

**RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT AND THE DISPLAY  
OF NATIONAL INTEREST: A RESURGENCE OF  
REALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND  
AN ATTACK ON SOVEREIGNTY**

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**Abstract**

*In an interdependent world, sovereign states enjoy the same international law rights as UN members. Article 2 of the UN Charter preserves equality and sovereignty and requires member nations to resolve their issues peacefully without compromising international peace, security, and justice. In an international system, however, where there is no central government to enforce not only the United Nations Acts but also the ideologies of other international organizations, many states, primarily powerful ones, have undermined the provisions of the United Nations, which prohibit nations from invading, suppressing, and conquering other weaker territories, while also relegating and violating the sovereignty of other states for strategic national interests. Consequently, the concept of power, force, and military statecraft becomes the alpha ratio in modern international politics and this is the case with Russia's present invasion of Ukraine. This invasion, which*

*has been harshly criticized, remains a major problem for international relations experts who study the inviolability of state sovereignty and the rise of realism amidst the pursuit of national interests in a liberal international order. A behavior that can impede world peace and security. The data for this study were obtained from secondary sources and are analyzed using a content-based methodology. The realist theory was examined to support the study's ideas. The study found, among other things, that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has destabilized global security, not just in Europe, and is a form of recolonization, a return to Sovietization, and an assault on the concept of national sovereignty.*

**Keywords:** Russia, Ukraine, Conflict, Sovereignty, National Interest

### **Introduction**

The international society has 206 sovereign nations: 193 member states, 2 observer states, and 11 additional states. 191 of these states have undisputed sovereignty, while 15 have disputed sovereignty (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is claimed by South Korea, the Republic of Korea by North Korea, Abkhazia by Georgia, Artsakh by Azerbaijan, Kosovo by Serbia (115 UN members recognized Kosovo as a sovereign state in March 2020), Northern Cyprus by the Republic of Cyprus, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic by Morocco. Article 2(1)(5) of the UN Charter declares that these sovereign states will remain sovereign and equal and resolve international issues peacefully to preserve international peace, security, and justice. All members must not threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state in international relations or otherwise violate UN goals. Thus, respecting a state's sovereignty over its air, land, and water is crucial regardless of its size, power, population, or race (World population review 2022; certification division; the United Nations, Weinschel 1951; United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination).

In keeping with the above, many powerful states misuse, marginalize, and undermine state sovereignty and independence and show absolute disrespect for the world's leading body, the United Nations (UN). States have invaded others for strategic, mostly security, reasons. Thus, sovereign states with various national interests tied up in their foreign policies often ignore the UN's "States shall refrain in their international relations from the use or threat of force in order to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other nations." Standing armies and various weapons have been used to defend national interests. Security has driven several foreign conflicts. Kalin (2015) suggests that security influences national interest. All nations represent their interests in foreign relations. Nations can go to war to protect themselves. This is seen from the ancient Greek-Persian Peloponnesian wars to the 1914-1918 First World War and 1939-1945 Second World War.

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, starting the conflict. The Russian leader and defense ministry then launched attacks on Ukraine's air defenses, airports, and across the country to stop Ukrainian attacks on the two breakaway regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, which Moscow recognized as sovereign states; de-Nazify Ukraine, overrun it, and depose its government; and permanently end Ukraine's desire to join the western defensive alliance, the North Atlantis (NATO). Ukraine's ferocity has cost countless lives. Though violence has decreased, the conflict has killed over 14,000 individuals, including 3,000 civilians, on both sides. The UN reported 331 civilian deaths as of March 3, 2022, and as Russian forces strike cities, the figure will undoubtedly rise. 1 million have left the country (Fitzgerald 2022; Kirby 2022; Krishna 2022; Morkevicius 2022). The realist school believes that military and weaponry are useful in international affairs because nations pursue national interests in an anarchical world with no central authority. Thus, states prefer to go to war to safeguard their interests, especially their core important interests, especially in a world of security conundrum when nations pursue military growth and it

becomes impossible to resist military force. Manan's statements illustrate how reality affects national interest and governmental behavior:

Realism states that conflict or even war among countries are acceptable in order to achieve National interest. State are always involved in power competition as a result of the will to survive and dominate other countries. However, it produces competition and conflict among states, and possibly leads to international anarchy or world disorder (Manan, 2017).

In international relations, sovereignty – the unlimited right of a recognized sovereign state to employ force, make internal and foreign policy decisions, and interact with the outside world – has been a contentious issue. Zewei (2003) believes that the sovereign equality of states is a fundamental principle of old and modern international law. Since the UN's founding, sovereign equality of state, regardless of force or resources, has remained cherished. This ensured that all member states create friendly, peaceful, and orderly relations based on equal rights and self-determination. "Nothing in the present charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in topics which are largely within any state's domestic context," states paragraph 7 of UN Article 2. Despite the above provision regarding sovereignty, it has been perplexed on several occasions when it intersects with states' national and security interests, prompting interference in sovereign states' domestic affairs without regard for the UN and other international organizations' reactions or the implications on international law. But the inevitable anarchical global political environment with no central government usually leads to conflicts of interest where states use force to protect vital national interests. Hence the utter disregard for the sovereignty of other states. The views of Langlois buttress the point: Conflicts

between states are inevitable, as each will seek to defend its national interests - defined in terms of survival, security, power, and relative capabilities, primarily through military power - (Langlois 2013).

Since force is usually used as a last resort when diplomacy fails, states' international behavior is irrational. The Russian case and others support the idea that realism and force are paramount in national security matters. The study examines the February 24, 2022, Russian invasion of Ukraine in the context of national interest and realism, examining Ukraine's sovereignty and its right to domestic and foreign policy choices, including its NATO alliance. This study investigated the applicability and significance of realist theory in international relations. There are numerous explanations for what occurs and how nation states behave in foreign policy and international relations. However, the study was designed to be realistic. Realist theorists include Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, E.H. Carr, H. Morgenthau, Waltz, and Mearsheimer, among others. Thucydides, who argued that power trumped justice and morality during the Peloponnesian War, was the earliest proponent of realism within international relations (Orsi Avagustin and Nurnus 2018). The contribution and applicability of realist theory to the study are evident, as MacKay noted: "Realism in politics attempts to resolve crises and international conflicts by implementing countermeasures that protect their borders and general sphere of influence among neighboring countries." As shown by his actions and stance, Putin does not want NATO or the EU to absorb Ukraine for several reasons. Security first. Consider China funding and arming Mexico and Canada through a multilateral agreement with foreign foes. The Kennedy Bay of Pigs missile crisis would alarm. Putin invaded pro-Russian separatist Ukraine to reunite the Soviet Union. Putin's nationalism has led him to oppose western globalization and preserve imperial Russia's culture, values, and customs for decades (Mackay 2022).

### **National Interest And The Russian - Ukraine Conflict**

National interest drives foreign policy and international relations. No nation is an island in terms of resources (economic: oil, manganese, zinc, foods, etc.), security (military, weaponry, military hardware, personnel, etc.), and technology (space science, automobiles, aeronautical, etc.), so interdependence and external relations are inevitable. International relations often prioritize security. Ancient cities built nations with power and military might. Scheer (2012) noted that centuries ago, a country emerged with the power, will, and intellectual and moral impetus to shape the international system to its values. In the seventeenth century, France under Cardinal Richelieu established modern international relations based on the nation-state and national interest. Britain's eighteenth-century balance of power dominated European diplomacy for 200 years. Ebaye (2010) states implement foreign policies with military strategies. Military power has become the legally sanctioned means of violent conflict that states use in their external relations with other sovereign states in international relations (Bassey, 2005).

The eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization exposes national interest, wrapped in security and strategic calculations in the Russian-Ukraine conflicts (NATO). Russia views this as "an attempt at thwarting Russia's recreation of its manifest destiny" – that is, since Russia is the sole superpower in Eastern Europe and still controls the former eastern satellite states that were split in 1989, any of those states' romance with the Western Bloc threatens Russia's security interests. That, just as the US was provoked into the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the Soviet Union feels threatened if any of its eastern neighbors join NATO. Thus, Aljazeera News reported on February 15, 2022, that Russia and the west's standoff over Ukraine centers on NATO's future. Moscow wants assurances that its former Soviet satellite state neighbor will never join NATO. It also demanded that NATO end all military activity in Eastern Europe, claiming it

undermines security. However, NATO's western bloc strongly opposed Putin's warning, saying that "Kremlin cannot be allowed an effective veto on Kyiv's foreign policy decisions" and defending NATO's "open door policy," which allows any European country to join. After World War II, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the US joined the organization. Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia – three European countries close to Russia – have expressed interest in joining NATO, which "guarantees the freedom and security of its members through political and military means."

Aljazeera News claims that Ukraine's attempts to join NATO and the US and other western NATO members' acceptance of them violate the post-cold war legal verbal commitment not to allow NATO to expand eastward, despite the alliance's denial. Putin has repeatedly urged NATO to reverse its expansion and guarantee that Ukraine will never join. Russia sent over 100,000 troops to Ukraine's borders and demanded security from Washington and NATO (Aljazeera 2022). As high-level diplomacy has failed, Washington and NATO have rejected the Kremlin's main demands – that NATO cease all military activity in Eastern Europe and bar Ukraine from membership – while Russia has refused to budge. As tensions rise, western leaders, including US president Joe Biden, have stated they will not send troops to defend Ukraine if Russia attacks (Al Jazeera, 2022). Kyiv's NATO allies – except Germany – provided weapons. NATO reinforced its eastern flank immediately. Suny also believed that the western view of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is that Russia has always been an expansionist state, and its current president, Vladimir Putin, represents that essential Russian ambition: to build a new Russian empire. "Russian action was.....always about naked aggression; about Putin's desire for empire by any means necessary," said President Joe Biden on February 24. Russia claims NATO expansion eastward threatens its security, but Putin has warned for years that it will

likely lead to military resistance. Biden's CIA director Bill Burns has warned Russia about NATO expansion since 1995. Scholars, pundits, strategists, and politicians have warned against NATO expansion.

The Russian elite and public have long opposed such expansion. American rockets in Poland and Romania and western weapons in Ukraine Former CIA director Mr. Burns told Congress that Bill Clinton's decision to bring Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO was "premature at best and needlessly provocative at worst." In June 1997, 50 prominent foreign policy experts wrote an open letter to Clinton saying, "We believe that the current U.S.-led effort to expand NATO is a policy error of "historic proportions" that would unsettle European stability." "Ukraine's entry into NATO is the brightest of all readiness for the Russian elite (not just Putin)," Burns told Rice in 2008. "In over two and a half years of conversations with key Russian players, from knuckle draggers in the dark recesses of the Kremlin to Putin's sharpest Ueberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests" (Sunny 2022). According to Wamsley (2022), Putin also worries that NATO would arm Ukraine and put it within striking distance of Moscow if Ukraine joins. Putin said, "Ukraine threatens itself by threatening Russia." Estonia and Latvia are NATO members. Kaliningrad, a Russian Baltic Sea region, borders Lithuania and Poland.

### **The Role Of Rationalism In Russia-Ukraine Conflicts**

On the basis of their respective theoretical tenets in international and global politics, various schools of thought provide explanations for global political events: liberalism, realism, neo-functionalism, system analysis, etc. Within the context of national interest and the resulting flexing and actual use of military statecraft, the utility and appropriateness of realism in explaining events of this nature enter and are appropriate. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

"realism," also known as "political realism," is a worldview that emphasizes the competitive and conflictual nature of international politics. Realists believe that nation-states, which are primarily concerned with their own national interests and the struggle for power, are the primary actors in international politics (Oyosoro 2021). Regarding the international environment, realists harbor skepticism and distrust for ethical norms governing state relations. They asserted that, in contrast to national politics, which is governed by a central authority and the rule of law, international politics is characterized by injustice and prone to interstate conflict. Philosophers and scholars like Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes are some of the pioneers of realism. Realists in international politics believe that people are "egoistic" and unfit for leadership in the world's governments. Anarchy is certain to rule in such a situation, where there is no central authority and states pursue their own national interests, which primarily depend on security and lack any sort of morality (Korab & Karpowics 2010).

From the above theoretical extrapolation on realism, it is clear that: (1) Nation states are the sole and primary players in international politics (2) Nation-states aggressively pursue their national interests, which usually involve security and survival. (3) That these nation-states are made up of individuals, who are egoistic and always want power over other states. (4) In an unregulated and unlawful international environment with no moral or ethical code, brute force and direct military force are necessary to pursue national interests. Realist scholars have analyzed international conflicts that have wreaked havoc on global politics. Scholars like Parent and Karas 2014; Ukessays.com 2018; Bartleby research 2021; Britannica). The February 24, 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war has revived realism and power politics. Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its support for the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk led to the current conflict with Ukraine (called Donbas). Coal production and profitable factories remain in Doban (Champion 2022).

According to Mimiko (2022), Russia's antagonistic stance toward the NATO's eastward expansion, which is at odds with Russia's own national security interests, reflects the realist posture of power play in the country's invasion of Ukraine. Despite the serious international crime of violating Ukraine's sovereignty, other nations do not behave as if nothing has been said when a superpower like Russia warns that a certain action poses a serious threat to their own national security interests. It is understandable why US President Joe Biden has repeatedly stated in public that the US is not prepared to intervene in the Russian-Ukrainian war after the military action taken by the US in 1962 against Cuba to prevent the Soviet Union from establishing missiles there, which the US saw as a terrible security threat to its sphere of influence. Putin's assertion that he wants to militarily demilitarize Ukraine and install a new government there also serves to highlight the value of realism in interstate relations.

In a similar vein, Loftus (2022) believes that, by applying a realist explanation to the Russian invasion, it speaks volumes about how states use military force as a last resort to protect their own interests. The concept of "a Russian world," or *Russkiy Mir*, is a focus of Russia's and its elite's foreign policy and represents the 1990s ideology of a Russian community composed of the people of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, and to a lesser extent of Russian speakers and Russian enclaves in the nearby foreign countries (Oyosoro, 2020). This Russian neighborhood is an example of civilizational nationalism. In the nearby abroad, Russian enclaves can be found in the Baltics, Crimea, Transnistria, and the Donbas. The "Russian Community" or "Ruskey Mirideology" was spread with the aid of the Russian Orthodox Church. It should come as no surprise that ceding Ukraine to the west would be political suicide. Suciú also pointed out that Russia's military action was intended to protect and further its threatened national security interests. NATO's troop placement close to its border and rising number of reconnaissance aircraft flights.

According to Sergei Shoigu, the Russian defense minister, NATO has already sent 10,000 troops to Eastern Europe, and it soon intends to redeploy another American military unit to Poland. Russian security is viewed as being compromised by NATO's military buildup near its border with Russia. Russia claims that this is in conflict with and violates the NATO-Russia founding act of 1997, which stipulated that NATO would refrain from stationing "considerable military forces" close to the contact line (Suciu 2022).

### **The Russian Invasion In Ukraine: a Violation And Attack On Sovereignty?**

Aggression by Russia toward Ukraine is widely condemned. Attack on national sovereignty, aggressive behavior, danger to the peace and security of the world, forcible occupation of a nation, aiding secessionist movements, annexation of Crimea, etc. In this study, the post-Russian invasion sovereignty of Ukraine is examined. Merriam-Webster defines sovereignty as "supreme power, especially over a body politic; freedom from external control: antonomy; controlling influence: one that is sovereign, especially: an autonomous state." Coleman (2009) outlined the impact of geography on state and national sovereignty. Westphalian sovereignty, according to Johnson and Ballentine (2020), is both internal and external. States are given self-government under UN Article 2. The Westphalia Peace of 1648 established authority. According to Akani (2019), sovereignty equals state independence. State sovereignty. Sovereignty: Universality is the subjecting of all territorial entities, regardless of grouping. State law is followed in right-creation. The ability of state laws to command and be obeyed, the independence of state power from other powers, and the propensity to liberate the state from all moral and legal restraints and associate sovereignty with force are thus three aspects of sovereignty that are sacred (for instance, with material force or the physical possibility of realizing sovereignty).

The French philosopher Jean Bodin (born 1530–1596) developed the concept of sovereignty at a time when medieval systems were giving way to centralized states, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. Jean Bodin strengthened the French king and feudal lords with the new concept of sovereignty, easing the transition from feudalism to nationalism. For over 350 years, sovereignty – the idea that governments can do what they want within their borders – has guided international relations, according to Haus (2009). The crux of this work is that Ukraine, a sovereign nation, has the right and power to choose any policy, mostly foreign policy as shown by Ukraine's security alliance with NATO. However, this foreign policy choice has become controversial and a global deadlock that threatens the long-standing global order. Ukraine's sovereign state policy has disrupted global peace, as Tirkey (2022) notes:

The Ukraine crisis raises important questions about state sovereignty and rising "spheres of influence." The Ukraine crisis has heightened west-Russia tensions and is dangerously close to becoming the largest military conflict in recent years. Russia strongly opposes NATO's eastward expansion and Ukraine's bid to join. The US and NATO disagree, supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and right to join security alliances.

Since the former Soviet Republic's dissolution in 1991, Ukraine's sovereignty has been recognized by international standards, and it is free to choose its own destiny and future international security prospects in terms of defense strategy and alliances. Since 1992, Ukraine has had a long-standing interest in NATO, and in 1997, a Ukraine-NATO Commission was established to serve as a forum for talking about shared security concerns. As Ukraine adopted the policy in its National Security Strategy in 2021 to strengthen partnership with NATO, this alliance became even more intense. In response to these actions by Ukraine, Russia antagonized a sovereign nation like Ukraine. Both the

Budapest Memorandum, signed in 1994, wherein Moscow promised to "refrain from the threat or use of force" against Ukraine in exchange for the surrender of a sizable nuclear stockpile that Ukraine inherited during the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the UN Charter, which stipulates that states should refrain from the use or threat of the use of force, were ignored by Russia (Turkey 2022).

Many people wondered whether Russia, a nation that once upheld the principle of sovereignty and non-interference in a country's internal affairs, would follow suit after its invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2020. Moscow has largely adopted a "statist" understanding of these concepts, according to which state sovereignty serves as the cornerstone of the global order. Moscow's justification for non-interference, however, was motivated by its own interests in preventing western influence in authoritarian regimes in Europe that were under Soviet sway. Moscow, however, has demonstrated its disregard for the non-interference principle. This can be seen in its invasions of neighboring nations that it deems necessary to interfere with in order to further its own national interests. This assertion is supported by Moscow's expansion of control over post-soviet regions, including its 2008 invasion of Georgia and its 2014 annexation of Crimea. Such a stance raises the question of whether Russia is actively forging a sphere of influence in its close neighboring countries. Currently, Ukraine is caught in a conflict between the west and Russia. The Ukraine crisis raises serious concerns about state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the potential effects of the emergence of a new "sphere of influence" on sovereignty (Turkey 2022).

Despite frequent claims that state sovereignty has been extinguished by globalization, according to Patrick (2022), the current crisis at the Russia-Ukraine border highlights the ongoing significance of state sovereignty as a sacred principle in international politics. It also argues how governments of nations invoke, reject, or interpret this fundamental principle in order to

further their own national interests. In fact, the ability of the United States and the European Union to reaffirm and defend the centrality of state sovereignty against a Russian attempt to dismiss it now determines the stability of the world. A former self-proclaimed defender of Westphalia and the UN rule against meddling, Russia now has 100,000 troops ready to invade, seize territory from, and possibly put an end to the neighboring country's independence.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which Russian President Vladimir Putin famously referred to as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century, Russia began to pursue an aggressive foreign policy geared toward extending its influence over its neighbors without regard for sovereignty. The Kremlin has persistently sought to expand its control over post-soviet territories, from the breakaway province of Transnistria in Moldova to Kazakhstan. Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 annexation of Crimea and arming of separatists in Ukraine's Donbas region are the most notable. Putin claimed that Ukrainians and Russians are "one people" and that Ukraine can only have true sovereignty as part of Russia. As the birthplace of Kyivan Rus, a medieval Slavic state from which Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians descend, Ukraine is important to Russian nationality. The fact that Crimea, with two-thirds Russians, was gifted to Ukraine by then-soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1954 as "a symbol of brotherly ties" between the two people only reinforces claims of Ukraine's artificiality as a national entity (Patrick 2022).

The Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic, recognized by Russia, can be used to illustrate Ukraine's sovereignty in Russia's military campaign. Putin ordered the Russian Defense Ministry to send peacekeepers there. Several UNSC emergency meetings condemned this order as a violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty. Russia mobilized troops to "protect" Donetsk and Luhansk from Ukraine's offensive against the

separatist territories (Sanger 2022). Lassin and Chanelle-justice (2021) analyzed sovereignty, focusing on the Donbas issue. Russian-speaking ethnic Russians live in Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia's "Russian world" (Russkly Mir) – the idea that Russian civilization extends to ethnic Russians worldwide – has influenced these people. Before the Soviet Union, Ethnic Ukraine lived nationwide. Stalin's Holodomor famine killed 4 million eastern Ukrainians in 1932–33. Russians moved to Ukraine during the Holodomor famine. New residents started it and made Donbass the industrial center. Ukraine's 24 "oblasts," or regions, including Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea, supported independence in 1991. In an independent Ukraine, 17.3% of the population – ethnic Russians – voted for independence.

Until 2010, when Donetsk politician Viktor Yanukovich became Ukraine's president, ethnic Russians and Ukrainians coexisted peacefully. As Ukraine's president, Viktor disguised his pro-Russian policies. President Viktor was negotiating an EU association agreement in 2013. Yanukovich chose the Russian Economic Union. Yanukovich was deposed by citizen protests. Putin annexed Crimea to protect ethnic Russians. Pro-Russian separatists took over several cities in Donetsk and Luhansk, hoping Russia would protect Russians in eastern Ukraine. Ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking eastern Ukrainians disapproved of the separatists and rejected Russia. 1.5 million Donbass residents have moved to Ukraine since 2014, while 1 million have moved to Russia. Separatist-occupied territories now offer a fast track to Russian citizenship. This boosts Putin's pro-Russian sentiment in eastern Ukraine. Since 1991, sentiment toward a strong, united Ukraine has grown, contrary to Russia's claim that Ukraine is still part of Russia. Most Ukrainians support NATO membership (Lassin and channel - justice 2022). Lassin and channel-justice believe that Russia interferes in Ukraine to (1) liberate the two separatist regions of Donbas and (2) deter Ukraine from joining NATO by using military force and Russia's unprecedented military build-up along Ukraine's borders.

Russian troops in Ukraine are occupying forces under international law, including the Geneva Conventions. Ukraine and Russia are parties to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, which covers this act.

According to the Freedom House report from February 21, 2022, "Ukraine is a sovereign democracy." Following a declaration that Russia would unilaterally recognize portions of eastern Ukraine as independent states, Putin invaded Ukraine using military force. This is an obvious instance of sovereignty violation under international law. "The people of Ukraine have a fundamental right to live in freedom, pick their own leaders, and run their own affairs" (Michael J. Abramowitz, the president of Freedom House). To support human rights advocates and activists in Ukraine, the United States, Europe, and all democracies must work together. Putin's attempt to invade Ukraine is a grave security implication for the region as it could undercut democratic systems and defy the will of the Ukrainian people who desire freedom. Those committed to establishing a world where governments respond to the will of their people and protect fundamental human rights must stand united against Putin.

### **Conclusion**

The study examined Russian aggression against Ukraine as a raw and aggressive display of national interest with power. Despite their plausibility, the Russian invasion has been widely condemned. The conflict has cost lives, displaced people, and refugees. It concerns statehood and sovereignty in international law and politics. Ukraine's leaders' decision to join NATO legally gives them the right to choose their government, global relations, bilateral relations, and more. The study showed the role of realism in the issue of concern, where power and brute force cause instability in a liberal order. The realist idea that "states are the only actors in international politics, all striving to nakedly pursue their national interest in a gruesome way using military means" is reinforced by national interest. Realistic calculations

and reasoning explain the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russia has defied many sanctions. This disrespects the UN. Thus, Russia, a superpower and permanent member of the UN Security Council, has broken a UN rule in an uncivilized manner.

The United Nations and other Security Council members should use the Russia-Ukraine incident as a yardstick for how strong they are when it comes to denouncing and effectively sanctioning any defaulter, regardless of its status in such a situation. Numerous observers criticize the UN and other global powers for their apathetic approach to subduing Russia. We all concurred that the world's response—primarily the United Nations and major world powers—was cautious and free of military force in order to avoid encouraging a paranoid leader like Putin to proclaim a world war that would usher in the apocalypse. However, the deterrence strategy used in such a situation needs to show more grit and readiness.

The study suggests the following key prognoses: (i) The Security Council of the United Nations must be significantly strengthened in order to deter any aggressor. All nations should band together to impose sanctions of various kinds on any state or its allies who turn a blind eye to such atrocities against humanity. This also has to do with the ability of such an aggressor to be held accountable for grave war crimes in order to deter future aggressors. (ii) The international bodies shouldn't be coy about joining forces to stop any state from acting aggressively, being spared the agonizing experience of the First and Second World Wars, with their high death tolls, expensive reconstruction projects in post-World War II Europe, the lack of many economies and industries, the ensuing hunger, etc., should be sufficient for any civilized statesmen to rein in their excesses.

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