, developing a meaningful self-articulation is a process that constitutes ontological security. State-society complexes are created through social interactions with outsiders as well as personal journey. As a result, a state-society complex that is ontologically secure is one who's reflexively generated and explicit self-identification that supported by historical roots is acknowledged at a certain historical point by relevant people at domestic and international level.

Since recognition is a phenomenon that is fundamentally intersubjective, the self-backs up its assertion of individual development in the framework of recognition. Given that wanting to be recognized is one of the essential human desires, it is not surprising that the struggle for recognition is at the center of many socio-political conflicts, from local to global. Recognition ensures that the self-identity formed naturally is consistent with how other people see the state and society under evaluation. This harmony is necessary for the general perception of ontological security. On the other hand, rejecting a certain state or society as they understand it will damage and undermine the strong sense of identity and jeopardies its sense of ontological security. In this situation, a state will face a crucial foreign policy challenge. the main issue to face are how to uphold the prevailing collective self-image and secure international recognition of it in order to reduce the general public's sense of ontological insecurity.

3.8 CHALLENGES TO RUSSIA'S ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY

Russia's ontological security situation now is greatly influenced by history. Russia has always been referred to as "an indescribable entity" while being frequently described in imperial terms. In addition to facing off various physical threats, Russia has struggled badly to create a powerful biographical narrative and gain the respect of the international states. These difficulties have had a significant impact on Russian self-identity, the ontological security, and ultimately on its foreign policy. The biographical narrative that is currently popular and supported by the Russian President Vladimir Putin is ambiguous. It starts in Kyivan Rus's medieval era. When the Mongol-Tatar invasion occurs after 1237, the biographical narrative continues. Later, the state of Muscovy was established on the territory of North-East Rus in the second part of the 15th century after Mongol fall. Muscovy's rulers adopted the imperial system of governance based on the notion of divinely appointed power as it expanded in both power and territory. They recreated a unified system called "responsive authoritarianism." In the past, Russia's imperial expansion confronted a distinctive combination of connected ontological and physical security issues. It was difficult to create a self-concept that would explain how different conquered peoples and ethnic Russians fit together as a unified entity. As Russia made the transition to modernity, which was described by the creation of an international society based on Europe and the rise of nationalism, this task become even more difficult. Russia began to copy modern standards in the context of the world's socially stratified environment as it came to adopt them. Russian recognition was important to the general impression of ontological security since Russia aspired to claim its "rightful" position in contemporary European international society. The opponents emphasized variances between West and Russia and promoted the historical significance of Russia as the center of its own civilization founded on moral superiority, Orthodox spirituality, and distinctive culture. This early resistance to the repetition of the West resulted in the rise of the Slavophile as well as Eurasianist movements that helped to sustain Soviet empire in the middle of the 19th century. And also, in the beginning of the 20th century, respectively, when the drive toward Westernization enhanced the full extent of the collective identity crisis as well as ontological insecurity in Russia. By adopting an assertive foreign policy toward the West and portraying Russia as greater and superior to the "decaying" West, Slavophiles and Eurasianist aimed to inverted the Russian-Western relationship.

The advent of nationalism in the late 18th century, when the Republics and empire of Russia were obliged to coexist "like oil and water", was not an easy task. This is like to blend together different nationalities in a single emulsion but really maintaining their distinct identities. This further hampered Russia's struggle for a unified identity. The deeply divided nature of the Russian self-identity and biographical narrative was supported by such contrasting impulses of uniting and separating peoples and civilizations. The desire to be acknowledged as a separate European/Western power rather than any other major power was greatly fueled by Russia's self-identification as a counter to Europe and, after 1945, the US or West. But the foreign powers nor recognized Russia as a global power. Strong resentment against the West as a result of its failure to accept Russia as a super power of the world was a sign of the ontological insecurity that still persisted. Hostility of the West, which was continued by Western unwillingness to recognize Russia as a Western great power, played a significant role in the formation of contemporary Russian identity. It's significant that contemporary Russian opinions of Russia's interactions with Europe and West show a strong propensity for securitizing identity. In fact, not even the 1917 revolution, which intended to fundamentally alter Russia's identity like as the West, succeeded in creating a strong sense of self and ontological security. However, the Soviet Union remained ontologically unstable due to rivalry between imperial and national centers of identity. The emphasis on a single territoriality was an attempt by Soviet authorities to create a sense of unity. The Soviet Union's transnational character, however, remained intrinsically Russian-centric. While the Soviet Union waged strong rivalry in the early years in the ideological and military-political domains, it was unable to convince the West that it was a major power with a developed social system. Widespread public support existed for the idea of becoming "more like the West", particularly among well-educated urban, intellectuals, and pro-capitalist influentials of the society. The Soviet leadership once more publicly accepted that Russia was a part of the West in a struggle to save the crumbling Soviet economy and create a closer to West democratic socialist identity.

3.9 STRUGGLE FOR ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY AND RECOGNITION IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

The ontologically doubtful connection with the West maintained as one of the fundamental aspects in forming Russian identity. The search for a meaningful self-image in Russia was greatly

challenged by the country's complex demography and conflicting attitudes regarding its communist history amid a crumbling institutional framework, eroding moral structure, and overall internal instability. Early in the 1990s, a number of competing biographical narratives promoted divergent self-images that suggested divergent foreign policy orientations. It's noteworthy that all stories agreed on one thing in particular, specifically, that Russia is a major power. The main goal was to elevate Russia to the same level of prominence as countries like Germany, France, and the US in the West. But Russia was not to be incorporated into the core Western culture, in the perspective of the West. The basic foundation of the general sense of ontological security was shaken by the West's rejection to acknowledge Russia's great power self-image. The government-led biographical narrative began to take on Slavophile, communist and Eurasianist self-images by the middle of the 1990s. This redefining of Russia as a bridge between Asia and Europe that also possessing of distinct values and an identity superior to those of the West. With this adjustment to its self-description, Russia's foreign policy shifted from one of open rivalry with the West, notably the US, to a policy of non-collaborative and restricted partnership. By limiting American hegemony and promoting great power balance in what Russia views as a multipolar international order, Russia hopes to win Western recognition of its great power position. As a significant Eurasian power, Russia views the former USSR region or the Near Abroad as its unique and important area of interest.

Contradictions about Russian identity continued after Vladimir Putin took office. By 2005, Russian president Vladimir Putin had changed his mind and was stressing how long Russia had been a powerful European nation. Regarding international policy, Russia maintained a tremendous power balance by cooperating strategically with the US in the fight against terrorism. However, when the West persisted in refusing to acknowledge Russia's perception of itself as a great power, Russian self-description clearly changed. It is moving towards a nationalist and anti-Western biographical narrative. In particular, the 2014 annexation of Crimea was seen as a sign of Russian revival and re-emergence in Russian society. Russian president Vladimir Putin used the term "Russian World," refers to as "the living space for the Russian-speaking world which include millions of people. It is a community that extends well beyond Russia itself." This defends assertive foreign policy stance of Russia. The Russian World places a strong emphasis on upholding Russian identity rooted in historical and spiritual principles. Russian world

also to protect Russian interests, particularly in opposition to the West, and demonstrating Russia's tremendous power (Narozhna, 2021).

3.10 GRAND STRATEGY OF RUSSIA

The art of balancing means and ends is known as grand strategy which entails deliberate activity. The emphasis on high-level issues of national concern and the extensive use of military, economic, political, social and diplomatic means to further the national interests are characterize as a Grand strategy. In relation to the conduct of its first two post-communist Foreign Ministers of Russia, Andrei Kozyrev and Yevgeni Primakov, Russia has developed its foreign strategy but their policies are ineffective. Primakov declared shortly after taking office that he wanted to restore Russia's status as an independent state in international relations and put an end to Kozyrev's concern with the West at the sacrifice of national interests of Russia

Primakov's methods for attaining the stated objectives, however, proved to be overly expensive, and the Russia quickly had to come up with a more cost-effective strategy for preserving the interests of the state. By the time Vladimir Putin arrived as the president of Russia in 1999–2000 when the political elite in the country had already agreed on the grand strategy for the nation. The joint consensus generated that had two key definitions of Russia's international strategic goals. First one is the domination of Russia in the former Soviet Union and second one is the worldwide influence as an independent power (Tsygankov A. P., 2011).

Certainly, any rational leader would point out that every state acting within the framework of the international system of anarchy has this as its goal. In fact, the majority of realistic theories of International Relations are built on the premise that regime and territory "security" serve as the basic national interests. Russian geostrategic thinking shows how Russia views its security environment, the risks to that security, and lastly its means of obtaining security. The factors that led to this major geostrategic agenda included geography, culture, history, internal politics, and the rivalry amongst other global powers.

3.11 RUSSIAN GEO-STRATEGIC APPROACH

Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin developed a geostrategy in the 21st century for its security or to fulfill its national interests. For that purpose, Russia protects its ontological or identity security and regain its international recognition of superpower. In this process, Eastern Europe particularly Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula play an important role where the power politics of Russia is seen very prominently. That's why the region become a center of attraction for world powers in the 21st century.

The "territorial imperative," and even the desire of the Russian leadership, particularly President Vladimir Putin is to maintain power over the post-Soviet region as its sole "sphere of influence." It is the most significant factor in determining Russia's foreign policy and the key pillars of the Russian geostrategic approach are that Russia is a "heartland" state. This means that Russia is a link between emerging markets, and that its unique circumstances dictate a particular style of politics, with its vast populated territory and ongoing occupation threat necessitating the establishment of a powerful central government. With a multipolar world, this strategy emphasizes the significance of Eurasia as one of the global centers of power (MONAGHAN, 2013).

3.12 RUSSIAN GRAND STRATEGY “ENDS”

The "ends" that Russian grand strategy aspires to are the primary goals and overall interests of the Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin in the international system. If "national interest as security" is too broad to be effective, this can be used to split down that comprehensive national interest into numerous crucial aims that add up to a grand strategy. First, Russia wants to establish an exclusive and accepted sphere of influence over the former Soviet Union's territory in order to guarantee its social, political, military and economic security. According to this vision, Russia would have a favorable position of influence over the international and internal policies of the nations under its influence. It also prohibits other powerful nations such as US from pursuing spheres of influence that are solely Russia's interests.

Secondly, in regions with many great power's presence, such as the Middle East, or without a single regional superpower such as the Arctic, Russia wants to take a strong position to make

decisions and a strong voice on matters. In other words, it represents Russia as a world super power with influence on a global scale.

US also wants to maintain a dominate role in the post-Soviet zone and across the globe. So, first two ends cause a lot of conflict between Russia and US. Accordingly, Russia tries to control and restrain the US uncontested one-sided advancement of its aims and interests around the globe to accomplish its grand strategic goals. The post-Soviet zone, where Russia is attempting to counter NATO influence in the Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula, is where this task is most vital. Russia needs to drive push the US out of the area to expand its sphere of influence in the region.

Last but not least, undermining Euro-Atlantic unity, encouraging the EU and NATO's dissolution, and to raise tensions between other global and regional powers are also the end of Russian geostrategy (Sivitsky, 2015).

3.13 RUSSIAN GRAND STRATEGY “MEANS”

The measures taken by Russia to accomplish its goals are referred as the ‘Means’ of Russian grand geo-strategy. The fact that Russia has been able to pursue increasingly more aggressive means of accomplishing its goals because its financial capabilities. The economy of Russia has increased since 2000 and is particularly significant in this debate. The 2000’s saw a decade of significant economic development in Russia following a terrible decade of economic collapse in the 1990s. In reality, the primary factors limiting Russian economic development under President Vladimir Putin were the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, the drop in oil prices, and the sanctions following the Crimea invasion in 2014. The most prevalent reason for Russia's economic development is that Russian president Vladimir Putin's firm control over the country that brought the economic stability. A wider economic growth supported increased military spending. Higher GDP and higher defence spending rates led to higher defence expenditures. The pursuit of Russia's great strategic goals certainly extends well beyond military spending. But it is evident that the resources required for Russia to follow the "means" of grand strategy have grown significantly since 2000.

3.14 RUSSIAN GRAND STRATEGY “WAYS”

Russia's strategic goals for the twenty-first century have stayed mostly constant over the past seventeen years. But the policies and "ways" of grand strategy have experienced a significant transformation. Generally speaking, since Vladimir Putin's selection as the president in 2000, there have been various major phases of Russian foreign policy orientations. Period from 2000 to 2003 was marked by Russian president Vladimir Putin's accommodating and pragmatic foreign policy toward the US to secure concessions on important Russian interests like the preservation of the anti-ballistic Missile Treaty and the prevention of NATO expansion to the east. From 2003 to 2007, a "soft balancing" strategy took its place and since 2007, Russia's foreign policy has been characterized as an "irregular balancing" strategy. Since 2014, when Russia intervened and took control of the Crimean Peninsula to weaken NATO's influence and protect its national interests, this strategy has become much more rigid (Person, 2019).

Since then, Russian President Vladimir Putin act aggressively in the international system to end up the unipolarity of the US by promoting Russia as another global power and leading that global power internationally. That's why the Russian grand geostrategy under the presidency of Vladimir Putin is the center of attraction in the international system in 21st century.

CHAPTER 4

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS STRATEGIC POLICIES IN UKRAINE AND CRIMEA SINCE 2012-2023

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Since collapse of the USSR, Russia's foreign policy has gone through stages of evolution that could be ranged from Pro-Western Diplomacy (from 1991 till 1995), Multi-polar Diplomacy (from 1996 till 2000), Power Pragmatism (2000 onwards), Cooperation and Stability Diplomacy (2009-2013), and Diplomacy of Great Power (2014 till now). However, the maintaining of Russia's standing as a great power and one of the world's power centers has been outlined as the primary objective in all versions of Foreign Policy Concept of the Russia since 2000. Another important factor of Russian Foreign Policy is establishing a good-neighbor zone outside Russia's borders and to take steps to reduce existing conflict and tension hotspots and avoid the creation of new ones in areas close to the Russian Federation. Russian Policy also focuses on to enhancing public opinion of the Russian Federation globally and to spread Russian culture and language among Russian citizens living abroad.

4.2 RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TRENDS SINCE 1999

4.2.1 MULTIPOLAR DIPLOMACY

In 1999, when Vladimir Putin assumed power as Prime Minister, it was era of multipolar diplomacy when Russian foreign policy's main goal focused on restoring Russia's position as a key power and promoting multipolar world. In that era, Russia was not in favor of North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Eastward Expansion because it was damaging Russian interests of strengthening relations with CIS states , Africa and Latin American regions. It also posed a threat to Russian security, objecting NATO's military use against other states was one significant decision of Russia and for this purpose it strongly condemned NATO's air strikes in Yugoslavia in 1999. In 2000, Russia also established strategic partnership with India in order to counter

position of the United States. Between 2001 and 2004, Russian foreign policy was committed to Great Power Pragmatism, and main goal was creating a favorable external environment that could help in promoting social and economic development, and also restoring its Great player position. The 9/11 attacks were proved an opportunity for Prime Minister Putin's government to stabilize the relations with the West that were affected after Kosovo war of 1999. It allowed the stationing of US troops in Central Asian Region and also provided counter-terrorism intelligence to help US in winning war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Russian foreign policy approach included to strengthen cooperation with NATO. And for it, both sides established Russia-NATO Council in 2002. Another aim of Foreign policy was to enhance relations with the European Union countries. In May 2003, the EU-Russia through St. Petersburg Summit set up goals for cooperation in economics, security (both domestic and external security), and in fields of culture, education and science. Moreover, Russia also focused on developing and strengthening relations with CIS countries, and with Eurasian Economic Community. In 2002, Russia founded Collective Security Treaty Organization, that is an intergovernmental military alliance. The alliance was established in order to strengthen military cooperation between Russia and its Eastern European neighbors including Belarus, Armenia and Kazakhstan (Secrieru, 2006).

4.2.2 NEO-SLAVISM APPROACH

In the years between 2005 and 2009, Russian Federation was committed to Neo-Slavism foreign Policy. The idea behind Slavism is that Russia should resurrect an empire with the three East Slavic nations of Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia at its heart and serve as a mediator between both Western and Eastern civilizations. Neo-Slavism approach rejects the idea of total Westernization. Russia on one hand however cooperated with the US but also countered it when the US actions were against Russian interests. It showed opposition towards U.S plan of deploying anti-missile system in the region of Eastern Europe. Moreover, Russia made an objection that Georgia and Ukraine were included in the NATO's Eastward expansion. The "colour revolutions" that were instigated in the CIS region by the Western countries were perceived as major threats to Russian geopolitical interests and stability by President Putin. He also believed that Russian Federation should determine its process of democratic development independently according to geopolitical, historical and national factors. This policy preserved Russia's influence among CIS for a long time

and, to some extent, consolidating its great power status. Russia also resisted color revolutions in CIS countries.

Moreover, during 2008-2009, Dmitry Medvedev's served as President of Russian Federation. The main goal of Medvedev's foreign policy was for Russia to become fully integrated into world affairs on equal basis with NATO and the European Union, while maintaining a practical approach to world affairs based on the advancement of Russian goals. This is reflected in foreign policy documents released by the President Medvedev's government, such as the May 2009 release of the Russian National Security Strategy until 2020 and the July 2008 approval of the New Russian Foreign Policy Concept. The two documents update previous versions that were adopted under Putin's administration. They largely repeat the same argument that Moscow wants to create a global order based on shared decision-making, security indivisibility, and the supremacy of international law while simultaneously protecting its "privileged interests" and avoiding any hostile interference therein. In those years, Russia also maintained close cooperation with the EU states in several fields including trade, energy and economics (Evans, 2008).

4.2.3 COOPERATION AND STABILITY DIPLOMACY

During 2009 to 2013, Russia focused on maintaining Cooperation and Stability Diplomacy. The main aims were to maintain Russian status as a great power and Russia US strategic stability, stabilizing socio-political conditions in the country. and most importantly, to advance foreign policy of cooperation with other states and to avoid being in conflict situations.

4.2.4 NEAR ABROAD

The foreign policy of Russia towards its near neighbors has been convoluted since 1991 and has included overlapping strategies that have ranged from supporting to interventionist, from peaceful to violent. The fourteen nations that comprise the Near Abroad are former Soviet Union states that include Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Moreover, The Pan-European Regional Council (PERC) is the framework for cooperation with labor unions between Russian Federation and Eastern European nations, such as Ukraine and Georgia.

In that era, Russia aimed to focus on developing economic partnerships with Post-soviet states. Russia formed Customs Union in 2010 under the Eurasian Economic Community framework, in order for promoting economic integration. It also established a common economic space with Kazakhstan and Belarus in 2010 and 2012. Moreover, it also signed a free trade area treaty with eleven CIS states except Georgia. The Cooperation and stability Diplomacy was adopted for many reasons, that a cooperative foreign policy was required for Russian Federation's Modernization; Russia acknowledged that it was in its interests to gradually improve its position within the current international system; and It was essential for Russia to engage in economic cooperation with other nations in light of economic globalization and at the time of economic crisis.

4.2.5 GREAT POWER DIPLOMACY

The Russian Federation considers regional economic integration as a significant attribute of emerging as a great Power and also to counter other powers' influence in the region. Hence Russia has been following Great Power Diplomacy since the year 2014 in order to emerge as a key player in the World. Its foreign policy objectives include to maintaining Moscow's hegemonic position in the Eastern Europe and among CIS states. The Eurasian Economic Union was founded in January 2015 by Russia and its partner nations (Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia) under the leadership of the President Putin government to advance economic integration. In order to counter U.S. and European presence in the region, it has also been fostering anti-epidemic cooperation as well as economic and political relations with CIS nations.

Along with it, to form "Greater Eurasian Partnership" with the Eurasian Economic Union, ASEAN and Shanghai Cooperation Organization member nations has been a priority for Russia since 2016. Russia considers that the (Eurasian Economic) Union has a great chance to establish itself as one of the dominant, autonomous, and self-sufficient poles of the newly emerging multipolar globe and to serve as a hub for all sovereign states that uphold our ideals and desire to cooperate.

Russia's perception of taking West's efforts to pull Ukraine into NATO and its geostrategic orbit a major threat, and the ingrained Russian great power mentality are the main drivers behind the President Putin administration's implementation of great power diplomacy. According to this foreign strategy, Russia has increased its ties with Asia-Pacific nations and also annexed Crimea, but the Ukraine conflict of 2014 and losing it, has hindered Russia's modernization.

In addition to other fundamental principles, President Putin's foreign and security policy are also influenced by a focus on national interests and opportunism. The acquisition of Crimea, which was brought on by the Ukrainian crisis, and the intervention in Syria, where the US has reduced its presence, can be characterized as opportunistic measures that prioritize their own interests and address the current circumstances. Since 2014, it is evident that Russian foreign policy aims are preventing any further NATO expansion in Eastern Europe and reaffirming its position as a great power outside of the post-Soviet sphere.

Moscow's strategy is to fabricate facts in order to pressure its former allies turned adversaries, especially the United States, to recognize Russia's security interests as determined by Moscow, and accept Russia's significance as a great power to be taken seriously on the international stage.

4.3 RUSSIA-EASTERN UKRAINE CONFLICT

The protests started in November in 2013 in Ukraine because Viktor Yanukovich, the President of Ukraine at the time, refused to sign a trade agreement with the EU under Russian influence and accepted a bailout from Moscow. 2014 saw the beginning of the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Three months of public demonstrations resulted from that, and on February 22 Yanukovich was deposed. In Donbas, which consists of two major industrialized regions of Luhansk and Donetsk later saw eight years of conflict between Russian Troops and Ukraine's government forces.

4.4 RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

Russian Federation maintains historical claims on Crimea. The Russians held control of the Crimea's Peninsula in the times of Catherine the Great. Then they established principal port and city of the Peninsula named Sevastopol, as the base for their Black Sea Fleet. Till 1954, Crimea was a part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, but after establishment of Soviet Union, the peninsula became part of the Ukrainian part of the Soviet Socialist Republic.

Crimea was a territory of Ukraine till February 2014 but it had significant presence of Russian military bases from the time of Ukrainian independence. Moreover, till 2014, 60 percent of ethnic Russian majority was present in Crimea.

It seems that one reason for President Putin's decision to take control of Crimea was domestic politics. As compared to his first two presidential mandates (2000-2008), the economy was worsened when he became President for the third time in 2012. But his reelection appeal focused more on Russian nationalism instead of mentioning economic progress and improved living standards.

Ukraine has formally permitted the Russian Black Sea Fleet to station itself at the Crimean city of Sevastopol after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

In 2010, pro-Russian President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich signed Kharkiv Accords, authorizing Russia to continue stationing its fleet in Sevastopol till the year 2042.

The anti-government protests that began on November 21, 2013, in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, went by the moniker "Euromaidan," and they served as the catalyst for the entire crisis. Because they took place in Kiev's Maidan Nezalezhnosti and were focused on Europe, they are known as the "Euromaidan" protests (Independence Square).

Complex variables including the ethnic character of the Crimean population, the weakness of the Ukrainian military, the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, and the political unrest in Kyiv allowed Russia to control the Crimean peninsula.

Russian troops without any military decorations annexed Crimea in late February 2014. Russia had subtly strengthened its troop presence on the peninsula over the most of February. They took control of the Parliament or Supreme Council of Crimea and closed off the airports in Simferopol and Sevastopol. They also occupied Council of Ministers building in Simferopol. President Putin claimed that it was necessary for protection of Russian citizens in Crimea (Masters, 2022).

In 2014, President Vladimir Putin in one of his Parliament addresses, reclaimed that Crimea significant to Russia and has always been an important part in minds and hearts of Russians. In March 2014, the Parliament in Crimea voted to hold referendum for joining Russia. The Russian government claimed that more than 90% of voters favored Crimean annexation. Later on, President Vladimir Putin and Sergey Aksyonov, Russian appointed Prime Minister in Crimea, signed a document declaring that Crimea was now again part of the Russian territory. After that, Russian troops were stationed in Crimea officially. President Putin ordered clandestine invasion of Crimea, which he later called a rescue operation. He said Everything has a limit, and with Ukraine,

Western powers have gone too far. In March 2014, President Putin declared in a speech that formally annexed the country. Sevastopol and Crimea are returning to their home harbour, to their home port, and to Russia after a protracted, difficult, and exhausting sea journey, President Putin reclaimed after Crimean Annexation. He also claimed that Russian military intervention would save people of Eastern Ukraine and Crimea from Government of Ukraine, as it has been under influence of Nazis and is backed by Western powers. On 18th March 2014, Russia formally incorporated the state as 'Republic of Crimea'.

MAP 4. 1. RUSSIAN CONTROL OVER UKRAINE



Source: Forum Mapping

The Crimean Peninsula has always been of sole importance to the Russian Federation. The Black Sea Fleet, operated from Sevastopol, enables Russian Federation for increasing influence over the Black Sea. Additionally, the Black Sea Fleet also gives Russia a sizable operating capability in the region. For instance, Russia utilized the fleet in 2008 to conduct a blockade against Georgia and transport troops. Moreover, the K-300P coastal defense system and the BSF 11th Coastal Defense

Missile Brigade, that utilizes Yakhont anti-ship missile is also located in Crimea. This will also greatly improve Russian air capabilities and its defense on its southern flank.

Russia has always given special place to Ukraine in its Foreign policy. President Vladimir Putin considered and has claimed several times that Ukrainians and Russians are one nation. From another perspective, Russia considers immediate neighborhood as its influence zone. This indicates that Moscow considers that its neighbors have limited sovereignty, they are not really free in choosing their political system or formulating Foreign Policies. Hence Moscow claims that it has a right of interfering in the external as well as domestic policies of its neighborhood countries if it notices that Russian national security or interests in any case are jeopardized by them.

President Putin contends that Crimea has greater cultural ties to Russia than to Ukraine and has linked his actions there to feelings of emotional attachment and sense of identity.

Putin periodically started "gas wars" (in 2006, 2008, and 2009) in an effort to extort more energy from Ukraine and tighten Russia's grip on the country. Moscow interfered in Ukrainian events during the Orange Revolution of 2004 by openly supporting Viktor Yanukovich's presidential campaign. At that point, it was clear that Vladimir Putin had turned Ukraine into his own pet project. Putin started viewing the Ukrainian situation as a personal matter for Russia, which he could use to his advantage. One of the things causing the continuous conflict between Russia and Ukraine is the right to rule Crimea. The war between the two States intensified after Russia annexed Crimea, which led to Russian support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia mutually signed the Minsk II agreements in Capital of Belarus, Minsk on February 2015 in an effort to end the conflict. It was intended to put an end to hostilities in the insurgent districts and turn control of the border over to Ukrainian government forces. Delegates from Russia, Ukraine, the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe), and the heads of two pro-Russian breakaway districts all signed the document. However they were not implemented completely.

Realistically speaking, Russia views relations between Ukraine and the West as highly undesirable and views the United States as a threat. Russia's growing insecurity may be a factor in the country's efforts to exert more influence over its neighbors. According to the realism perspective, President Putin also thinks that Western interests should utilise their might to reduce Russia's global influence and raise their own. Putin did not want to risk losing Ukraine to the US and forfeiting all

of the strategic advantages that come with having Russia's foreign policy in the Near Abroad Crimea under its control. Thus, in an effort to maintain its dominance and further its interests in Ukraine, Russia decided to assume control of Crimea.

4.5 RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE 2022

Russian invasion of Ukraine marked the continuation of eight year old conflict between the two states. One of the factors that led to invasion was that in few years before 2022, Ukraine strengthened its connections with NATO despite the fact that it was not its member. Also, NATO named Ukraine as one of the significant opportunity partners in 2020. Additionally, Ukraine participated in several military drills with alliance. Moreover, Kiev reaffirmed its intention of becoming a member of NATO. Later in February 2022, Russia recognized Luhansk People's Republic Donetsk and People's Republic as two quasi-states in Donbas.

MAP 4. 2. RUSSIAN CONTROLLED REGION IN UKRAINE



Source: Institute for the Study of War

In the September 2021, Russia started deploy troops close to the Ukrainian border claiming it as training exercises. Moreover, in November 2021, it was revealed that around 100,000 were deployed. Russia began military operations in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Its troops entered

through Kharkiv from Crimea in the south, Belarus in the north towards Kyiv, and Russia in the Sumy region, which is also in northern part. (Jr., 2023).

After entering the Ukrainian territory Russian Military Troops took control of the whole Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant area on the first day of the invasion. Another significant win was of the Russians was to seize the Antonov airstrip, that is a crucial cargo airport located near the north of Kyiv.

According to President Putin, it was a "special military operation" meant to defend the Donbass population as well as "demilitarise and denazify Ukraine." He also claimed that the Ukrainians have become the hostage of Western powers who have influenced the state in military, economic and Political sense. Ukraine's government does not serve its own national interests instead it does of other countries. In order to preserve its security interests, Russia claimed that the deployment of troops along the border was necessary due to NATO's eastward expansion and Ukraine's ambition to join the alliance (Mearsheimer, 2022).

In first few weeks of the invasion, Russian forces managed to occupy Quarter of Ukrainian territory. On February 26, the Russian 22nd Army Corps surrounded Enerhodar and moved towards the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station to seize control, which is located around Daniper river and is Europe's largest Nuclear Power Plant. From Crimea, a third Russian strike group by Russian forces by the fifth of March as they Apart from the battle lines, Russian forces continued to occupy water and electricity systems.

Russian troops entered Kyiv's northwest outskirts on March 11. Presidebt Putin gave his approval for the sending of up to 16,000 Syrian militants.

By April, Russian troops entered Donbas region of Ukraine to take control of Donetsk and Luhansk, the Eastern front proceeded to march from the northwest towards Kyiv. Russian forces also occupied the centre of Severdonetsk in May. Moscow won the battles on the southern and southern-eastern fronts, taking Kherson in March while aiming to secure coast of Ukraine and Mariupol in May, which is a significant southeastern port city strategically. President Putin called the occupation of cities of Mariupol and Melitopol a "major success for Russia. He also claimed, within the Kerch Strait, the Sea of Azov "has become internal sea of Russia. The Russian army

also sieged the Azovstal steel plant. Lysychansk, the last Luhansk city under Ukrainian rule, was captured by Russia in July (Psaropoulos, 2022).

While in September 2022, the Ukrainian forces launched offensive attacks in the Northeastern part of the country, which resulted in collapse of Russian military lines. Although Russia had control over a large portion of Ukraine's southeast, Ukrainian forces claimed that they have retaken a

sizable portion of the Kharkiv region, which resulted in cutting off crucial supply routes. In order to counter the Ukrainian attack, Russia made it known that it intends to send reinforcements—roughly ten to twenty thousand troops in the eastern front. Later, on September 21, Russian President Putin announced ‘Partial Mobilization’. Meanwhile, referendums were held in Russian occupied areas for joining Russia. Most of the results were announced in favor of Russian annexation. They included 99% votes from Donetsk, 87% from Kherson and 98% from Luhansk.

MAP 4. 3. EXPANSION OF RUSSIAN MILITARY IN UKRAINE



Source: Institute for the Study of War

President Putin justified to use nuclear weapons to safeguard Russia's "territorial integrity," and for this, he ordered the mobilization of an additional 300,000 troops, and later on October 5th, declared four more Ukrainian provinces annexation that included Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Donetsk

and Kherson. He announced that Russia will be using all the resources in order to liberate these four regions. He also claimed that people living in those four provinces are becoming our citizens forever. After an explosion in October, Russia's bridge to Crimea, was destroyed. Russian authorities described the incident as a "terrorist attack". However, Ukraine has not taken responsibility. In response to bridge incident, Russia later launched a missile in retaliation. Starting on October 10, Russia started its most significant attacks on Ukraine in months, and occupied energy and military facilities. The attacks took place throughout fourteen regions including the Capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, Kirovohrad and Cherkasy (provinces located in Central Ukraine). On November 1st 2022, Russia announced that Partial mobilization has completed. However, attacks still took place between both Russian and Ukrainian forces (Zimmerman, 2022).

The annexation-affected areas will always be part of Russia, according to the Kremlin. Additionally, in December 2022, the main focus of the conflict was Bakhmut city in Eastern Ukraine. Later, the Russian forces also occupied a small town named Soledar. However, at the end of December, President Vladimir announced that Russia was ready to negotiate but Ukraine and the West refused to held talks and the Russian intervention is still going on.

In sum, throughout Putin's administration, Russia has worked to regain its international standing and sense of itself as a Great Power. Putin attempted to forge new relations with the West at the outset of his administration in 2000, and Moscow revised its national goals to deal with the ever-evolving barriers in international affairs and attempted to change the direction of its foreign policy accordingly. The results thus far have been uneven. On the one hand, Russia has reasserted its position as a major player in the world. President Putin has made an effort to benefit from the chances provided by Russia's key position in geopolitics. The development of closer ties with the CIS nations has been high on the agenda since Moscow wants to maintain a dominant position among the post-Soviet nations not only for reasons of prestige but also as a means of ensuring stability in its near abroad, where it has significant national interests. Russia's aggressive foreign policy measures increased as it reclaimed its position as a Great Power, supported by a stronger economy. In an effort to lessen Western influence in the region, the Kremlin has regained its arrogance and is once more engaging in traditional Realpolitik.

CHAPTER 5

WAR WITH UKRAINE: CHALLENGES FOR THE RUSSIAN GEOSTRATEGIC INTERESTS AND THE IMPLICATIONS (2012-2023)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Russia wanted to regain its status of global power that it had lost after the disintegration of soviet empire. For that purpose, Russia is trying to regain its influence and dominated rule on the post-soviet republics under the presidency of Vladimir Putin to ensure its survival as a global power and this is also the main tenet of the Russian geostrategic policies. But Russia faced many challenges to pursue this goal of becoming a global especially from west. That's why to counter the western influence is also a major objective of Russian geostrategic policies. Russia also provides alternatives to the western strategies and institutions such as CSTO and EAEU to attract the Eurasian region particularly Ukraine towards Russia. but the western influence increasing day by day which pose serious challenges for Russia to regain the statues of global status. These challenges also urged Russia to become offensive to purse its geostrategic goals. This offensive behavior of Russia can be seen in Crimea in 2014 and in Ukraine in 2022, where the influence from west expanded continuously. In this region Russia intervned by using its military to secure its interests and to counter NATO expansion and western collaboration with Crimea and Ukraine. These intervention by Russia also have certain implications for Russia. Russian interventions in Crimea and Ukraine impacted the state in many ways. The challenges are still there even after the Russian invasion in Crime and Ukraine. The war impacted the economy and military of Russia and also increased geostrategic challenges for the Russia.

5.2 CHALLENGES TO RUSSIAN GEOSTRATEGIC POLICIES

One of the pillars of European security over the past twenty years has been the expansion of the EU and NATO to encompass Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans. By undermining old barriers and laying new foundations for inter-European alliances in democracy, security and economic development, it has helped to the prosperity and peace of the whole continent but Russia has resisted these measures, even claiming excluded from them. Russia has thus stepped up its

opposition to the EU's and NATO's expansion ambitions by trying to stir up memories of geopolitical conflict and foreign invasion risks (Haar, 2020).

5.3 US AS EUROPEAN POWER

It is claimed that the United States became a major player in Europe initially irregularly in 1917–1919 and then in 1943–1946. Then US continuously starting to intervene in European matters in the late 1940s. From 1917 onward, the United States' grand strategy towards Europe can be summed up as preventing the hegemonic dominance of the continent by a hostile power or by any state or empire, like the German and Soviet empires. It was because US claim this state or empire would seek to prevent the United States from pursuing its national interests. This national interest particularly defined in economic terms. The main aim was to ensure the unipolarity and hegemony of US in the world. In comparison, the United States encouraged the emergence of the European Union as a "friendly" hegemon. It is because, starting with the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the European Economic Community and its predecessors contributed to the provision of coherence and capabilities in addressing the issues posed by Soviet forces and German. They also advance the Kantian concept that democracies are more tolerant than totalitarian or authoritarian civilizations. Still this US support of a role for the EU has its limitations as the US occasionally still tries to play off EU countries against one another and it has still not completely embraced a strong role for the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in possible competition with NATO. US, in late 1940s, began to think that Soviet power, in both ideological-economic and geopolitical terms, was likely to prevail throughout Europe at the expense of American values and interests in addition to those of the liberal democracies of the European sovereign states.

It is significant to keep in mind that American dominance was gradually established in Europe, not all at once. These economic and political efforts did not seem insufficient until close to the end of the decade, as Soviet influence and authority were being solidified deeper in the east. There was a growing belief that the US needed to forge a strategic partnership with the continent in order to increase confidence among the countries that were beginning to be referred to as West European countries. As a result, the US committed itself for the very first time firmly to defence other nations in case they suffered any threat from the authoritarian governments when it signed the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. NATO's primary goal was to limit the dominance of the Soviet

empire in Europe. The fact that NATO survived the end of the Cold War, which usually does not happen to alliances, was one of the most surprising aspects of the post-Cold War era. It was also notable that the US will not leave European continent at any cost, whether by removing all of its military forces and more significantly by reducing its strategic ties to the region. In the early years following the end of the Cold War, the United States played a major role in changing NATO. So that it could try to realize the fundamental strategic objective of seeking a Europe that is “Whole, Free, and at Peace” (Hunter, 2016)

NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) initiative was its most significant attempt to round these many circles and these three key objectives are as follows:

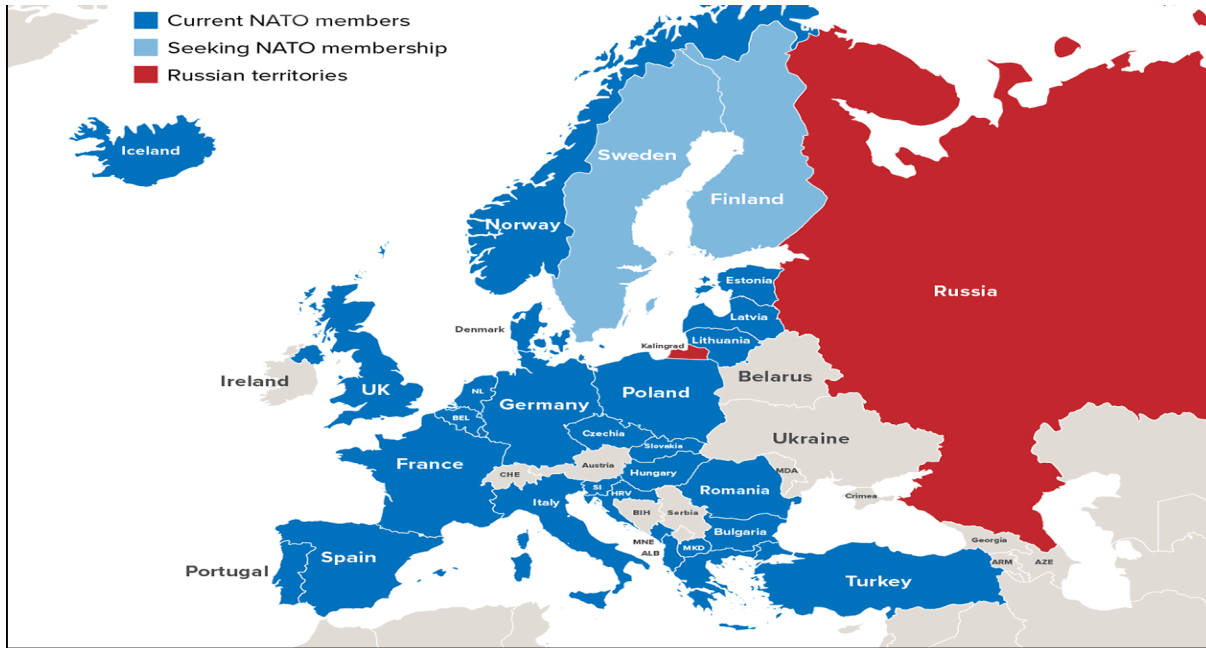
1. To assist in transforming and "socializing" the military of non-NATO countries involved that took part in PFP and, building on the adoption of Western norms and values, to positively influence larger society.
2. Helping aspiring states to develop their security capacities so they may become growers and not simply consumers of security.
3. Aiding states who would never become full members of NATO.

5.4 NATO EXPANSION AND RUSSIA'S LATER REACTIONS

In 1997, significant advancements were made in a chain of related phases. NATO decided to accept new three members. these include Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. A NATO-Russia Founding Act was also negotiated between NATO and Russia, and it included establishing a Permanent Joint Council at NATO Headquarters for the purpose of cooperation in 19 different sectors. Lastly, established a NATO-Ukraine Council at NATO Headquarters after negotiated a charter on an exclusive partnership between Ukraine and NATO. At the Strasbourg-Kehl summit in 2009, the official NATO stance on Ukraine and Georgia was restated as the two countries will eventually but not immediately join the alliance. Between 1999 and 2020, 14 East European nation-states successively joined NATO. The region achieved ground-breaking advances in establishing the foundations for diverse societies and democratic governments which pose threats to Russian interests. But Russia was never satisfied with NATO's growth, particularly in Eastern Europe and with the Russian invasion of Crimea in February 2014 and the escalation of Russian

military activity into other areas of Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin's Russia showed the aggressive reaction towards NATO expansion.

MAP 5. 1. NATO MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPE



Source: CNBC

In addition to its direct military interventions in Ukraine, Russia has also engaged in other activities across Central Europe. These activities include cyberattacks, economic espionage, energy market manipulation, direct or indirect propaganda campaigns, and efforts to undermine democratic institutions and practices in the Eurasian region. These initiatives also support what Russian President Vladimir Putin and others have been doing to lessen the possibility of liberal democratic politics and society flourishing in Russia. This is a topic that reflects similar views on issues concerning Russia's extending its authority outside its boundaries (Hunter, 2016).

US is trying to dominate in the European region by using its liberal international values and norms which pose severe challenges for Russian in the Eastern Europe that is basically the region of Russian interests. For that purpose, US used NATO as a tool to promote the security of the states and this compel Russia to adopt an offensive geostrategy to its own interests and security.

5.5 EU AS A CHALLENGE TO RUSSIAN RISE

Similar to NATO, the EU was unable to contain its hunger for expansion over time. This was most evident in its entry into the Western Balkans that have benefitted from EU membership and European resources since the closure of the Yugoslav conflicts. Also, the EU is actively involved in a number of security missions in this region. While the Western Balkans are where the EU's soft power is most effective because those on the EU's immediate borders can see the benefits of membership the most. The same reasoning was used farther east where Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine have all showed interest in joining the EU. Offering these states a chance would have required a political adjustment in Europe's ties with Russia that was always considered to be politically dangerous. With regard to both its economic policies and security arrangements, this is clear that eastward expansion strengthened the pillars of a modern European rules-based system and throughout the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, states in Eastern Europe under the supervision of the EU took significant measures to modernize their economic and security frameworks. Furthermore, between 2004 and 2009, the region also achieved significant success in establishing the foundations for diverse society and democratic governance when 11 East European nations joined the EU. Furthermore, throughout the last three decades, the EU's expansion policy has determined the political geography of the continent.

MAP 5. 2. EU'S MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPE



Source: European Union Council

EU is making a distinction between the ins and outs as well as between the major integration effort in Europe's potential members and non-members. The Central Europe, the Baltic States, and the Western Balkans as either full members or future members and through the Eastern Partnership initiative, more states in east were given integration opportunities. Allies are further strengthened their bond due to shared political principles by democracy and the rule of law. In a time when democracy is under threat both within and outside the neighborhood, the EU's role as democratic stabilizers is even more essential. Hungary, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Belarus's pro-democracy majorities look to the EU and the US for assistance in their own domestic conflicts (Haar, 2020).

5.6 UKRAINE CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE WEST

More than 25 years ago, the Ukrainian people made a profound choice in favors of independent, democratic, and the free market trends, but their aspiration of a fully functional, democratic state has only been partially achieved. Despite Ukraine's long history and widely acknowledged sovereignty, Russian aggression, pervasive corruption, and slow political cycles have all hindered the development of its democratic and free market institutions. After the demise of the Soviet Union, Ukraine developed into a very varied but weak democracy. During the 1990s, the political structure of the state changed in opposite directions. This system combining a liberal democratic frontline with a post-Soviet oligarch or a more authoritarian controlled transfer of money and power. The conflicts between these two political aspects of Ukraine resulted in two revolutionary cycles that essentially lasted from 1992 to 2004 and from 2005 to 2014 and in each of these cycles, a phase of broadly embraced democratic reforms was quickly replaced by fake democracy, which was primarily fueled by oligarchic competition. Later, authoritarian consolidation led to public unrest and, ultimately, regime change, which reset the cycle (Minakov, 2018).

Since 1992, Ukraine and NATO have cooperated on security-related topics, and in 1997, NATO established a commission for Ukraine to promote this collaboration in the absence of a formal membership agreement. By permitting NATO military action inside Ukraine along with Ukrainian military soldiers, NATO membership would significantly increase the level of international military assistance for Ukraine. Membership would boost Ukraine's relations to Europe and raise the possibility that it might do so, which is another strategic goal for the country. Additionally, joining NATO would reinforce the Ukraine relations to the US and enhance its military capabilities

that used to create deterrence against Russia. Russia cannot afford to have Ukraine move farther away from its area of influence by joining the other alliance. Even while Ukraine is getting closer to joining NATO, it doesn't appear possible that it will happen anytime soon. The Russian forces stationed on Ukraine's border pose a difficulty and all NATO members must unanimously accept a new state based on criteria including a functional democracy and "unresolved foreign territorial disputes." Secondly, Ukraine submitted a Membership Action Plan application in 2008. Under previous President Viktor Yanukovich, a Putin-backed candidate who did not had any goal to seek connection with NATO, this process ended in failure in 2010. Recently, Ukraine in the last decade, Ukraine has re-boosted its efforts to join NATO and this escalated confrontation with Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea because if Russia had not interfered in Crimea, Ukraine would have joined NATO. This would have led to the deployment of NATO forces in the Black Sea. A constitutional amendment affirming Ukraine's commitment to NATO membership was enacted in 2017 after which Ukraine created a National Security Strategy with the intention of strengthening its alliance with NATO by 2021 (Kocho-Williams, 2022). This close collaboration of Ukraine with west compel Russia to intervened in Ukraine in 2022 using its military. The Ukraine desire of becoming a NATO permanent member poses severe challenges to Russia geostrategic goals to dominate on post-soviet states because if Ukraine join NATO, then it would not come under the Russian influence.

5.7 BLACK SEA INVASION: RUSSIAN A2/AD LAKE

The takeover of Crimea occurs at a specific time when the traditional American strategy for projecting influence on a global scale was increasingly defined by an existential crisis, with all its game-changing implications for the entire Black Sea area. The fact that Russia increased its military presence in Crimea implies that the Black Sea area is rapidly embracing Anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) tendencies. In total, Russia intends to invest US \$151 billion by the end of the decade on modernizing its military and the Black Sea Force. In the larger Black Sea area, the geography is already changing as a result of the annexation of Crimea and previously referred to as a Russian lake, the Black Sea is now known as an A2/AD Russian bubble. Therefore, as Russia evolves into a mature A2/AD power, it may also use comparable unconventional subversive strategies inside the larger Black Sea. This may include challenging NATO costal states' territorial waters by making innovative claims over their energy perimeters and EEZs, activating an air

defence identification zone (ADIZ), or enforcing a maritime defence identification zone (MDIZ). With its activities in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea during the previous year, Russia demonstrated explicitly that it intended to undermine the European security system and its guiding principles. Beyond goals, Russia now appears to be using specialized capabilities that endanger freedom of movement in the region.

But Russia was not successful in its A2/AD strategy because the interactions of Ukraine and NATO increased day by day and Ukraine also increased its military capabilities to counter Russian aggression. This also urged Russia to adopt offensive policy which resulted in Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2022.

5.8 RUSSIAN GOALS FOR EASTERN EUROPE: ALTERNATIVES TO THE WEST

Contrary to what the West believes, Russia returned to establish its hegemon position in the region after a period of withdrawal in the years instantly following the conclusion of the Cold War. Its attempt to limit the sovereignty of governments in the neighborhood to choose their economic and security partnerships was one of many aspects of its ambition for dominance. Russian policy is one of non-interference and respect for the rule of sovereignty but in practice, Russia only gives the sovereignty norm little attention, using it to limit what it perceives as Western advances into its area of interest while breaking the law to force its views on the regional states.

In general, Russia wants the post-soviet states to be independent of the western powers in terms of their security and economic interests. Russia aimed to be the dominant state in the Eurasian area, fostering peaceful coexistence amongst all nations while also guaranteeing the security of the former Soviet Union republics (Tsygankov A. , 2020). Moreover, Russia developed a number of institutions as alternatives to the western influence and copied EU and NATO strategies while reaching out to its eastern neighbours with integration plans, much like the West. Russia's attempt to attract its eastern neighbours into an economic union project similar to the EU's single market through Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Russia effectively claimed a strong position in defining the terms of the region's economic integration. By providing a security umbrella through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to attract the Eurasian governments, Russia try to counter the US security commitments to its NATO allies in Europe. Both Eurasian

regional projects, which aim to compete with the West with a diplomatic approach focused on institutionalization through law-based arrangements, are supported by Russia's economic and military. By actively attracting new members to its core, Russia therefore aimed to create an alternate to NATO and EU (Haar, 2020).

Despite initiatives like the EEAU and CSTO, Russia was unable to control the social, political, and economic landscape of Ukraine and Russia's goal to play a significant role in the Eurasian region is directly related to its invasion of Crimea in 2014. The invasion of Crimea reinforced Russia's shift away from Europe as a superpower and a civilization with its own culture. Russia aimed to reshape the region into a multi-civilizational community of states engaging in multilateral forms of collaboration under Russian state authorities so that the Russia maintain its position as a major power and the shift in the balance of power away from the West and towards a more regionalized world (Tsygankov A. , 2020). The Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2022 also because of Ukraine close interactions with NATO and EU. Russia not allowed Ukraine to fall under the western influence because this will threaten the Eurasian spirit of Russia.

5.9 IMPLICATIONS OF WAR IN UKRAINE ON RUSSIA

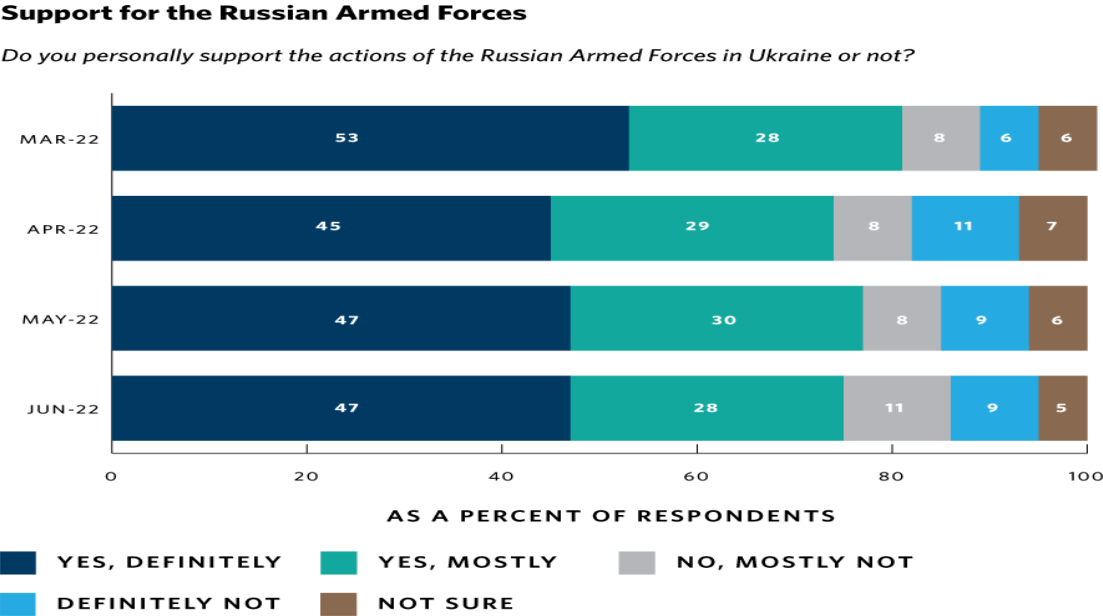
Russia became offensive to fulfill its geostrategic goals or interests as to regain its status of global power. To fulfill this aim, Russia invaded in Crimea in 2014 and in Ukraine in 2022 to ensure its dominate role in the region. This decision of Russia has several implications on Russia and also on the geopolitics of the world.

5.9.1 RUSSIAN PUBLIC ON UKRAINE WAR

From the start of the conflict in Ukraine, there were numerous predictions of a nationalist reaction against the unprovoked Russian invasion but surprisingly strong public support for the war continues even after half a year. My Country Right or Wrong: Russian Public Opinion on Ukraine is a new ground-breaking paper by Andrei Kolesnikov and Denis Volkov that explains the several issues that influence various sections of Russian public opinion that how Russian society responded to the invasion in Ukraine and Crimea.

Public opinion polls consistently show that the majority of participants support whatever the Russian military forces are carrying out in Ukraine. The extent of this support barely altered in the first four months of the war. In June 2022, 28% of Russians said they largely supported the military's activities. While 47% said that they absolutely supported them not their actions. According to these respondents, the dispute is more likely to be described as a preventive strike or an inevitable action. Additionally, they saw the invasion as a means of defence against NATO and they express their admiration and delight for President Vladimir Putin as well as the developments in Ukraine. In the second category, the amount of support for Russia's activities in Ukraine is less strong. The second group members were uncertain that showed emotions of worry, dread, and terror about what is going in region compared to the group that offered absolute support and they also show far less pride for the state. They saw the "special operation" as being motivated mainly by a desire of Russia to defend and support Ukraine's Russian-speaking community. Support for the Russian government's actions is somewhat lower in this group. Because their ideas are often less well-defined, this group has considerably less support for the actions of the Russian government and basically goes along with what the bulk of the populace thinks. It's critical not to underestimate the number of individuals who say they support Russian soldiers since it's possible that some of them are afraid of the military.

FIGURE 5. 1. SUPPORT FOR RUSSIAN ARMED FORCE



Source: “The Conflict with Ukraine” (in Russia), Levada Centre

Due to the escalating tensions along the Russian-Ukrainian border, the approval ratings of governmental institutions had increased by the end of the previous year and their support for the Russian government also increased. That increase in March resembled the one that followed the 2014 annexation of Crimea when the government approval ratings increased from 69 to 80 percent in March 2014. The growth went from 71% to 83 % in March 2022 and all state agencies benefitted from this increase, which also helped the United Russia party, which is currently in power. Similar to 2014, there was a corresponding rise the support for Russia and its potential for future growth. More individuals were expressing "pride in their people" at the end of April, according to surveys. These predictable increases in support among the Russian public show that the support for the government or support for the special operation are essentially the same(Volkov D., 2022). This showed that the Russian invasion in Crimea in 2014 and in Ukraine in 2022 strengthen the public and government ties in Russia which ultimately strengthen the political structure of the state. This also made the President Vladimir Putin's regime stronger at domestic level despite international criticism.

Although Russia has full domestic or public support to its geostrategic interests but the challenges are still there that Russia is facing to achieve its geostrategic policies.

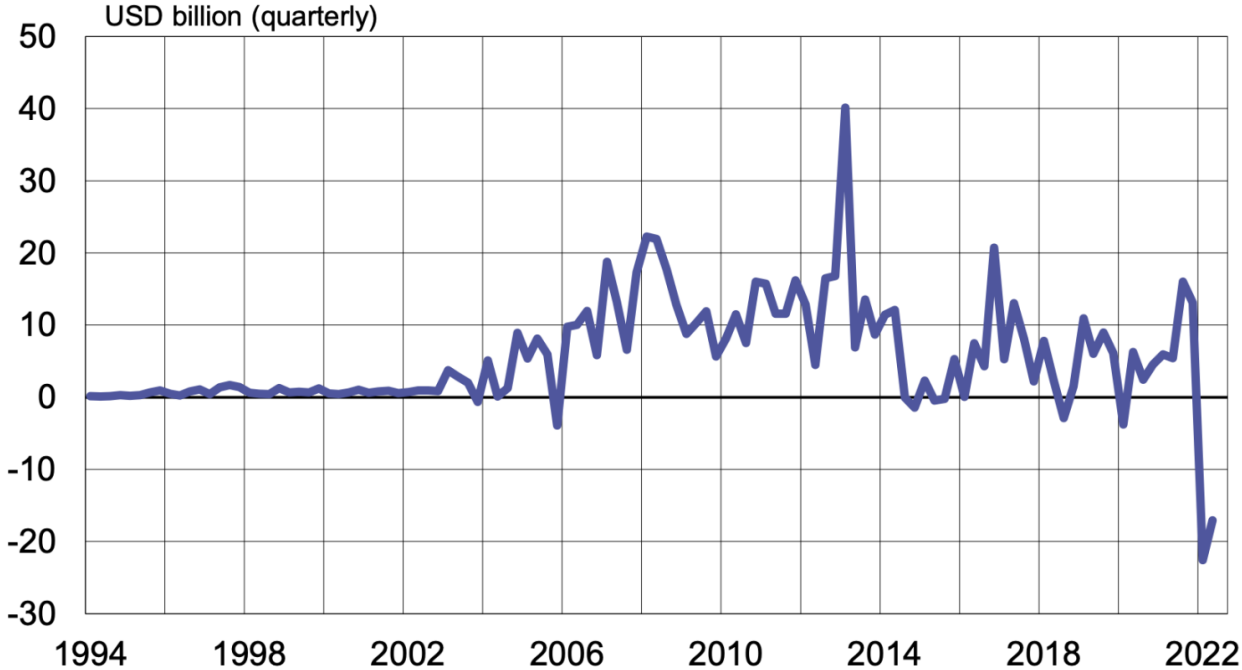
5.9.2 ECONOMIC CRISIS IN RUSSIA

Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, appears to have thought he could resist whatever sanctions the West might impose. So, he misjudged the financial implications of launching its battle in Ukraine. They anticipated that the West would just apply light sanctions similar to those they endured during the 2014 invasions of Crimea and Donbas. They also felt safe because of their enormous reserves, which total hundreds of billions of dollars. Russian President Vladimir Putin does not appear to have realized the shock wave as a result of attack in a European state that have West and the European Union's tremendous economic unification in reaction. On April 6, 2022, the White House stated that researchers believe that GDP of Russia may decline by up to 15% in 2022 and this will undermine the economic progress made over the last 15 years. Due to this, inflation has risen by 15% and is predicted to go considerably higher. Russia's supply chains have been also severely damaged, and it is likely that it will no longer be considered a significant

economy and that it will continue to move slowly but surely into economic, technological, and financial isolation (Orenstein, 2022).

The EU, the US, and several other states have reacted to Russia's unprovoked invasion in Ukraine by imposing massive economic sanctions on Russia to limit its technological and financial capacity for war. The war and the sanctions have already had an effect on the Russian economy and Russia's financial sectors have been severely hit by the war and the sanctions. It is because Russia has been largely shut off from the global economy and has barely involved in new economic partners. The majority of the nation's foreign exchange reserves remain frozen and only few people have access to international banking. Conducting international money transactions is difficult under this situation. The sanctions prevented the Russian government from repaying its foreign debts, and as a result, in June 2022, Russia had its first significant external debt default (Simola, 2022).

FIGURE 5. 2. RUSSIA'S NET FDI FLOW

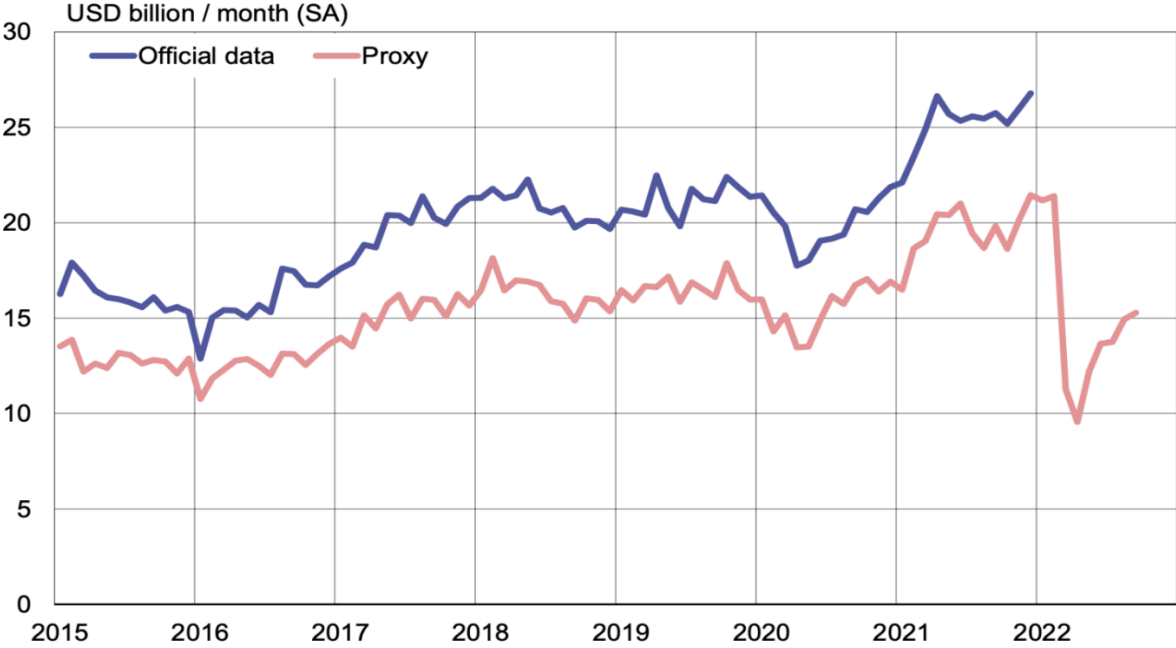


Source: Macrobond and Bank of Russia

The export constraints imposed on Russia are aimed at cutting down on the manufacturing capacity of the military sector. The conflict and the sanctions have also greatly decreased Russian imports, as well as numerous imports relating to technology. According to a different indication based on mirror statistical data i.e., information from important trading partners, reveals that Russian

imports of products were 28% lower than they were prior to the operation. This alternative indicator has historically had a correlation of 0.97, closely following the rise of Russian imports (Simola, 2022).

FIGURE 5.3. RUSSIA IMPORTS PRODUCTS CREATED FROM MIRROR STATISTICS



Source: Macrobond, Eurostat and BOFIT

5.9.3 MILITARY DISASTOR FOR RUSSIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to start a war has been a disaster for Russia as well as a tragedy for Ukraine. Early in August 2022, a Pentagon officer estimated that 70,000–80,000 Russians had died and the Russian army has not been treated well and also massive volumes of equipment have been lost by the Russian military. The loss of remarkable numbers of tanks and other armored personnel carriers by the Soviet military was noted by US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. He also stated that Western restrictions on microchips would prevent the manufacturing of substitutes of the lost armed personnel. Russian military image is in troubles as a result of poor management, poor logistic and tactics, and disappointing results against a weaker and less well-equipped force of Ukraine (Pifer, 2022).

Ukraine has destroyed, crippled, and seized around 1,054 items of Russian weaponry. This is about four times that Ukraine has lost to Russia throughout the period of Vladimir Putin's unprovoked

war. Up to 200,000 Russian soldiers have been reported to have died on the battlefield in only one year. In the battlefields of Ukraine, a major mobilization of some 300,000 soldiers completely deployed. But they have just slowed down some Ukrainian attempts to recapture land lost to Russia. The Russian military's armament has also been significantly diminished and according to a report from the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Russia has lost over half of its main battle tanks and is turning to its reserves of older or Soviet-era weapons (Tharoor, 2023).

5.10 GEOSTRATEGIC CHALLENGES FOR RUSSIA

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine began about a year ago, there have been several ways in which it has had an international impact. The terrible effects of war, the terrible suffering of civilians, and the realization that certain states need to fight for their independence, sovereignty, and right to live have all been bring back to the world after the Russian unprovoked war in Ukraine. The war between the good and evil, democracy and authoritarianism, globalization versus protectionism, and success versus loss has mobilized and digitalized the whole world. This could be necessary in times of conflict. But this will make global collaboration much more difficult to achieve. Eventually, when the conflict comes to an end, the collaborative ties resolving global issues, balancing inequalities, and addressing injustices.

Russia no longer possesses the moral authority, soft power, or international credibility according to the West who are shocked by the extreme use of violence and the cruelty they have witnessed in Ukraine. Economic sanctions have prevented trade, incomes, and growth for Russia. Furthermore, the Russian military has underperformed thus far on practically all metrics due to poor planning, low morale, awful tactics, corruption and political miscalculations due to which Russia is facing significant. Russia clearly miscalculated the Ukrainian forces and their readiness to engage in war, the strength of the people, and the level of sympathy and support that Ukraine receive from the majority of nations in the world. Russia also failed to obtain air superiority over Ukraine or adequate intelligence about its forces.

The US play a significant strategic role in the region and even before the invasion, it strengthened the Ukrainian military's cyber capabilities and created extensive sanctions measures against Russia in collaboration with the Allies. The conflict has brought the EU and NATO together to counter Russian influence (Hagman, 2022).

The conflict provides more incentive to change the sustainable options. Several nations that have purchased Russian oil, gas, and coal are looking for alternatives which threaten Russia's economy. The Russian's attempts to create division in the United States and Europe have failed as a result of Russian aggression and violence in Ukraine. The reliance of Europe on Russian hydrocarbons may be further reduced because EU plans to stop purchasing Russian coal by the end of August. The EU intends to reduce its imports of Russian natural gas by two-thirds this year and this will help American and other liquified natural gas suppliers. Ukraine and the West are undeterred by Russia's military warning that Russia would use nuclear weapons because the nuclear use could further isolate Russia internationally and contribute to its economic crisis as other countries boycott with Russia (Courtney W., 2022).

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY ON UKRAINE AND CRIMEA (2012-2023)

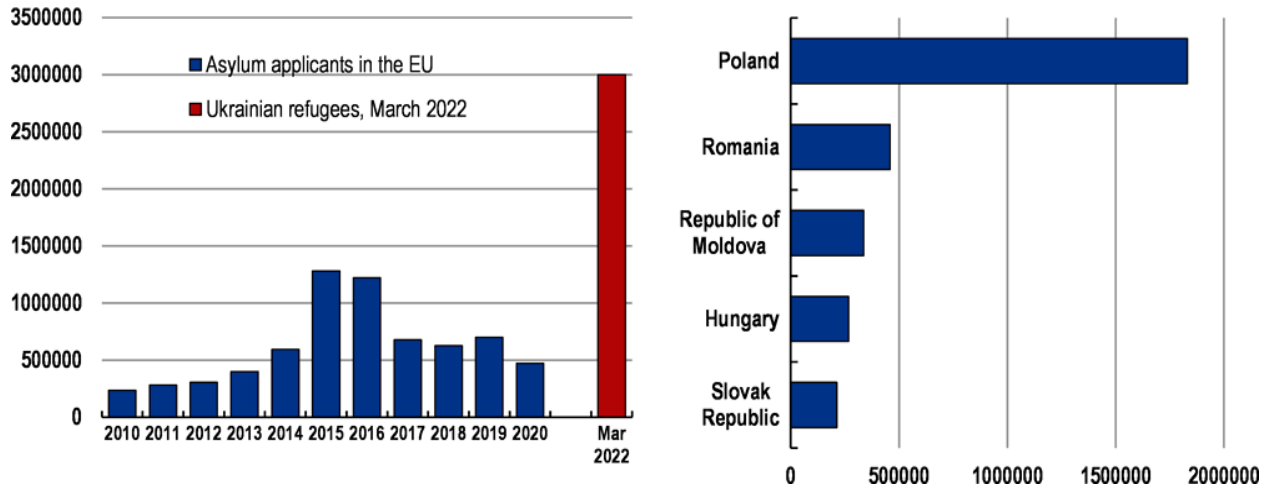
6.1 INTRODUCTION

Russian realistic interests pursued President Vladimir Putin to take offensive measures and hence resulted in Russian invasion of Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and of whole Ukrainian territories in 2022. However, this intervention has resulted in causing negative impacts on just not only for Ukraine, Crimea or Russia but eventually whole of the European continent and the World. For instance, the risk of food insecurity and energy crisis rise in whole after the invasion of Russia in Ukraine in February 2022. Many states have condemned this act of Russia and called for it to end the war and supported territorial integrity of the Ukraine. But Russia is continued to justify its acts to fulfill its security or national interests. To counter Russian actions in Ukraine, states have imposed several sanctions against Russia and on the other hand provided military and financial support to Ukraine to counter-fight against Russian forces.

6.2 IMPACT OF RUSSIAN INVASION ON UKRAINE

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is considered as the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Due to destroyed houses, and lost income and displacement, millions of livelihoods have been impacted. Only, in the first three weeks of the war, over three million people fled Ukraine which also adds burden to other European states where people from Ukraine went to survive. Refugee problem due to Russian invasion in Ukraine become a major challenge for European states to deal especially in eastern and central Europe.

FIGURE 6. 1. REFUGEE PROBLEM IN UKRAINE



Source: Eurostat; UNHCR; and OECD calculations

Healthcare demand has significantly increased because of sharp rise in humanitarian needs and casualties, and that placed a tremendous amount of strain on the Ukraine’s healthcare system.

There are threats of an immediate spread of infectious diseases including polio, tuberculosis, measles, HIV, and diarrheal disorders due to the destruction caused by bombings in water and sanitation infrastructure, insufficient vaccination coverage, and lack of access in getting proper medical care. Additionally, the invasion has also negatively affected the healthcare systems of neighboring countries of Ukraine including Poland, Moldova, Romania, Hungary and Czech Republic. As more than eight hundred million refugees have left Ukraine since the start of invasion of February 2022, and more than 50% refugees fled to Poland only resulted in putting strain on country’s health care system.

Despite the fact that invasion took place in Ukraine and sanctions are imposed on Russia, the whole world has been affected due to it. States are going through severe disruption in rising prices and supply of raw materials, food, energy, oil and wheat. The conflict had devastating impact on World hunger because Ukraine and Russia are third largest global exporters of wheat and oil exports.

In 2014, there were 500 thousand fewer people living in Ukraine as a result of the country's political unrest. Specifically, it results from emigration and population losses in the ATO region.

Ukrainian casualties, high crime and unemployment rates, migration, adverse effects on civil society and socialization, and the need to reconstruct the destroyed infrastructure are thus some of the primary socioeconomic difficulties of the war in Ukraine.

The rise in criminality is another adverse effect of the Ukraine situation. Around 530 000 offences were perpetrated in 2014. That is a significant amount. Moreover, it increased by 62 thousand crimes over the subsequent two years. And there were 592.6 thousand offences perpetrated in 2016. There were 523.9 thousand crimes committed in 2017.

6.3 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INVASION ON UKRAINE

Ukraine's economy was reduced by 30 percent in 2022, as a result of invasion. It suffered biggest losses last year, since the time of its independence in 1991. Attacks by Russia on the nation's energy grid have hampered the movement of food, contributed to cause a global food crisis. Ukrainian farmers are looking for temporary fixes as storage for several harvests has ran out. From roughly 8 million tonnes before the war, Ukraine can now only export 5 to 6 million tons of grain on average each month.

The main export industries of Ukraine, which made up the majority of the nation's income prior to the war, have sustained the most damage. Last year, a 35% decrease was caused in shipments of everything from steel to wheat.

Ukraine had also been a significant supplier of raw commodities including iron ore and metals. However, almost all of Ukraine's significant steel and other important metal-producing plants were situated in its eastern regions, which Russia had either invaded or heavily bombarded.

Moreover, the country's infrastructure has also severely damaged due to missiles strikes and bombardment. The infrastructural damage has been costed around \$130 billion.

While socially, people of Ukraine are suffering through trauma of war. Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders have become common among them.

6.4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Russia-Ukraine situation is generating long-term environmental effects for Ukraine because of its extensive industrialization. The potential environmental consequences may extend beyond Ukraine's borders.

Eastern Ukraine is especially more industrialised. Some infrastructure, including chemical plants near Korosten and Kyiv and steel mills that are located in the eastern Donets Basin, and arms factories, including those capable of producing intercontinental ballistic missiles, have been mismanaged and fallen into despair since the invasion has started.

Several plant and animal species experienced increased mortality and reproductive failure as a result of the Chernobyl incident. The spread of radionuclides into water bodies impacted not just Ukraine but Europe as well.

Power plants were destroyed by shelling after the Russian invasion, and the energy supply to Chernobyl was cut off. The takeover of Chernobyl by Russian forces also resulted in hazardous working conditions and a lack of adequate systems for workers.

During the invasion, The Russian military targeted Ukraine's military assets, many of which were located near civilian area. These sites were in Kryvyi Rih, Zhytomyr, Dnipro, and Krasnopolye. Meanwhile Ukraine targeted airfields, naval stations and gasoline tanks associated with them, in the regions including Hostomel, Chernobaevka, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chuhuyev, Melitopol.

All these occupations caused emitting of hazardous air pollutants. Huge plumes of smoke engulfed densely inhabited areas. As a result, poisonous gases, and heavy metals, have been found in areas where conventional weapons have been stored.

When the west imposed sanctions on Russia for invading, it responded to Western sanctions by prohibiting the export of a number of products until the end of 2022. Exports of telecommunications, automobile, agricultural, medical and electrical equipment's, and various forestry goods such as timber, were banned (Legget, 2022).

Since the fact that Ukraine is one of the world's top agricultural exporters, Russia's blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports threatened causing a food crisis globally.

6.5 RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS BY UKRAINE

Thousands of Ukrainians conducted peaceful protests early in the occupation. However, the Russian military dismantled them immediately and jailed activists, which paved way for radicalizing the resistance. The Resistance Operation Concept was devised in 2013 in the outcome of Russia's war with Georgia of 2008. But its importance was only appreciated after Russia's attack of 2014 in Crimean Peninsula. It lays out a strategy for smaller states to resist effectively and face an invading larger neighbour. After some months of start of invasion, the Ukrainian government established a website that describes several methods of resistance. The website covers nonviolent tactics such as boycotting public events, labour strike etc. The purpose was to undermine pro-Russian authorities' ability to rule while reminding Ukrainians of their inherent sovereignty.

The resistance doctrine is a creative and unconventional approach to combat and total defense that has guided not just Ukrainian military forces but has also involved the country's civilian population in a determined fight against Russia's forces. The resistance doctrine also advocates purposefully setting fires, and to put chemicals in gas tanks in order to destroy enemy vehicles (Liebermann, 2022).

The law specifies that the formation of this Resistance Movement organisation must take place during a "special period," which refers to "temporary" occupied regions, and authorises the use of this concept in territories considered occupied since 2014.

Moreover, Guerrilla forces started killing pro-Moscow officials, carrying attacks on trains and blowing up bridges, and assisting the Ukraine's military forces by pinpointing vital targets. It proved out to be challenging for Russia to maintain its control on occupied territories of southeastern Ukraine.

The Ukrainian resistance had degraded Kremlin control of those areas and jeopardized Russia's ambitions to stage referendums in several cities as a step towards annexation.

Moreover, Ukrainian military in retaliation also used a HIMARS (multiple rocket launcher) supplied by the United States to strike a vital bridge on the Dnieper River near region of a Kherson, disrupting the Russians' primary supply link. The 500,000-person city, that was occupied by

Russian soldiers early in the war, has been inundated with Ukrainian rebels and threatened Moscow-backed officials.

Guerrilla activity has escalated as Ukrainian forces conducted attacks in the region and recaptured some regions west of the Dnieper River. They work closely with the Ukrainian military's Special Operations Forces to create strategies and tactics. These forces also choose targets and create a website with instructions on how to organize resistance, plan ambushes, and avoid arrest. In occupied territories, a network of weapons depots and hidden hideouts was constructed by Ukrainians.

Guerrilla groups derailed two trains of Russian military forces and blew up two railway bridges in Melitopol in May and June 2022. This resistance movement of Ukrainians had aimed at three objectives: to destroy Russian weaponry and means used in supplying them, to disgrace and intimidate the invaders and their collaborators, and to alert Ukrainian special services of enemy positions. These groups also placed yellow ribbons on buildings where voting of Russian referendums were to take place, and warned residents that they may be targeted by bombs during the voting process. The Ukrainian resistance extends from extremist militants to teachers and pensioners (YURAS KARMANAU, 2022).

6.6 SUPPORT FROM THE WORLD

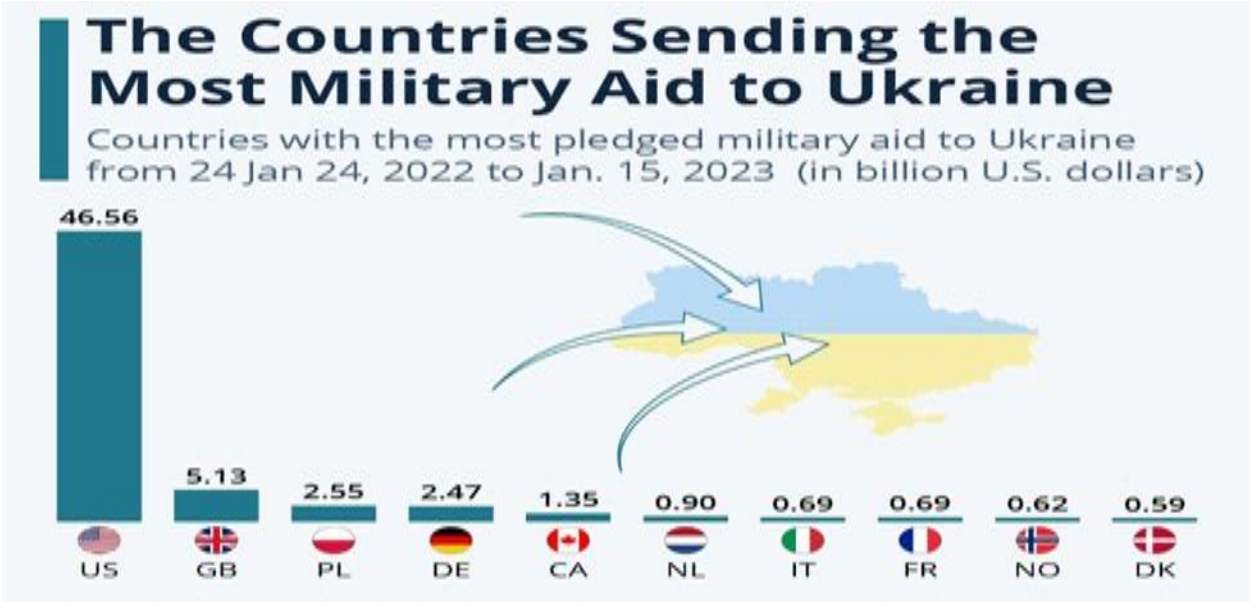
US administration has promised to giving more financial support for military purposes than any other nation, with pledges of military aid to Ukraine between January 24, 2022 and January 15, 2023 with total amount of \$46.6 billion that is the excluding worth of provided equipment and weapons. United Kingdom, which was rated second, contributed \$5.1 billion. Nonetheless, when seen in relation to GDP, these military aid obligations represent about 0.2% of each nation's GDP.

A vast array of defense tools, including anti-aircraft missiles, coastal defense vessels, Abrams battle tanks, and advanced monitoring and radar equipment's, had been sent to or agreed to be given to Ukraine by the US President Joe Biden's administration.

The United States in September 2022 also proclaimed an additional \$457.5 million in civilian security assistance for improving law enforcement and criminal justice agencies of Ukraine.

Since 2014, after the Crimean peninsula annexation by Russia, the US has provided Ukraine with around \$17.9 billion in aid, including more than \$15.1 billion since February 2022. Russian-Ukraine Crisis started.

FIGURE 6. 2. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE AGAINST RUSSIA



Source: Kiel Institute for the World Economy

The United States in January 2023 announced an additional \$125 million in support of Ukraine’s electricity and energy grid, at the World Economic Forum. Earlier, the US had already provided more than 1500 generators to 22 oblasts across Ukraine, via the USAID. These generators ensured the electricity for hospitals, and schools as well as for accommodation centers for internally displaced persons. The US government also delivered funds for Ukraine’s heating system for helping the people during winters (Jonathan Masters, 2023).

The US had also committed in helping the local Ukrainian government bodies in standing against the Russian Invasion and in seeking accountability for human rights abuses and war crimes and helping in filling gaps in Ukraine’s health system.

In November 2022, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Rishi Sunak visited Ukraine to affirm UK’s support to the country. After his visit, the UK announced that it will provide military aid

including 10000 artillery weapons and helicopters to Ukraine. Additionally, the UK also provided Ukrainian army winter kits and other essentials including heavy-duty sleeping bags, to help in liberating their country from Russian forces.

In order to reaffirm international support, Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) was held in July 2022 in Lugano, Switzerland. The United Kingdom announced a Packet of Support for Ukraine.

Moreover, European states like Estonia and Latvia have also provided financial support to Ukraine.

Canadian military aid to Ukraine has reached over \$1 billion since February 2022. Prior to this, Canada sent members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to Ukraine for providing training to Ukrainian soldiers, and for capacity-building projects. Canada is still working with Ukraine through continuing efforts to fight against Russian soldiers.

6.7 SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN UNION

Since the Russian invasion, the European Union has provided continuous support to Ukraine to fight against forces of Russia. The EU provided an emergency macro-financial assistance of €1.2 billion to Ukraine in February 2022. Later, the EU also announced in July 2022 to provide additional of €1 billion to Ukraine. Other than that, the European Union signed a health agreement with Ukrainian authorities in order to respond quickly to health needs of Ukrainians.

EU-Ukraine Association Council has held several meetings for this purpose, and on 5 September 2022, the 8th meeting of the Association council was held. It covered the bilateral agenda and the current status of cooperation between the EU and Ukraine, and also guaranteed the EU's support either humanitarian, military, politically or financially. Josep Borrell, High Representative of EU for Foreign Affairs claimed that the EU will help Ukraine in ending the war.

Moreover, Finland provided Ukraine with additional funding worth of 70 million euros. It also supply public administrative help and humanitarian aid to Ukrainians. In September, more than half of these funds were allocated to enhance reproductive health and food security and to provide housing in Ukraine for people who have lost their houses during the Russian invasion. Earlier Finland had also provided Ukraine with defense equipment both directly and through the European Peace Facility. Recently, Finland proposed budget in order to support development in Ukraine in 2023 that is worth 37 million Euros.

Moreover, leaders of Asian states had also supported Ukraine and condemned Russian invasion during the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Summit held in November 2022 in Thailand. State leaders had called for an end to Russian invasion of Ukraine. They strongly opposed the conflict and the economic instability it has caused impacting the whole world.

On February 23, 2023, after one year of Russia began its invasion of Ukraine, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling for Moscow to withdraw its soldiers unconditionally and completely and put a stop to hostilities. The resolution also called for ensuring the accountability for conducting the most serious crimes according to International law.

It also mentioned about humanitarian consequences due to the invasion, and expressed concerns for people who are internally displaced in the country, and refugees who need humanitarian assistance and violations committed against women and children. It also urged all the UN Member States to work together in a spirit of solidarity in addressing the global effects of the Russia Ukraine conflict on energy sector, finance, the environment, food and nuclear security and emphasized the importance of making preparations for a complete, just peace.

The resolution reaffirmed the call for a "just, comprehensive and lasting peace" that will constitute a substantial contribution to strengthen global peace and. Moreover, the resolution mentioned the reaffirmation of territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. Around 140 states voted in favor of the UN resolution.

Earlier, 143 nations were in support of resolution denouncing Russia for annexation of four significant Ukrainian regions, at the last UNGA session in October of last year

Eritrea and Mali, two nations that had abstained in the vote in October, were able to endorse Russia.

But after declining to vote the first time, Lesotho, Honduras, South Sudan, and Thailand, all supported the resolution.

Recently in February 2023, the G7 (International group of seven states including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Canada, the US and Japan)held a virtual meeting with Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, as it marked one year of Russian invasion.

Leaders of G7 reaffirmed their unwavering support for Ukraine. They also termed Russian invasion as unjustified and illegal and is against the rules of the United Nations (UN) charter. They

claimed that they will intensify their financial, military and diplomatic support for Ukraine and its people. Before to the conference, the United States already announced \$2 billion for defense funds in Ukraine, that included new weapon systems, counter-detection and communications devices, and a variety of other capabilities that will assist Ukraine in maintaining its position in the fight.

While Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau also announced that Canada will impose new sanctions against persons and entities involved in Russian ongoing invasion in Ukraine.

Other than these countries, Sweden also launched a new help package for Ukraine in February 2023, with total amount of SEK 520 million. It has been continuously providing unwavering assistance for Ukraine's reconstruction and humanitarian endeavors. While, 529 SEK is split into two installments. The SEK 300 million is designated for the energy sector while the remaining SEK 220 million are designated for humanitarian efforts.

6.8 SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

Amid the Russian invasion in Ukraine, the United Kingdom blocked assets of Russian banks including Bank Rossiya and Industrial Savings Bank situated in Russian capital, Moscow. Australia also imposed sanctions on Russian banks. The United States also blocked transactions with Central bank of Russia. Moreover, the UK, the US and Canada places export controls on technological gadgets.

Individual sanctions have also increased considerably since the start of the 2022 conflict. The US has designated approximately 2,600 Russian, Belarussian, and Ukrainian citizens for their role in supporting the Russian invasion. Those sanctioned people have been barred from entering certain countries. Additionally, their assets have were blocked. The purpose of these restrictions is to punish certain groups of people for alleged legal offences and to foster the formation of internal factions within the President Vladimir Putin's regime by forcing political and corporate leaders to distance themselves from his regime. The European Union also issued target restrictive measures against around 30 Russian elites and members of Russian State Duma (Martin, 2023).

In March 2022, the European Union imposed ban on Supply of energy-related equipment, technology to Russia. New investments in the Russian energy sector were also prohibited and also put more restrictions on Russian individuals that were associated with technology.

Moreover, the United Kingdom issued 65 more sanctions against Russia's significant industries that included Russian railways and defense industry. Meanwhile, the United States imposed sanctions on Russia's technology sector.

In April 2022, Sanctions were levied by Poland against 50 Russian firms and individuals.

The United States declared that Russia-linked vessels will be barred from entering US ports beginning. While, Canada also in support of Ukraine and to stop Russian invasion announced sanctions on Russian officers including 190 members of Peoples Republics of Donetsk and People's Council of Luhansk located in Donbas Region. These sanctions came after Russian soldiers attempted to annex these areas.

In May 2022, new import levies on items were announced by the United Kingdom such as platinum and palladium. Some export bans were also imposed on chemicals, plastics, rubber, and machinery. Further sanctions were imposed on President Vladimir Putin's associates as well as family members.

The Russian financial institutions Sberbank, Russian Agricultural Bank, and Credit Bank of Russia were cut off from the Swift financial messaging system as part of the sixth round of sanctions the European Union approved in June 2022. Sanctions have also been placed on the NCO JSC National Settlement Depository in Russia, which was intended to provide services for Eurobonds. The EU was prohibited from importing Russian crude oil and some petroleum products as part of the sanctions. (Clara Portela, 2022).

The United Kingdom Prohibited the export of commodities and chemical and biological technological equipment's, oil refining, and other essential industries to Russia. The export ban also included prohibition of jet fuel and cash denominated in pounds or euros, to Russia.

The G-7 countries also imposed a restriction on imports of Russian gold. The UK, the US, Canada, and Japan proclaimed a prohibition on the import of processed or newly gold. The US further sanctions targeted 70 entities, many of which were linked to the defense industry of Russia. Moreover, Sanctions were imposed on 45 entities who were designates of Russian Federation military and redesignates of Russian Federal Security Service. Visa restrictions, were imposed on more than 500 Russia's military officials.

Later in September 2022, the United Kingdom imposed 92 more sanctions in reaction to Russian referendums that resulted in the annexation of four Ukrainian areas. Top Russian authorities involved in imposing the vote, as well as 49 executives from Gazprombank (Joint-stock Corporation), Sovcom bank and Sber bank of Russia, were all sanctioned.

Japan also imposed Sanctions against more than 60 Russian citizens and 23 other persons that were accused of being directly involved in the annexation of four regions including Kherson, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk.

The European Union in December 2022, also set up a price \$60 per barrel for crude oil and other oils derived from Russian bituminous materials (Martin, 2023).

It also adopted a ninth package of sanctions against Russia, including a full transaction ban on Russian banks and freezing assets in Credit Bank of Moscow. Along with it, a ban on new mining investments in Russian Federation, and the suspension of broadcasting licences for several media outlets were also included.

In February 2023, the EU prohibited the purchase of Russian gasoline, diesel fuel, as well as refined petroleum products.

Later, the United Kingdom imposed new sanctions on six organizations that provided military weapons for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as eight individuals and a group that was linked to Russian financial networks

Source: Business Today.In



MAP 6. 1. COUNTRIES THAT IMPOSE SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA

Ukraine also imposed sanctions on Russian financial institutions, including the central bank, payment system operators, investment funds, insurers, as well as financial services firms, for a period of 50 years. According to Ukrainian authorities, it is a "total blockage" of Russian financial institutions' access to Ukrainian assets and markets.

Financial Action Task Force suspended Russia's participation in the global terrorist financing and money laundering organization.

At the end of February 2023, the EU imposed a tenth package of sanctions against Russia, targeting around 100 Russian government officials, military and defense sector companies in Russia, and also included high-level executives in media groups. The additional sanctions also apply to JSC Alfa-Bank, PJSC Rosbank, and JSC Tinkoff Bank, as well as the Russian Federation's the National Reinsurance Company and National Wealth Fund.

Canada, the United Nations and several European states support Ukraine and in its support have continued to put sanctions against Russian Federation in order to make it end the invasion of Ukraine.

6.9 CURRENT STATUS OF RUSSIA IN UKRAINE

In January 2023, Ukrainian President Zelensky Volodymyr claimed that Crimea is our land and our territory, and appealed to the West for weapons. Although Russia views that reclaiming Crimea is not easy for Ukraine and would further escalate the ongoing situation (Vohra, 2023). But on the other hand, this can be a great threat for Russia if Ukraine plans to take Crimea back, which is under Russian control since 2014.

On one side, Russia is focusing on renewing a grain deal with Ukraine permitting the safe transport of grain from Ukrainian Black Sea ports, it also is beneficial for Russia to improve its economy. The Black Sea grain initiative was carried out last July in order to prevent a worldwide food crisis through allowing Ukrainian grain blocked by Russia's invasion to be securely transferred from three Ukrainian ports. While on the other side, Russia is trying to have hold on Ukrainian regions which were lost earlier and Ukraine took them back, so that Russia can strengthen its position.

In February, Russian missiles hit Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia regions. Recently, Russia also carried out missile strikes that targeted Kyiv and other major Ukrainian cities. Currently, the Bakhmut (city in Eastern Ukraine) remains most highlighted cause of contention between the Russian and Ukrainian forces, which are aiming to weaken Russian military forces and maintain their control in Bakhmut. Although Russian forces have been challenged due to counter-attacks carried by the Ukrainians but in order to maintain its hold all over the Ukraine, it does not seem that Russia would stop carrying out attacks and strikes in the country, it cannot be really predicted where would conflict move next.

CONCLUSION

The return of Russia as a significant global actor has been seen by the international community during the last several years. Russia in recent years become very active and avails every opportunity under the presidency of Vladimir Putin to maximize its power. Russian president Vladimir Putin also expand the power capacities of Russia to extend its influence. A grand geostrategy is defined for Russia by the political leaders who boldly asserted the Russian power to the global stage. The role of Russian president Vladimir Putin is very significant in this case whose narrative is influenced by a discourse about Russian ties with its neighbor's cultural and historical heritage. Furthermore, the narrative is also shaped by the cultural and security vulnerabilities brought about by the treatment of West towards Russia which refused to accept the Russian identity and to recognize Russian status as a global power even when Russian fall under the Western civilization after the disintegration of Soviet Empire. This shaped the perspectives of Russian political elites and Vladimir Putin who also adored the western policies and ideologies in the past. But in the late 1990s and especially after entry in 21st century, Russia realized that the west considers Russia as a hostile which will pose threat to the security of the Russia. So, the Russia redefined the significance of Eurasian region due to cultural and historical links where Russia enjoyed a role of a dominated player in the region and made a geostrategy to introduce its interests and for their implementation. In the recent years the focus of Russia is more on the eastern Europe where the influence of western powers increasing day by day and Russia increasing its presence on the European security, politics, and economies, especially through the development of cooperative relationships and asset exchanges to counter the western especially the US influence in the region to enforce its interests. The revival of empire, global power status, and sphere of influence that Russia suddenly lost 30 years ago with the fall of the Soviet Union in 199, at the end of cold war, are assets that Russia wants to bring back and President Vladimir Putin plays a significant role to get back Russian prestige. For this purpose, Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin took several measures, from diplomacy and propaganda to cyberattacks and open war which is more prominent in the eastern Europe that is the post-soviet territory. These goals shaped the grand geostrategy of Russia which focused that Russia is no longer to follow the of Western powers particularly the US who lead the western world. Instead, Russia will focus to promote its position as independent centre of power which, as a n alternative to unipolarity of US,

will promote the development of a multipolar world. For that purpose, the main policies of Russian geostrategy are to regain its influence and dominated role in the former Soviet Union's territory in order to guarantee its political, military and economic security. Furthermore, the policies include to counter the US enforced NATO influence in the Russian interest's territory i.e., post-soviet region and to undermining Euro-Atlantic unity, encouraging the EU and NATO's dissolution. Since the return of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency in 2012, Russia sees several significant wins where Russian expand its military power in the world such as in Crimea, Ukraine Syria and many other regions and interfere in the western domestic politics which enhanced the Russian prestige as a global power in the world. This also improved the Russian President Vladimir Putin reputation as a skilled and bold leader in the world. But despite some success, the challenges are still there which Russia tries to counter offensively. Although the offensive behavior of states severely condemned by the international community, but Russia still justified its offensive acts as in defensive nature as without this behavior, the security of the Russia is under threat. A great power's ambition to create regional hegemony should be taken into account while analyzing Russia's conduct during the Ukrainian war in 2014 and 2022. Keeping a secure neighbor is the primary goal of Russia to become a great power and a regional hegemon and to develop a sphere of influence to reach the maximum level of security. International analyst Jhon Mearsheimer define the Russian actions through the prism of offensive realism which he defined in his book in 'The Tragedy of Great Powers' where in international system, the dominate and influential role is always played by powerful state. According to him, the states consider this system anarchic where all the states and individuals struggles for their selfish interests that many times pose threats for the security of others. In this way, all the states behave in the same manner and maximize their own power to fulfill their interests that is mostly related to security. This is how Russia behave operate in the international system by showing in military presence in different regions of the world especially in posts soviet states such as in Crimea and Ukraine. This offensive behavior also seen in the geostrategic policies of Russia due to which Russia uses its military forces in the Post Soviet republics to expand its influence in Near Abroad and to counter the western influence for its security and survival. A crucial country in Russia's security model is Ukraine due to geostrategic location of Crimea and black sea, political, social, and economic interests. Russia wanted to incorporate Ukraine under Russian influence but the pro-western policies of Ukraine was a disturbing development for Russia which threatened its interests and ultimately its security. To

reclaim Crimea from Ukraine, Russia turned to using force in 2014 and also intervene in Ukraine again in 2022 to counter NATO or US partnership with Ukraine. In this way the geostatic policies of Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin considers offensive where the state and leadership are trying to hold and maximize the interests that is mostly security based but the implementation of these Russian interests also undermines the security of other states as happened in Ukraine since 2014.

The actions of Russia in Ukraine also reflected through its foreign policy which reflected the neo-Slavism notions that rejects the idea of total Westernization in the world. The idea behind Slavism is that Russia should revive an empire with the three East Slavic nations. These states include Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia at its heart and Russia should serve as a mediator between Eastern and Western civilizations. Furthermore, it views that Russians and Ukrainians share same identity; hence Ukraine should be part of Russian territory and all this will help to revive the Russian Federation and its strengths to regain its status of a global power. That's why, Near Abroad or post-soviet states are the main focus of the Russian foreign policy. Russia also promoted the diplomatic means to enhance integration in the region which challenges by the expansionist policies of west. It has also been promoting anti-epidemic cooperation as well as economic and political connections with CIS states in order to counteract US and European involvement in the region. But as the western influence continue to expand, Russia become more assertive or aggressive in its foreign policy which also shaped its geostrategic polices. For these purposes, Russia carried out annexation of Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and after eight years of it, it started invasion of whole Ukraine in February 2022 and control the region such as Luhansk and Donetsk by using its ,military. Russia continues to expand in other regions and control the resources of these regions such as Zaporizhzhia Oblast to control the Europe largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine. Although it was successful in occupying several Ukrainian territories but due to Ukraine's counter attacks, it faced difficult circumstances.

There are several challenges that Russia faced to fulfill its interest of becoming a global power that urged Russia to become offensive in the implementation of its geostrategic policies. The clash of interests of Russia and US in Europe is a big challenge for Russia which also shaped the policies of Moscow. US since the end of the World War 1 wanted to play an influential role in the Europe which is also a region of interest for Russia. US dominated role in Western Europe also very

prominent and gradually US moved towards the East which threatened the goals of Russia and its rise as a global power. US basically prevents the rise of any hegemon in the region to maintain its unipolarity and ultimately threatened the Russian interests. US used NATO to maintain its presence and partnership with the European states with the strategic objective of seeking a Europe that is free, and at peace. NATO expand towards Eastern Europe where Ukraine also eager to become a member NATO after which NATO forces can be deployed near the borders of Russia that undermines its security. US is trying to dominate in the European region by using its liberal international values and norms which pose severe challenges Russian interests. For that purpose, US used NATO as a tool to promote the security of the states and this compel Russia to become offensive to its own interests and security. Same policy adopted by EU which increased its influence towards the Eastern Europe through economic integration and by promoting democratic cooperation in a region of Russian interest. In a time when democracy is under threat both within and outside the neighborhood, the EU's role as democratic stabilizers is even more essential which attract states such as Ukraine. The close collaboration of Ukraine and Russia with west instead of Russia through EEU and CSTO pose severe challenges for Russia which Russia tried to counter by its invasion in Crimea in 2014. Russia failed to play a dominated role to shape the policies of Ukraine according to Russian ideology. Even after the invasion in Crimea in 2014, Russia was not able to refrain Ukraine close collaboration with EU and US or NATO. This resulted in another offensive measure by Russia in Ukraine in 2022. The Russian military invasion in Ukraine different region in 2022 was fully supported by the Russian political leader local citizens. And the support for President Vladimir Putin and his decisions is still very strong. But despite this domestic support, there are several economic, military and geostrategic challenges are there for Russia. The economy of Russia suffers due to war in Ukraine due to sharp decline in foreign direct investments and Russian imports in the world. The military also suffered where Russia lost both its people, technology and armaments. The image of Russia is affected due to its aggressive behavior in Ukraine which further undermines the Russian economic and political collaboration with other states. Russia also faced severe condemnation and sanction from the world on its offensive measure in Ukraine. Ukraine and the West are undeterred by Russia's military warning that Russia would use nuclear weapons because the nuclear use will further isolate Russia internationally and contribute to its crisis. This shows that it is not easy for Russia to fulfill its geostrategic policies,

counter the western influence, and become a revisionist state by convert the unipolarity of the world into a multipolar world.

Russian invasion in Crimea and Ukraine not only increase the challenges for Russia but also have certain implications on Ukraine. The economy of Ukraine suffers from Russian invasion due to huge spending on defense and disturbance in imports and exports. Humanitarian crisis is clearly seen in Ukraine where people suffered a lot. In the attacks from Russia, people of Ukraine are losing their lives, facing health issues and many leave their houses and become refugee in other European states and many other crises where only the citizens of the Ukraine suffer. Same challenges faced by Ukraine in 2014 when Russia invades in Crimea and now this happened in the different cities of Ukraine since 2022. Deaths, infrastructure destruction, migration, crimes, unemployment, low average earnings and adverse effects on civil society and many more difficulties Ukraine is facing due to conflict with Russia. Furthermore, this intervention has resulted in causing negative impacts on just not only for Ukraine, Crimea or Russia but eventually whole of the Europe and World. For instance, the risk of food insecurity and global energy crisis. But the Ukraine gets the moral, economic and political support from all over the world. The whole of West and even Asian states has condemned Russia's actions and is totally in support of Ukraine with the aim of restoring its territorial integrity. The west wants Russia to stop its intervention at any cost hence they have put several sanctions on Russian exports and imports, on Russian individuals who were involved in intervention as well as government officials. Russian also rests Russian military actions in its states more strongly as compared to the previous time in 2014 when Russian takeover Crimea. This time Ukraine is stronger and more backed by western powers to fight against Russian military. Russia has been facing several challenges imposed by the West in fulfilling its interests through its geostrategic policies. But despite facing challenges and resistance, Russia still fighting in Ukraine to pursue its geostrategic goals and it can be difficult to predict where would conflict move next and how much destruction and adverse effects would be faced.

RECOMENDATIONS

Despite all of its offensive activities and statements, Russia is in a difficult strategic situation. It will probably fall short as a country if it keeps using military action to change the status quo and maintain its influence in the sake of defending ethnic Russian people and upholding unwilling

buffer nations. There is no clear victor in the Ukraine war. It ultimately undermines collaboration, trust building, and the capacity to address global issues. The best way to proceed is to accept compromises to limit the damage and resolve the areas of contention for the benefit of all parties involved.

For conflict resolution, to discover one another is the other way. Since 2014, there has been little or no interaction between the two US and Russia on the official, military, political, and social levels. Restoring procedures, like bipartisan congressional delegations and involvement with Russia's State Assembly, would need to apply. Since 2014, majority of Russian or US defence institutions are competing with each other. A complete confidence- building and demystifying network of Russia and US communicators must be built to promote close collaboration.

Due to West imposed sanctions, Russia's economy has been greatly affected and if the sanctions continue it might result in Russia being isolated from the whole world due to ban on trade and freezing assets etc, so there is a need that President Vladimir Putin should opt for cooperation with the West especially Europe so that its position gets stabilized in the region as well as in the World.

To implement its geostrategic policies in Ukraine and Crimea, Russia should focus more on diplomatic means instead of offensive measure to overcome the disagreements and for the mutual interests. Furthermore, initiatives should be taken to build trust and close cooperation so that the western influence can be reduced in Ukraine.

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