MS Thesis

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF NATO:
AN ANALYSIS OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Dedication

I dedicate this MS thesis to my beloved Parents for their kindness, unparalleled inspiration, and endless support throughout my studies. Dear parents, your selflessness will always be remembered. Thank you for enabling me to achieve this feat.

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I would like to begin my gratitude by praising the Almighty Allah for all the blessings He has bestowed upon me in life. It would never have been possible without guidance from Allah Almighty who made me come across instances that shaped my success. This research is one of the few things that I hold close to my heart and I would like to thank Him for giving me the strength and courage to pursue this. It is indeed He who at every step gave patience and confidence to pursue MS in my choice of stream.

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ABSTRACT

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, characterized by territorial disputes and military hostilities, has drawn international attention due to its geopolitical significance. In this context, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is pivotal in shaping Eastern Europe's political and strategic landscape. This study analyzes NATO's political and strategic objectives concerning the Russia-Ukraine war. NATO's political objectives center on deterring Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine's sovereignty. NATO also extends political support to Ukraine and calls for meaningful dialogue with Russia to reduce the risk of unintended escalation. Strategically, NATO has deployed troops in Eastern European member states as part of its Enhanced Forward Presence initiative, bolstering its defense posture. The alliance emphasizes military readiness, ballistic missile defense, and cooperation on cybersecurity to counter emerging threats. NATO's strategic objectives further encompass supporting Ukraine and partner nations through training and capacity-building efforts, along with diplomatic endeavors for conflict resolution. This study employs a qualitative exploratory and analytical research method by utilizing thematic analysis for primary and secondary data collection. This research is guided by the regional security complex theory, which focuses on understanding security dynamics within special regional boundaries. The involvement of NATO is a commitment to provide security maximization for Ukraine rather than aggressive expansion against Russia. This study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the political, strategic, and diplomatic objectives of NATO in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. As the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to evolve, NATO's political and strategic objectives adapt to address regional security challenges while seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Understanding NATO's role in this context is crucial for comprehending the dynamics of one of the most significant international conflicts of the 21st century.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Russia is an important country in both Europe and Asia that is a part of the Eurasia region. Different tribes in the region were called Kievan Rus, which is similar to the early versions of Russia. Later, Russia was ruled by the Mongols. Russia developed under a ruler by the name of Ivan. A man by the name of Peter wanted Russia to look like Western European nations in the 18th century. Russia joined the Soviet Union at the turn of the 20th century. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia achieved its independence in 1991. However, Ukraine is a country located in Eastern Europe. Parts of Ukraine are ruled by many nations; including Poland and Russia. The Ukrainian people supported independence and wanted their nation. In the 20th century, Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union but in 1991, it gained independence. Ukraine has struggled hard to maintain its independence and faces challenges when dealing with Russia.

1.1   Background of the Study

One of the countries to emerge after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was Russia and Ukraine gained independence. Russia and Ukraine have complex and uncertain relations. Division of the resources and assets that were left by the Soviet Union, including gas supply interruptions and price disputes, was one of the issues. Ukraine, Russia, and the European nations that Russia supplied through Ukraine were all affected by this issue. Because of electoral fraud (presidential elections), Ukraine's "orange revolution" in 2004 changed the political landscape and the result was a revote Yushchenko won the elections against Russian candidate Yanukovych and lost. The country wanted an elected government and allies with the West, but Russia did not like them and tried to cut relations with them (Wood. et.al, 2015).

The Russian and Ukraine conflict started again after Victor Yanukovych, Ukraine's elected president in 2010, decided against allowing the alliance into the European Union in support of strengthening ties with Russia. This decision by the president was not accepted

by the Ukrainian people. They think ties to European unions can be helpful for the growth of a country. They started protesting against the president of Ukraine. The Euromaidan protests in Ukraine were used to remove the country's president, and Crimea was taken as a part of Russia. The Euromaidan protests against corruption, and government violence, and demands democratic reforms. Russia annexed Crimea, a region that was previously a part of Ukraine after the president of Ukraine was removed. Historically, Crimea belonged to Russia, but in 1954, it was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Although the people are Russian speaking, the Crimean people support Russia (Shah & Gedamkar, 2022).

One of the main players in this conflict is Russia. In 2014, it annexed Crimea, a region that was previously a part of Ukraine, and Crimea supports separatist forces that are pro-Russian in eastern Ukraine. The Crimea annexation by Russia in 2014 became the reason for the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia. The violence in Eastern Ukraine started after the annexation. Russia supported the crisis in eastern Ukraine. Then Russia started a conflict in the Donbas and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, which is essential to Ukraine's industry. In addition, there are conflicts between the government of Ukraine and people in Eastern Ukraine who support Russia. The primary country directly affected by the conflict in Ukraine. In the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, the Ukrainian government has been engaged in fighting against separatist groups. The areas in dispute were again under the control of the Ukrainian government, which maintained its territorial integrity. Armed groups from eastern Ukraine want independence from Ukraine and closer ties to Russia. Russia gave its military aid and equipment support. Since then, the conflict has changed territorial disputes, humanitarian problems, and its impact on regional stability (Zhao, 2023).

On February 26, 2022, conflicts between Russia and Ukraine started. It was the biggest attack on European countries after World War II and was caused by military conflicts, territory disputes, and political tensions between Russia and Ukraine. At that time, 20% of Ukraine's land was under Russian control. Before the invasion, Ukraine prevented Russian troops near its border from preparing a plan of attack.

"Putin publically said in 2007 that Russia shared their history with Ukraine and blamed the West for instituting in Ukraine a forced change of identity. He characterized

Ukraine as a part of an anti-Russia project under the protection and control of Western power. He cleared that the true sovereignty of Ukraine was only possible with a partnership with Russia. Russia will no longer tolerate a truly independent Ukraine, free to distance itself and align more closely with the West".

Days before invading Ukraine, Putin repeated these themes in a speech to the public. Ukraine "is not just a neighboring country for us," he warned. Ukraine is important to our religious, historical, and cultural landscape. The people who live in what used to be historically Russian territory have identified themselves as Russians and Orthodox Christians since the past. Russia shifted military forces to Ukraine's border and warned the country. Putin said the words "You have a choice" and aggressively warned the whole of the world to choose to accept Ukraine as a part of ours, if not effectively, if not officially, then face the consequences. Russia demanded in December 2021 that NATO and the US stop all military operations in the former Soviet republics as well as any future expansion into Ukraine. These demands of Russia were rejected then Russia attacked Ukraine officially in 2022 (Brunk & Hakimi, 2022).

From February 2021 to February 2022, the President of Russia Putin sent different Russian forces to the Ukrainian border. Zelensky, the president of Ukraine changed his plan and moved closer to NATO. After that, Russia warned Biden that Ukraine would not join NATO and would not have any modern weapons and it also demanded the withdrawal of NATO forces from Eastern Europe to Western Europe. Ukraine has a lack of modern weapons to use against Russia, NATO provided the arms to Ukraine that were the border and security threads for Russia. According to Putin, it is not acceptable for Russia. Tensions with Russia increased as the United States and its allies were trying to connect Ukraine with Western nations. When the crisis started, the US and its allies paid little attention to making Ukraine a part of NATO, a military alliance of Western countries. The main challenge in this situation is not NATO expansion. After 2014, western countries stuck to their main objective and closely worked on connecting Ukraine to NATO. Russia was worried if Ukraine joined NATO, they would then try to take back Crimea. Russia asked for Western countries to withdraw from Ukraine. However, NATO provided Ukraine with military training, and President Trump also agreed to provide Ukraine with more weapons and defensive weapons. Ukraine started joint military exercises with NATO forces (Mearsheimer, 2022).

However, a political and military alliance known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established on April 4, 1949. The 32 countries are part of NATO including intergovernmental military alliances from North and Europe. The primary objective of NATO is to ensure its member states collective defense and security. While NATO is monitors the situation closely and has provided political and practical support to Ukraine, they are not directly involved in this conflict. After that, Ukraine wanted to join NATO and they had security concerns about its western border. Then Russia captured Crimea and identified itself as belonging to Russia. Russian military intervention in Crimea began the international conflict between the two states. Russia also supports the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in Eastern Ukraine (fix & Keil, 2022).

This study explores the political and strategic objectives of NATO in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. The political objectives of NATO are deterring Russian aggression and supporting the sovereignty of Ukraine. Therefore, NATO also extended political support to Ukraine and called for negotiations with Russia to reduce the unintended escalation strategically NATO has exploited troops in Eastern Europe, and, further, they support Ukraine as a partner nation through armed training, capacity-building efforts, and diplomatic try for conflict resolution. Therefore, NATO's political and strategic objectives adapt to address the regional security challenges to seek a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

1.2   Statement of the problem

The conflicts between Russia and Ukraine involved military confrontation, territorial disputes, and political tensions. The area is important due to its deep geopolitical significance and global intentions. While NATO has played an important political and strategic part in Eastern Europe. This study explores the political and strategic objectives of NATO's involvement in the Russia-Ukraine war and the actions and intentions of NATO towards conflicts they seek to achieve.

1.3   Significance of the Study

The Russia War is a territorial dispute and military confrontation has global attention due to its profound geopolitical significance and NATO has played a vital political and strategic role in Eastern Europe. NATO's political objectives revolve around deterring Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine's sovereignty. NATO also extended support to Ukraine to provide armed training, and mutual capability and promote dialogues with Russia to reduce the risk of unintended escalation while NATO strategically exploits the troops in Eastern Europe. This research is helpful for researchers, academia, and the general public who will work further on this topic. It is hoped that the study will add a valuable contribution to the limited literature on the topic of the Russia-Ukraine War and the political and strategic objectives of NATO.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the political and strategic objectives of NATO's involvement in the Russia-Ukraine war.

2. To explore the various political, strategic, and diplomatic mechanisms that NATO has employed to deter Russian aggression and analyze their effectiveness in the Russia-Ukraine war.

1.5   Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the main political and strategic objectives that drive NATO's engagement in the Russia-Ukraine war?

2. How effective have NATO's political, strategic, and diplomatic mechanisms been in deterring Russian aggression and maintaining regional stability in the Russia-Ukraine war?

1.6 Delimitation(s) of the Study

The primary focus of the study is to explore the political and strategic objectives of NATO in deterring Russian aggression and preventing the escalation of hostilities in Eastern Europe. Additionally, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of these mechanisms in maintaining regional stability.

Another key aspect of the study examines NATO's diplomatic efforts and the management of the balance between military deterrence and defense. This includes assessing how NATO seeks a peaceful solution through diplomatic initiatives to bring an end to the conflict.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The book titled "Roots of Russia's War in Ukraine" by (Brunk & Hakimi, 2022) explained that providing details on Russia-Ukraine relations. Many tribes called Kyivan Rus already lived in Russia, an important country in both Europe and Asia. Ivan played a crucial role in Russia's expansion during Mongol rule. Peter wanted to make Russia modern like Western Europe in the seventeenth century. Russia joined the Soviet Union in the 1900s, but it gained its independence in 1991. In 1991, the Eastern European nation of Ukraine achieved its goal of independence from foreign rule. It wasn't easy to maintain independence, especially against Russia. Tension developed due to disputes over issues of the Soviet era and the 2004 "orange revolution" as Ukraine tried to be more westernized. The 2015 study by Wood et al. analyzes this convoluted past and the difficulties in Russia-Ukraine relations.

According to an article published in 2023 titled Russia-Ukraine War: Geopolitical Implications and Evolution of NATO-Russia Relations explains that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has affected international politics, and collaboration between Russia and NATO broke down. The crisis started when Russia annexed Crimea, a region that was part of Ukraine. Military clashes, territorial disputes, and political tensions between Russia and Ukraine have marked it. It began when Russia attacked Crimea and took control of Crimea. After that, there were fights between the government of Ukraine and groups of people in eastern Ukraine who wanted to be separated from Ukraine and have closer ties with Russia (Zhao, 2023).

The author in Ukraine-Russia War: A Prelude to a Post-Western International Order discussed the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia and its implications internationally. He argues that the war served as a precursor to a shift away from the Western powers' dominance in global affairs. They highlight the significance of the conflict and the implications of its broader geopolitics. They also suggest that Western response to the war has been insufficient, destroying the credibility of Western leadership. The failure presents the opportunity for the emergence of a post-Western international order with countries like Russia and China seeking to challenge Western dominance. They also discuss the potential shift to a multipolar world and changes in regional security and global governance (Nagy, 2022).

The author in this research article, The Russo-Ukrainian Conflict, explains the details of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. He highlighted the historical background, events, and implications of the conflicts. He explains how the conflict started with the Russian government opposed Ukraine's intention to seek deeper connections with the European Union. After that, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 by Russia and the outbreak of war of arms in Eastern Ukraine. Furthermore, he explores the geopolitical implications of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, how it has developed, and how ties between the two countries have changed as a result of economic sanctions against Russia and an expansion of NATO's position in Eastern Europe. Also, he studies how the conflict affects regional security and works to maintain stability (Gierczak, 2020).

An article on the Ukraine-Russia Conflict: Signals and Scenarios for the Broader Region (Special Report 366) by the United States Institute of Peace in 2015 analyzes the Ukraine-Russia conflict and provide awareness and implications for the broader region. The prospects for NATO and EU expansion, the instability of Eastern Europe, and the signals and scenarios that may result from the conflict and more Russian aggressiveness in the post-Soviet region are all discussed in the paper. This report provides comprehensive details of the Russian and Ukraine conflicts.

Keil in his article discusses the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the relationship between NATO and Russia. The authors explore the opportunities and challenges that emerged as an effect of the conflict and the writers analyze the strategies and responses of both NATO and Russia. The authors Fix and Keil begin by providing the details of events that led up to the invasion of Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. They also highlight the importance of these events and their effect on the security dynamics in Europe. They conclude with the importance of maintaining a strong and unified NATO against Russian aggression (Keil, 2022).

In an article about "the role of the UN in the war with Russia in Ukraine", the author discusses the war between Russia and Ukraine that began and that has been dead. Every nation demanded that Russia stop its aggression against Ukraine and that the UN act on Russia's

decision. The purpose of this study is to examine how the UN has contributed to the peace process between Russia and Ukraine (Perbawa, 2022).

In the research article Conflict in Ukraine: A Timeline (2014 Eve of 2022 invasion), the authors discuss the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine that started when the Russian armed forces moved into the country from Belarus on 24 February 2022, Russia, and Crimea. Before the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, there was already conflict in eastern Ukraine between backed separatists of Russia between the Governments of Ukraine. This paper provides the major events that happened in the conflict in Ukraine from the annexation of Crimea in 2014 to the invasion of Russia in 2022 (Walker, 2023).

In the report discussed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the author discusses the function of nuclear weapons in Russia and Ukraine and their impacts on NATO. Putin announced in 2022 Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine and understanding Russian nuclear attacks. The start of the war was because of Ukraine joining NATO. It's a Western block and threads between Russia and Ukraine are bordering on the state of Russia (Chesnut, 2023).

The review of the article on the causes and consequences of Russia and Ukraine provides a detailed examination and its origin, historical relationship, and integration of Europe. The author discusses the annexation of Russia in Crimea and its subsequent conflict response to international organizations and on implementing sanctions on Russia. The author highlights the broader implications of European security and Russian-Western relations (Mearsheimer, 2022).

Russia Ukraine is an important issue in global politics. It affects Europe and the European security plans and the rest of Ukraine has always struggled with aligning with eastern and western states since its independence. In these conflicts, sanctions were imposed on Russia and had a big impact on the economy of Russia. Russia has had a large military presence on the Ukraine border since late 2021 and in 2022 a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This war affects people all around the world (Shah & Gedamkar, 2022).

The author in his article Russia, Ukraine, and the Future World Order provides the details of how Russia and Ukraine were involved in a major conflict on February 26, 2022, which caused the biggest attack on European countries since World War II. Military disputes, geographic disputes, and political difficulties between the two countries are what led to this crisis. In planning for an invasion, Ukraine took measures to stop Russian forces from invading its borders. Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, stated in full that Russia and Ukraine had a shared past in 2007. He stated that the West was responsible for forcing Ukraine to adopt a new identity and that only an agreement with Russia could give Ukraine true autonomy. Putin issued a warning that Russia would not accept an independent Ukraine that was backed strongly by the West. Putin repetitive his views in a speech shortly before starting the invasion, highlighting the importance of Ukraine to Russian history and culture. Russia demanded that NATO and the US stop transferring into Ukraine and joining in the conflict in former Soviet nations in December 2021. These demands were refused, and in its reply, Russia started an official attack on Ukraine in 2022 (Aleksovski et al., 2014).

While there has been considerable research on the Russia-Ukraine war, the study aims to fill a specific research gap by examining NATO's political and strategic objectives. It focuses on how NATO works to deter Russian aggression, prevent hostilities in Eastern Europe, and actively seeks a diplomatic way to end the crisis between Russia and Ukraine.

Through this research, researcher intend to provide a deeper understanding of NATO's function (role) in maintaining regional stability in Eastern Europe. Additionally, this study places a specific emphasis on analyzing the diplomatic efforts of NATO as part of its strategy to actively seek a diplomatic way to end the crisis between Russia and Ukraine.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Regional security complex theory is an approach theory in international relations. Regional security complex theory focuses on understanding security dynamics within special regional boundaries. It was proposed by Barry Buzan in 1983 and later expanded by Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde in 2003. The theory of regional security complexes suggests that security issues and relations between states are influenced not only by global concerns but also by regional dynamics, structures, and historical experiences.

The theory of regional security complexes provides a lens to analyze the political and strategic objectives of NATO in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. NATO is a transatlantic security alliance deeply invested in the security of its member states and the broader European region. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is a challenge to the stability and security of this regional context. The Russia-Ukraine war was influenced by the security interdependence within the European regional security complex. The actions of alliances are shaped by the need to maintain stability, deter aggression, and protect its member states. NATO is interested in protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine as well as other neighboring states while preventing Russian aggression in the region. NATO seeks to strengthen security cooperation with Ukraine and other regional partners through measures such as military support, training, and capacity-building efforts. NATO provides reassurance to its member states in Eastern Europe by conducting military exercises and bolstering defense capabilities to counter any potential threats. The NATO alliance works towards promoting stability in the region by engaging diplomatically, imposing sanctions on Russia, and supporting diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflicts. Regional security complex theory helps to understand that NATO's actions and objectives are shaped by the dynamics of the European regional security complex and emphasizes the interconnectedness of security concerns and the alliance's efforts to maintain stability and security.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is exploratory. Data is collected from primary and secondary sources. In this research, secondary methods are used to explore NATO's political and strategic objectives in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. Primary sources such as interviews and secondary sources like books, articles, journals, research papers, and governmental reports from different think tanks are utilized in the study.

4.1   Research Design

A qualitative methodology is used for research design, which is based on exploration and analysis methods. Data analysis is conducted through primary and secondary sources for the elaboration of the study.

4.2   Population

Primary data is collected through interviews with three professors and three lecturers from different universities, all of whom have connections to international relations experts. They are focusing on the Russia-Ukraine war.

4.3   Sampling

In this research, interviews are conducted to collect data, and convenient sampling is used.

4.4   Operational Definitions

Russia Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine War began in 2014 and its ongoing conflict when Russia annexed Crimea and expanded the conflict in eastern Ukraine because the president of Russia the president protested against the president. It involves Ukrainian government forces and a pro-Russian separatist group.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO is a group of North American and European countries that work together for their collective security. If one country attacks a member state of NATO, it promises to protect that country. NATO rules are written in a special agreement called the North Atlantic Treaty. There are thirty-one member states. They were found on April 4, 1949, and are located in Brussels. NATO's aims are for the mutual defense of its member states during the Cold War and beyond (NATO: The World's Largest Alliance, 2023).

Collective Defense

Collective defense is the objective of NATO. It's a commitment of NATO to its member states to protect and defend one another from external threats and attacks, including in the Russia-Ukraine War. The basics of collective defense are in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Deterrence

Deterrence is a strategy used by NATO to stop the aggression of Russia in the Russian-Ukraine war. They are just showing the power of the military.

Dialogue and Diplomacy

It is a political strategy of NATO to engage countries in negotiations and discussions to find a peaceful resolution with Russia to the Russian-Ukraine war.

Military Readiness

NATO provides military training, types of equipment, and operational capabilities to Ukraine to respond effectively to security threats and potential military engagements in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Conflict Resolution

The process of addressing disputes and setting the conflict or crisis through peaceful means including negotiations, dialogues, mediation, and diplomatic efforts to reach mutually acceptable solutions.

4.5   Data Collection

Data collection is conducted on primary and secondary sources. In primary resources, the research is rely on structured and unstructured interviews, while the secondary sources include books, research articles, newspapers, and web sources.

4.6   Data Analysis

In this research, the thematic analysis are used. Thematic analysis is employed to identify and analyze key themes to the political and strategic objectives of NATO within the context of the Russia-Ukraine war.

4.7   Ethical Consideration

In secondary qualitative analysis, all the information are appropriately cited. Bias to particular content will be avoided throughout conducting the research and the data has been selected based on the aims of the research and not just according to the preference of a particular aspect.

5.   ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore the Political and Strategic objectives of NATO in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. To effectively analyze and present this topic, it is important to have a well-organized structure consisting of several chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides an overview of the Political and Strategic objectives of NATO in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. This chapter provides background information and also includes purpose and objectives.

Chapter 2: Historical Background

In the first section, we discuss the overall Political and Strategic objectives of NATO. In the second section, this study discusses the role of NATO in Russia and Ukraine before the 2014 Ukraine war.

Chapter 3: Political and Strategic objectives of NATO in Russia-Ukraine war

This chapter explores the Political and Strategic objectives of NATO in the Russia-Ukraine war. This study discusses NATO's policy to counter the aggression of Russia.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In this chapter, this study concludes the thesis with recommendations.

References:

Authentic sources.

Chapter 2
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed on 4 April 1949 in Washington D.C. NATO consists of 32 member countries from North America and Europe. The primary objective was to ensure the defense and security of its member states through collective efforts. The core principle of NATO was mutual defense, which means that if any member can attack, it's considered an attack on all member states. The statement was written in Article 5 of the NATO treaty. NATO also serves as a forum for its members to cooperate and consult on defense and security-related issues. NATO promotes democratic values, builds trust in long-term ways, and prevents conflicts. The historical background is separated into two sections. The first section describes the overall political and strategic objectives of NATO and the second section describes the role of NATO with Russia and Ukraine.

Section - I
2.1   Overall Political Objectives of NATO from 1949

The first section describes the overall Political and Strategic objectives of NATO and the second section describes the role of NATO with Russia and Ukraine.

2.1.1   NATO's objectives to counter the Soviet Union

The world was divided into two blocs after World War II. The Soviet Union led the Eastern bloc, while the United States led the Western bloc. That time was the period of tension known as the Cold War. The United States, Western European states like the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany, as well as other allies, formed the democratic and capitalist Western bloc. They supported free market economies, individual freedom, and democratic governments. The Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact on 14 May 1955 to maintain its influence and unite the Eastern European countries. The Soviet Union controlled the countries of the Eastern Bloc, and they adopted communist governments and socialist economic systems. They included the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany. After West Germany joined NATO, the communalist countries formed the Warsaw Pact, including Hungary, Romania, USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. The division between capitalism and communism was ideological rivalry, political and geopolitical. That period was the period of tension known as the Cold War. NATO consisted of Western countries and the Warsaw Pact united Eastern bloc countries in a military alliance. Both organizations were established to counter one another influence. Many countries like Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, and Bulgaria are part of the Warsaw Pact. This alliance existed until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the period of the end of the Cold War (Wagner, 2012).

The Soviet Union extended its influence and installed the communist government in several countries after World War II. The United States and its allies adopted a policy of containment to prevent the spread of communism and soviet influence. The United States wanted to maintain an existence in Europe. The United States performed an essential work in the formation of NATO and in protecting Western interests. NATO was made to counter the

Soviet Union's expansion in Europe after World II. After that, NATO was established to provide collective defense for its member states. During the Cold War, NATO was established in 1949 to counter the communist threat to the West. NATO aimed to protect its member states' security and stability while presenting a unified front against soviet expansionism. NATO maintains its existence in Europe and helps the formation of the European Union. NATO adopted a massive retaliation policy. NATO threatened Warsaw pacts countries that if anyone attacked the NATO Alliance, then they started a nuclear attack on that country. NATO's policy of deterrence focused on the economic development of Europe to address the devastation caused by World War II. Europe worked under the umbrella of NATO during this period. On the other hand, Russia built its military presence and spent three times more on military. NATO originally consisted of twelve countries and expanded to include Greece, Turkey, and West Germany. From its beginning, NATO was not only defending the allies against soviet threats. They also focus on strengthening the relations between North America and Western Europe. After World War II, NATO was a response that changed the geopolitical landscape. NATO aimed to provide a united front against soviet expansionism and ensure Western Europe's security and stability. NATO's mission expanded to include stopping nuclear war during the Cold War (NATO, 2022). The NATO clear goal was:

"In the words of NATO's first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, NATO's role during the Cold War was to keep 'the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."

2.1.2 The Expansion of NATO toward Europe from 1949

North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established to counter the Soviet Union's European influence. After that, their mission was not only to counter the Soviet Union but also to carry out a broader mission. NATO wants to stop aggression from emerging again in Europe. The strong presence of North America in the region aimed to cooperate, maintain stability, and prevent conflicts among European nations. NATO is a united front for countries to discourage aggression, maintain regional stability, and collaborate among member states. After World War II, Europe tried to recover its losses, and the leaders wanted no more big wars in Europe. NATO is also interested in expanding its alliance to Europe. They invited the European states to join NATO to promote regional stability. If any country attacks another,

they all work against that country. NATO's objective in Europe was to counter the Soviet Union and prevent the expansion of its influence in the European region. NATO aimed to expand its alliance toward the Soviet Union's borders. NATO encouraged European countries to cooperate more closely, and it helped European countries with their losses in World War II. The strong presence of America in Europe proved that they would not work together and avoid fighting among themselves. NATO's ideas were a sense of unity among European nations. The Soviet Union threatened Europe and were trying to take control of their governments. In 1948 in Europe, the communalist party of Czechoslovakia toppled their democratic government and backed the Soviet Union against joining the NATO alliance. The objectives of NATO were to contain the Soviet Union and preserve democratic Western values (Tsygankov, 2014).

NATO is a military alliance of security and defense for its member states. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO expanded its alliances with Eastern European states. The Soviet Union controlled the states of Eastern Europe, which were members of the communist bloc. The goal of NATO is to invite countries to expand NATO. NATO aims to promote peace and stability in the region. They play a role in the defense of its member states, crisis management efforts, and conflict prevention. NATO also plays a role in Russia's Ukraine war to support Ukraine militarily and provide training and aid. NATO's efforts to ensure its member states' military capabilities and to support them in their position as modernizers of military weapons and enhance military power.

2.1.3 NATO's Open Door Policy

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in 1949 in Washington DC by 12 members: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. During the Cold War era, it was for mutual defense against soviet influence. After that, NATO's mission was to expand alliances throughout Europe to counter Soviet Union expansions. NATO invited the European states to join Western allies against the Soviets. NATO's open door policy is for countries interested in joining as an alliance member for collective defense and to prevent threats mentioned in Article (10) of the NATO treaty. NATO adopts the open door policy for

enlargement towards Europe. It is also a criterion for countries to join. The open-door policy is based on the concept that European nations have the right to security and self-determination. The NATO nine enlargement rounds were conducted in 1952, 1955, 1982, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2017, 2020, 2023, and 2024. Now, NATO has a 32 member state which includes Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, north Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Sweden and the United Kingdom and the United States. The open door policy is planned for European nations to promote stability and security through a unified collective defense against any external threat. The commitment of member countries must follow international law, the rule of law, and human rights and promote democratic values (NATO Enlargement: The Future of the Open-Door Policy, 2023). NATO has declared an open-door membership policy for alliances from any country that can meet the requirements (Art, 1998).

2.1.4 Promotion of Democratic values

After World War II, there were periods of new tensions between the US, Canada, and other European allies and the USSR. NATO was founded, and it aimed to safeguard a Europe that was free, united, and democratic against Soviet Union influence. NATO was made to counter communalism and promote democratic values against the USSR (Soviet Union). When the Cold War ended, there was a transition from communalist governance to the democratic system of the Western organizations of NATO and EU (European Union). This step takes a dynamic shift in geopolitical dynamics and NATO, shaping the post-Cold War security landscape in Europe (Lloyd & Freeman, 2019).

NATO is a cooperative organization where countries work together to ensure their security and only make decisions if everyone is on the same page. Members of NATO can consult on any issue and make decisions on political and security issues in this forum. Decisions within NATO are always made through consensus. After discussion and consultation, NATO members reach agreements. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) aims to establish long-term peace in Europe by bringing together member states that share common values like democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, and human rights.

The objective was to maintain the security and freedom of all members by military and political means. On both sides, members of the Atlantic formed a strong bond known as a transatlantic partnership. The alliance's security in North America and Europe was closely connected. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded to unite member countries with shared values such as individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. NATO aimed to protect all members' security and freedom through military and political means. The transatlantic partnerships formed on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean between the members of NATO created a strong bond between them. The security of allies in North America and Europe was closely intertwined. The core principle of NATO is collective defense, which ensures that no member country faces security challenges alone and that all ally members can support each other. The commitment of NATO to provide security and promote stability in the Euro-Atlantic region, and its purpose is to maintain peace by bringing nations together, sharing their expected values, and contributing to stability in the regions. The NATO core principle is collective defense, which ensures that no member country faces security challenges alone and that all members of allies can support them. The commitment to security promotes stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. The purpose of NATO is to maintain peace by bringing nations together, sharing their expected values, sharing their security through collective defense, and contributing to maintaining regional stability (NATO purpose, 2023).

NATO supports member states' liberty, a fundamental aspect of democratic societies. The alliance recognizes the freedom of speech, religion, and associations and works to promote and protect these values in member states. NATO is committed to promoting democratic values of alliance and encourages consultation, consensus on decision-making, and cooperation on defense and security matters of members (Matthijs, 2019). Human rights are important, and NATO supports and defends these principles in its member nations. NATO also recognizes the importance of the rule of law and encourages its members to support the rule of law and ensure their lawful systems, like transparency, accountability, and independence (Durhin, 2020). NATO works as a solid alliance to provide security in Europe and maintain peace in the region. NATO uses its military strength to prevent and handle crises by itself. During the Cold War, NATO strengthened its ties with Europe and assisted its members in fighting against Soviet threats to promote democratic values and counter the

Soviet Union. NATO supports democratic values and seeks peaceful solutions to problems (NATO Operations and Missions, 2023).

2.2   Overall Strategic Objectives of NATO from 1949

2.2.1   Defensive Objectives of NATO

NATO is a major alliance that draws its strength from Article 5 of its founding treaty. NATO promised their member countries that if one country was in trouble, the others would provide military help. An alliance is a group of countries working to keep each other safe. Similarly, article (5) of the treaty of NATO is collective defense says that if any member country of NATO attacks one country, it is considered an attack to all, and they all work together against that country to respond; deterrence is a core element of NATO and it aims to prevent war and conflict, defending their members and preserving the decisions freedom and country actions. NATO is a cooperative organization where countries work together to ensure their security and only make decisions if everyone is on the same page. Members of NATO can consult on any issue and decide on political and security issues in this forum. Decisions within NATO are always determined by consensus. After discussion and consultation, NATO members reach agreements. The small and big countries take advantage of alliances. The smaller and less powerful states and lack of resources take advantage of solid defense, rely on alliances, and prevent potential threats. Conversely, bigger and stronger countries boost their military strength and gain influence over smaller nations. They also discourage smaller countries from developing nuclear weapons (Doppagne & Reuters, 2023).

NATO's policy depends on deterrence, which aims to keep Allies safe and prevent conflicts by maintaining influential military forces in the cyber, space, land, air, and sea domains. NATO reiterated its defense and deterrence commitments at the 2022 Madrid Summit, adopting a comprehensive strategy to counter threats from every direction. This involved bolstering defense capacities in various areas and guaranteeing rapid supplies for any ally facing potential threats. Based on these conclusions, NATO leaders started in Vilnius in 2023 and decided on necessary actions to strengthen defense posture and deterrence. These actions included creating new regional defense policies to reinforce face defenses and improve the ability of members to respond quickly to new threats. To strengthen NATO's deterrent and defense posture, space and cyber capabilities have been added to its nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities. Because of this broad combination, NATO can respond to a wide range of threats effectively and flexibly. To safeguard the security and stability of its members

in an unstable world, NATO tends to maintain the defense of its values of human rights, democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law (Deterrence and Defense, 2023).

2.2.2 Economic Objectives of NATO from 1949

NATO's establishment was a collective effort of an alliance of Western democracies to counter the threat of communalism and soviet expansionism to ensure the security and stability of their member states. United States provided economic assistance to Europe because it faced losses during World War II. They lost many people and faced economic issues for development. The plans of the United States of Marshall Plan (plan for recovery of Europe) for Europe. The United States played an active role in helping Europe to recover from the effects of the war. The Marshall Plan was an economic aid for Europe in 1948. It is aimed to provide financial aid programs for Europe to rebuild economies and infrastructure. The Marshal Plan played a role in stabilizing the economy of European nations, recovery, and preventing the spread of communalism. The economic assistance is not only for recovery but also for grand work for regional stability. After the establishment of NATO, they played a role in countering external threats and in security and economic reconstruction for Europe (Bostick, 1997).

After World War II, Europe faced economic challenges, rebuilt its economies, and focused on security. At that time, communist expansion in Europe and, on the other hand, the United States Marshall Plan, an economic aid program, was launched for Europe to help. The objectives of this program were to rebuild European nations that had been lost and to advance American Western expansion goals in Europe. The United States was involved in European affairs and helped Turkey and Greece. They provide economic and military aid for both states. The Czechoslovakia government was supported by the Soviet Union, its expansion on the German border, and Italy as a communist party. After that, Germany was split in two, with the Eastern part controlling the Soviet Union and the West controlling the West. The expansions of the West grow increasingly. The Brussels treaty was to increase the military aid for Europe for their security and collective defense against the Soviet Union. These steps for Europe to maintain its stability and control. After that, NATO was established to counter the influence of the Soviet Union and hold Europe against the Soviet Union. Under the protection of US nuclear power, NATO gave aid to all of Europe. The first doctrine emerged in 1955 and

was based on massive retaliation when the US responded to large-scale nuclear attacks by any state that attacked a NATO member state. These steps were against the Soviet Union's threat (Bostick, 1997).

NATO provides economic assistance for its member states through various mechanisms such as crisis management and operations, collective defense, and cooperative security; the provided funding budgets of NATO are used to support the alliance's assistance program. The strategic goals of NATO are closely linked to the organization's economic assistance program. Financial assistance for alliances was a goal of NATO, which was to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means. The funds providers are essential for members to deliver capabilities, run their operations, and for the security and collective defense of the member state. NATO provides defense expenditures for its member states. The NATO alliance spent the money on their armed forces. The financial assistance for members to support its military forces and participate in the collective needs of the NATO members. The funds are allocated for countries to spend their armed forces, expenses for air, maritime, and land forces, and for special operations and cyber security. In 2016, NATO defense ministers collectively spent 2% on defense expenditures. The funds ensure military readiness and political determination for NATO's collective defense efforts. NATO allies agreed that modernizing military capabilities should receive at least 20% of defense expenditure (Aspects of NATO Economic Cooperation).

The US raised its defense budget after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The US has approximately two-thirds of the defense spending for alliances. This was not only for the alliance but also commonly funded for NATO members. In 2007-2008, the financial crisis and reduced defense spending aided many NATO alliances up till 2014 with their European allies.

Section – II

2.3   Role of NATO in Russia and Ukraine after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991

After the fall of the Soviet Union, sixteen (16) states emerged. The Soviet socialist republics comprised fifteen states, and after collapse, these republics became independent states. In the past six years, NATO expanded twice, in 1999 and 2004, and has added ten new countries. Russia and Ukraine were necessary due to their size, population, and geopolitical importance. Russia was the larger successor of the Soviet Union after its dissolution because Russia had many productions, defense industries, a black sea fleet, and military, economic, and geopolitical resources. Russia maintains to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Similarly, Ukraine was also a significant successor state and the second-largest state in Europe after Russia. Ukraine faces many economic challenges. Ukraine struggles with its internal divisions of eastern and western regions. Ukraine's location is a competition point between East (Russia) and West (NATO/US) dominance. The fall of the Soviet Union had both internal and external reasons, which were political policies, economies, defense, and nuclear disasters. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the end of communalism and made political, economic, and societal shifts. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization originated to counterbalance the growing power of the Soviet Union. In history, NATO is a solid and successful military alliance and defense of their countries against Soviet threats. Late in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO adopted a new strategic plan. The concept was to safeguard the alliances against an uncertain future. NATO must also focus on Europe to maintain a strategic balance in Europe (Temelkovska & Anevska, 2017).

The relationships between NATO, Russia, and Ukraine are like a triangle, with each side representing essential interactions. NATO was trying to establish relations with Ukraine and Russia, but tensions and disagreements occurred regarding security and regional issues. Neither Russia nor Ukraine are NATO members. The relations between Russia and NATO were complex because NATO's expansion in Europe was a threat to Russia, and it was near Russian borders. Russia was concerned about the NATO military alliance near its border and the threat to Russia. Conversely, Ukraine wants closer ties with the West (NATO). Ukraine and Russia have complex relations and territorial disputes. The people in Ukraine are

primarily in favor of Russia, and they want an alliance with Russia. Some people want an alliance with NATO because of their country's development. However, Russia was unhappy with this and maintained its control in Ukraine.

2.3.1 Role of NATO in Russia

The proposal was made by former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to join NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union. His policy was to restructure the relations with the West. He further said the alliance was not against Russia. The idea of Gorbachev did not materialize, and NATO expanded toward Europe and included countries that were a part of the Soviet Union. The relations between Russia and NATO are cooperative, and tensions between increases, the expansion of NATO and Russia's security concerns in Eastern Europe. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the first president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, repeated Gorbachev's proposal. He said over the phone in Hungary that Russia's long-term political goal was to ally with NATO members. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO started to refine its purpose. NATO's goal is to ensure the democratization of newly post-communalist republics and maintain Europe. Most of the countries join the NATO as an alliance. NATO and Russia officially signed a partnership for peace in 1994. Building trust between NATO and former Soviet states was the goal of this effort. In the 2000s in Moscow, American President Clinton met with Putin and stated that he believed Russia was joining the Atlantic Alliance and supporting the West. Thirteen countries have joined NATO since the end of the Cold War. The tensions between Russia and NATO include NATO expansions towards Eastern Europe, geopolitical ambitions, and security arrangements in Eastern Europe. NATO rejected Russia's request to prevent the alliance's expansion into neighboring countries. The 2008 Bucharest Summit had a significant impact on NATO and Russian ties. NATO extends membership invitations to Georgia and Ukraine without involving Russia. After Russia's military invasions into Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014, as well as a full-flagged invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Roache, 2019).

Furthermore, NATO agrees with their aspiring members to secure the sovereignty of their aspiring member states. Georgia and Ukraine are aspiring members of NATO, and the point of the clash between Russia and NATO is that NATO did not directly support Georgia and Ukraine when Russia attacked both states. These steps prove Russia's anti-western stance

against NATO, but Russia's steps are only to protect its border from any external threat. If NATO is near to Russian borders, then it is a significant threat for Russia because NATO created their bases on their alliance countries. The NATO step towards Eastern Europe was a threat to Russia and a countermeasure to its influence. NATO's efforts to establish diplomatic ties with Russia. NATO aims to strengthen their relations in parts of common interest through dialogue and cooperation. The partnerships evolved in various forums: The North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991, the Partnership for Peace Program in 1994, and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997. Russia supported NATO to maintain peace in the western Balkans during the late 1990s. It was NATO and Russia working together practically. Russia deployed troops into the area to support NATO forces in preserving security and peace (Roache, 2019).

2.3.2 North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)

The NATO and Russia relations started informally in 1991 with the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). After that, in 1997 their name was the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). This council provided NATO and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe a place for political discussion, consultation, and collaboration. This council was not established for formal relationships but provided a ground for the future. At that time, Europe faced political changes and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The ambassador of the Soviet Union represented the new Russia by the end of the NACC meeting in NATO headquarters because the Soviet Union was dissolved. The platform provided a way for NATO and Russia to engage with each other, mainly because it is essential for Europe. The NACC provides a platform for political dialogue or discussion, consultation, and practical cooperation or collaboration in security issues, including arms control, military cooperation, regional conflict, and military cooperation. NACC aims to stabilize the environment in Europe by promoting mutual understanding among member states. NATO and its partner countries did not establish formal relations through the NACC and its work for future cooperation and dialogue at the end of the Cold War. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was established in 1997 as a successor to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). It provides the platform for political dialogue or discussion, consultation, and cooperation between NATO member states and partner countries in the Euro-Atlantic area. To establish strong relations with central and Eastern Europe, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

(EAPC) was established. Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council's (EAPC's) goals were to promote regional security, stability, and the values of democracy. It aimed to improve relations with Russia and strengthen connections between NATO and its allies through regular cooperation (Hendrickson, 2005).

2.3.3   Partnership for Peace (PFP)

In 1994, during the NATO summits in Brussels, US former President Bill Clinton established the Partnership for Peace Program, which he had already created the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). This step of NATO was to engage those countries who were previously part of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. The step of NATO is to expand toward European countries, intended to open extensive collaborations toward overall peace and stability in Europe. The Partnership for Peace Program (PFP) was an operational arm of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) to help partner countries build their military capabilities for peacekeeping operations along with NATO forces. In 1994 Russia joined the PFP, signaling its willingness to cooperate more closely with NATO. Russia gained special considerations in PFP. The Partnership for Peace (PFP) program was a way for NATO to work with countries not members of the alliance, like Russia, to address security challenges in Europe. Russia was given special attention in PFP because of its important position in Europe. However, non-members of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) didn't get complete access to NATO or its decisions. Instead, it provided an opportunity for NATO and these countries to cooperate on specific issues of security without making them complete membership in the alliance. (Rice, 2007).

From time to time, Russia increased its level of cooperation and partnership in NATO activities. In 1996, Russian peacekeepers were sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina to work alongside NATO troops as part of the Implementation Force (IFOR) and the Stabilization Force (SFOR). These forces implemented the Dayton peace accord, which ended in the Bosnian war. However, Russian forces participated and interacted with NATO forces regularly. These steps are for political cooperation despite political differences. The Alliance promotes Russia's active role in the PFP, engages more Russian officers in technical efforts in force planning and joint exercises, and potentially even incorporates Russia into its military restructuring initiatives. NATO leaders were aware that Russia would continue to look to

other countries to establish or promote other alliances and partnerships in response as NATO expands, especially to the East (Yost & Tsypkin, 2023).

2.3.4   The founding act and permanent joint council

The mission for NATO's President Clinton's decision to expand the alliance in 1996. In 1997, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed. The decision was endorsed by leaders of NATO in 1997 at the Madrid summit. After that, Poland, the people of Czechia, and Hungary receive membership invitations from NATO. In 1999, these countries became members of NATO. Russia perceived a threat to the expansion of NATO toward former Soviet states. NATO invited former Warsaw Pact members to join and establish a more formal relationship with Russia. Russia was not a member of the alliance, the PJC did not have decision-making authority. To strengthen ties, Russia and NATO should establish a permanent joint council (PJC) so that they can have a seat at the same table as other NATO members and participate in discussions and decision-making. These steps of NATO were necessary for European security. The main goal of the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) was to show the close working of NATO member states and Russia in the Euro-Atlantic region for peace. The Founding Act was signed in 1997 by Russia and NATO. To achieve regional stability, members and Russia formed a strong connection to this step. NATO and Russia discuss common security issues through a permanent joint council. During the Cold War, there was a great deal of distrust between NATO and Russia. Russia and NATO overcame their historical hostility and improved their relations in different ways, and they jointly worked together during the Balkan deployment. However, the Kosovo crisis started when NATO grew, and Russia was not participating in the Permanent Joint Council. NATO and Russia tried to work together, but things were worse because NATO expansions were toward Europe, and it was a threat to Russia's borders. Russia declared in February 1999 that further NATO expansion extended to a certain point. The war in Kosovo caused NATO's new partnership with Russia and the Permanent Joint Council to collapse after the declaration (Carlisle, 2000).

2.3.5   NATO-Russia council

In 2000, the president of Russia, Putin, came into power, and then they focused on improving and rebuilding their relations with NATO. The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was

founded in 2000 as a forum for discussions, agreement building, collaboration, cooperative decision-making, and cooperative member actions between NATO and Russia. It is a platform for both to improve their relations for dialogue on security issues of common area of interest. The NRC's primary objective was to facilitate discussions on security-related issues, including military cooperation, non-proliferation, crisis management, and counterterrorism. Through NRC, the military cooperation between Russia and NATO enhances their power to conduct joint exercises and training activities. These activities contribute to mutual understanding between military forces. The NATO-Russia Council is important in promoting cooperation and stability between NATO and Russia and contributing to a broader role in euro-Atlantic security (NATO-Russia Council, 2022).

The turning point of NATO's approach to defense was a terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. After 9/11, Russia and NATO addressed the complex security challenges. The leaders of the West face the challenges of security threats and want a practical solution that requires Russia's involvement. NATO and Russia worked together against terrorist attacks in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. However, NATO and Russia enhance their cooperation and dialogue on security issues. Russia's joint commitment to peacekeeping in Balkans states and cooperation on security manners. This established the NATO Russia Council (NRC) (Countering Terrorism, 2023). Because of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States, President Putin stopped from enlarging NATO in 2001. Putin stated the following month that we would reconsider our stance regarding NATO expansion if it were to adopt a new political stance and turn into a political organization. In response, NATO established the NATO-Russia Council and proposed a new alliance with Russia based on collaboration in countering terrorism (Wolff, 2015).

In 2004, the NATO Russia Council welcomed seven new members of NATO and partnered with the European Union. The NRC aimed to enhance cooperation, address common security threats noticed by NATO and Russia, and advance their relationships. The NRC operates through continuous political dialogues to identify emerging issues, develop common methods, and conduct joint operations as needed. The NRC focuses on many security-related issues, including military cooperation, non-proliferation, counterterrorism, arms control, and missile defense. The Permanent Joint Council (PJC) operates only along with NATO, but the NATO Russia Council allows Russia to participate equally with NATO allies through open

and transparent discussions. The North Atlantic Council and the NATO Russia Council both use similar decision-making processes. The NRC saw a significant shift towards a more partnership-oriented approach between NATO and Russia and a closer working relationship. Overall, the relationships between NATO and Russia were mixed and characterized by cooperation, competition, and conflict (Cordesman, 2017).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian economy strengthened, old disputes between NATO and Russia resurfaced, and new conflicts started when NATO deployed missile defense systems in Eastern Europe. The main objective of the missile systems deployed in Eastern Europe was to defend the Eastern Europe region and the United States. Conversely, Russia views the deployment of NATO as a direct threat to Russia and the US to enhance their deterrent capabilities. Moreover, Russia believed that deploying missile defense systems in Eastern Europe was part of a broader strategy by the US to gain an advantage over Russia. The relationship between NATO and Russia started to decline when central and eastern countries, such as the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, joined NATO. All these states are directly connected to Russian borders. Russia opposed this expansion, and President Putin prioritized improving relations with NATO over the issue of membership in the Baltic States. Russia taking issue with the NATO membership of Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the three Baltic republics. Moreover, in 2009, Croatia and Albania joined NATO. After that, NATO established the Membership Actions Plan (MAP) to encourage countries that were not members aspiring to join the alliance. Alongside several Balkans and former soviet republics like Georgia and Ukraine, they were engaging in the MAP process as an aspiring member and hoped to become a NATO member (Rice, 2007).

The relations became worse when Russia attacked Georgia in 2008, and NATO responded against Russia, creating an environment of tensions. NATO condemns Russia's military intervention and support to Georgia against Russia. In 2014, Russia attacked Crimea because it wanted to join NATO as an alliance, but it was a border threat to Russia. Then, Russia controls the area of Ukraine. NATO supports Ukraine against Russia and implements the economic sanctions on Russia.

2.4   Role of NATO in Ukraine

Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe that has borders with the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. Ukraine is the second-biggest country in Europe, after Russia. Ukraine is important for NATO and its alliances and is near the Russian border. Ukraine became independent in 1992, and its relationship with NATO strengthened. At the start, Ukraine chose to stay neutral and not join any alliances. The first country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that signed to participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace program was Ukraine in 1994. Ukraine was not a problem with NATO expanding its membership towards Europe because it was interested in joining NATO for the betterment of its state. Ukraine's position promotes positive relations-building with its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe. Ukraine was not against NATO expansion, but it was also important to acknowledge and protect Russia's interests (Volodymyr & Dubovyk, 2007).

The relationship between Ukraine and NATO has been complex, and membership in NATO with Russia's opposition is a challenge for NATO. Russia has consistently opposed Ukraine's NATO membership because it thinks that it is a threat to its security interests. The opposition of Russia made it difficult for Ukraine to join NATO. Ukraine has wanted to become a member of NATO since the early 2000s. NATO also consistently supports the sovereignty of Ukraine, territorial disputes, and support to choose its alliance. The commitment of Ukraine to NATO to democratic reforms was an essential partner for NATO.

2.4.1   North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)

After achieving independence, Ukraine became involved with NATO through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which served as a forum for communication and collaboration between NATO and the former Warsaw Pact countries. NATO provides Ukraine NACC opportunities for political dialogue and cooperation with NATO members without committing to full membership in this platform for security concerns after the Cold War, the NACC platform for consultation and cooperation between NATO and non-member countries. NATO's expansion into central and Eastern Europe started with the NACC. The Partnership for Peace program started in 1994. The basis for strengthening ties between

NATO and Ukraine is provided by the NACC. In 1994, NATO extended an invitation to every NACC member to join the partnership for peace (Hall, 2023).

2.4.2 Partnership for Peace

The Partnership for Peace (PFP) program of NATO is essential in NATO relations with Ukraine. In 1994, Ukraine became the first country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to join the NATO PFP program. The main goal of this program was to increase stability and security throughout Europe. This was the start of NATO's partnership with Ukraine. The PFP program includes various activities, including defense, civil-military relations, military-to-military relations, and cooperation and exercises. This program supports Ukraine's security-related and peacekeeping sectors. The PFP program facilitated arrangements for Ukrainians to join the NATO military forces and made it easier for Ukraine to take part in missions and operations under NATO guidance. The Partnership for Peace program encourages Ukraine's efforts to contribute to aligning with euro-Atlantic security and defense, as well as cooperation and partnership between Ukraine and NATO. Ukraine decided to join the PFP to strengthen ties with the West (NATO). This program provided an opportunity for political dialogue, consultation, and cooperation with NATO member states without committing to full membership. The PFP program is committed to maintaining democratic values, encouraging stability, reducing threats to peace, and enhancing the security of both NATO members and non-member countries in the Euro-Atlantic region (Kuzio, 2000).

2.4.3 Ukraine-NATO commission

In 1997, the Ukraine NATO Charter was signed to strengthen the alliance between NATO and Ukraine. The purpose of the NATO-Ukraine Commission is to promote the alliance between the two countries. The basis for political communication, consultation, and collaboration between NATO and Ukraine is provided by this charter. The defense reforms, civil-military relationships, education, training, military-to-military collaboration, and exercises were among the issues covered by the charter. The hosting countries agreement, the PFP status of force agreement, and the strategic airlift agreement were all formed by this charter, which also provided the legal framework for NATO and Ukraine to pursue more operational cooperation. This charter establishes a partnership and NATO's support for

Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, democratic development, economic growth, and non-nuclear status (Tur, 2000).

On July 9, 1997, NATO launched its documentation and information center in Kyiv, and NATO and Ukraine signed a charter of special partnerships covering a wide variety of security-related matters. NATO recognized Ukraine's choice to reject nuclear weapons and accepted the country as a non-nuclear weapon state member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). As a result, stability in Europe was greatly preserved and strengthened, and Ukraine gained a unique status around the world (Schmies, 2001).

From 1997 until 2023, the NATO-Ukraine Commission was replaced by the NATO-Ukraine Council as the decision-making body for developing relations between NATO and Ukraine. The NATO-Ukraine Commission was founded under the NATO Ukraine charter as a unique collaboration that was signed by the Ukrainian government. This change from commission to council strengthened political ties and increased unification with NATO. The NATO-Ukraine Council provides a platform for discussion on security issues of mutual interest between the Allies and Ukraine, especially Russia's aggression against Ukraine. (NATO-Ukraine Council, 2023).

2.4.4 NATO-Ukraine Action Plan

In 2002, the NATO and Ukraine action plan was signed. NATO and Ukraine worked together closely on different security interests and mutual concerns. The plan's purpose was to identify Ukraine's strategic goals and objectives to achieve their goals. The plan focuses on addressing security, defense, and military issues along with economic and political issues. This plan also aimed to train Ukraine's armed forces and provide modern equipment to cope with challenges. The NATO-Ukraine action plan promotes their relationships. After that, the action plan's goals came into action by creating the annual target plan (ATP) (NATO and Ukraine, 2003).

A Ukraine-NATO action plan was approved by the NATO-Ukraine Commission during the 2002 NATO enlargement summit, and Ukrainian President Kushma declared his country's want to join the alliance. The loyalty of Ukraine to the US and the Ukrainian troops

participated in the US-led war in Iraq in 2003. Meanwhile, the political elite and public were divided in membership in NATO. After the election in 2004 in Ukraine led to the Orange Revolution, President Kushma replaced pro-Russian president Viktor Yushchenko, and he was not in favor of an alliance with NATO. In 2008, a cabinet meeting was held, and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko's and Ukraine's membership action plan was met with opposition. In the 2010 elections, President Viktor Yanukovich won the elections and rejected Ukraine's membership action plan (Schmies, 2001).

2.4.5   Bucharest summit

The Bucharest summit in 2008 was an essential event in NATO-Ukraine relations. NATO leaders declared their support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity during the Bucharest summit. At the time, Georgia and Ukraine showed interest in joining NATO. The membership action plan (MAP) was still not signed. The summit held in Bucharest represented an important change in the relationship between NATO and Ukraine. The leaders of Ukraine are divided on NATO membership because of the lack of public support of Ukraine and the pro-Russian president. The presidents of the United States supported Ukraine for MAP, but Russia was against this. This was the reason for Russia's threat to Ukraine and targeted nuclear missiles on Ukraine. However, the Ukrainian government told Russia it was a Western alliance, not an anti-Russia stance. Ukraine was a border country of Russia, and it was a threat to Russia if Ukraine allied with the West (NATO). The membership action plan is still not working, and NATO offers Ukraine the option of joining an alliance without MAP. However, membership of Ukraine in NATO was in opposition to Russia because Russia said it was a security threat to their country (Pifer, 2008).

The joining of Ukraine in the NATO alliance was a threat to Russia, and then the annexation of Crimea in 2014 by Russia. The opposition of Russia faces Ukraine to pursue its aspirations for NATO membership. The failure of a membership action plan for Ukraine was the reason behind the Bucharest summit in 2008. The leaders of NATO do not give Ukraine a membership action plan, which is why Ukraine faces the challenge. Membership in NATO is not provided by the MAP. It is a crucial step to joining NATO as an alliance. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the partnership for peace with NATO member

states without full membership was an engagement of NATO and Ukraine. Ukraine also received significant support from NATO, including military equipment, training, and financial assistance (Pifer, 2008).

In the 2010 elections of the Ukraine presidential, Viktor Yanukovych won the election; he was pro-western and did not want to join an alliance with NATO. President Viktor Yanukovych rejected the alliance with NATO. After that, in the Bucharest summit in 2008, Germany, France, and NATO were under pressure not to offer the membership action plan to Ukraine and Georgia, but both are aspiring members of NATO, and they supported it. The president of Ukraine assured to put that country with non-aligned and drop the membership action plan. On the other hand, the European association is still a part of their strategy, as well as NATO-led peacekeeping missions and operations in Europe, to maintain regional stability (Schmies, 2001).

2.5 Expansions of NATO toward Eastern Europe after the disintegration of the Soviet Union

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO focused and developed a new plan in the East. NATO was adding more countries to Eastern Europe. The NATO eastern agenda was expanding towards the east. The enlargement of NATO was to strengthen security and build partnerships with countries that were previously part of the Soviet bloc. NATO planned to invite new countries and expand toward the East. NATO's eastern expansion was a new start at the November 2002 summit in Prague. The seven countries that NATO has invited are Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This step of NATO has overcome the division of Europe in the past and created a united and free Europe. NATO wanted to ensure that countries were invited to join NATO to strengthen their democratic systems. The Prague meeting was a positive change for countries, and NATO wanted to support these countries in their journey toward becoming more robust and secure members of the alliance. NATO's first step was to modernize forces and restructure. They provided military training to Eastern Europe and faced restrictions, but NATO committed to the defense and security of the countries of Eastern Europe (Larrabee, 2003). NATO allowed Eastern European countries to engage in military activities and joint exercises and established the mutual defense framework. This effort concerned military readiness, trust-building, and a

common approach to security challenges. Due to their shared borders with Russia, Poland, Hungary, and now Ukraine, the Eastern European expansion of NATO created a threat to Russia. The aim of the United States and its allies in Eastern Europe is to promote interdependence in the economy and democracy among them.

NATO expansion towards Eastern Europe created a security dilemma with Russia. The security of Russia was threatened by the influence of NATO and its support for Ukraine. This expansion of NATO increases the tensions between NATO and Russia. The expansion of NATO and Russia did not react to this step until Ukraine was interested in joining an alliance with the West. Due to their shared border, Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, against Ukraine wanting to join NATO. Russia complained that NATO leaders promised not to expand towards Eastern Europe, but they also broadened near its border. Russia claimed that only NATO military forces in East Germany had not developed in ex-communalist states of the Soviet Union at the time of the reunification of Germany. Still, NATO denied this statement of President Putin. Russia believed that the NATO agreement in 1990 broke their promise and offered Ukraine to join the alliance. In 1999, Russia warned NATO of further expansion. NATO considered crossing the red line, but their relations were improved. Russia further said that the expansion of NATO broke the promise and is a border threat to Russia. According to NATO, the expansion promoted democracy. On the other hand, Russian perception was different, and it was considered that enlargement created instability in Europe because Russia lost its power with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the expansion of NATO. For this, it provided stability to the region. The expansion of NATO was afraid of Russia, and Russia also lost control of its former Soviet states. Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, warned that Georgia and Ukraine's membership in NATO represented a geopolitical shift for Russia in 2006 and warned Ukraine against joining it. After that, Georgia and Ukraine received an invitation from NATO to take part in a membership action plan, and Russia reacted against their opposition. Putin said that we are viewing a powerful military bloc and our Border States' alliance with the West as a serious threat to our country's security. The alliance chose to delay the summit, and both countries will become part of an alliance in the future. A delay in NATO's membership plan indicates an issues among the alliance's members. Some alliance members of Germany and France feared and said that further expansion of NATO was only a pro-voke of Russia. After a few months, Russia and Georgia went to war because of joining the NATO alliance and Russia's Implementation through force and stopping the enlargement

of the NATO alliance towards Eastern Europe and near its border. President Obama considered alternates and did not admit Georgia and Ukraine as formal members. The action of Russia in 2014 when annexed Crimea was also tension for NATO enlargement policy. As well as the Euromaidan protests, the EU association's agreement Ukraine failed to sign, which is better for Russia. The enlargement of NATO created a security dilemma, and adding NATO members detracted from Russia. Russia was worried about reducing Russian power and Russia's steps toward greater security against the alliance (Wolff, 2015).

The Crimea attack and full-fledged attack on Ukraine increased the tension between Russia and Ukraine, and it also impacted regional stability. Russia wanted to maintain influence over Ukraine, control it, and stop Ukraine from joining the EU and NATO. Russia encouraged the separatist movement in Ukraine to remove the country's government. Considering its geopolitical location, Ukraine plays an important role since it provides 70% of trade between Russia and Europe. The region was affected by the Russia-Ukraine war along with Ukraine. Due to Russia's impact from NATO expansion, Russia continues to preserve its influence in Eastern Europe through its control over Ukraine. Eastern European neighbors expressed concern over the Russia-Ukraine war. The aggression of Russia resulted in NATO increasing its military capabilities in the region. Therefore, NATO plays an important role in the Russia-Ukraine war. NATO aimed to strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities to prevent Russia's aggression. NATO also implemented the deterrence measure to stop the escalation of the conflict, increase military capabilities and diplomatic efforts, and promote dialogue between Russia and Ukraine to maintain regional stability. The response of NATO to the Russia-Ukraine crisis was multifaceted, with political and military support to strengthen and deter aggression. Overall, tensions between Russia and Ukraine have been increased by NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe. NATO's concern and actions protect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity while promoting stability and security in the area and defending its aspirant member states. However tensions increased as NATO expanded to contain Russia in Eastern Europe because Russia was against the enlargement of NATO, and just because of expansion, they attacked their former Soviet states. Words of Putin that Georgia and Ukraine's joining NATO represented a "direct threat" to Russia. "One Russian newspaper reported that Putin, while speaking with Bush, very transparently hinted that if Ukraine were accepted into NATO, it would cease to exist" (Goldgeier & Shifrinson, 2023).

Chapter 3

Political and Strategic objectives of NATO in the Russia-Ukraine war

Introduction

In the years before the Soviet Union's dissolution, Russia and Ukraine were a part of it. More than sixteen states were emerging. After the disintegration in 1991, Russia was one of the superpowers in the world due to its substantial military and political clout. After Russia, Ukraine is the second-largest country in Europe. It is located on the western border of Russia. Ukraine was a member of the Soviet Union until 1991 when it achieved its independence. Ukraine aimed for closer ties with the West and joined NATO for the betterment of the country, but it was not acceptable for Russia. Russia and Ukraine have deep political, economic, and cultural bonds. Russia and Ukraine had developed complex relations after the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia faced danger because of Ukraine's independence and wanted to join the Western allies. A new chapter in the history of relations between Russia and Ukraine started with the fall of the Soviet Union. As a state free of nuclear weapons, Ukraine agreed to the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and committed to supporting international security and non-proliferation efforts. Ukraine was the fourth country to join the partnership for peace in 1994. NATO established relationships between member states and the alliance to secure peace and security throughout Europe. NATO maintained its "open door policy" and increased collaboration to keep Ukraine on track to membership. In 2002, Ukraine announced that it would join NATO. Russia was worried and unhappy with these steps because of the division of assets that the Soviet Union left, including weapons, gas supply interruption, and price issues. Russia supplied European nations with oil and gas through Ukraine (Lin, 2023).

The first member that started a more active discussion with NATO was Ukraine. Viktor Yushchenko, the president of Ukraine, achieved the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in 2006 because he wanted more. Despite that, Russia threatened Ukraine with nuclear missiles, and even MAP was a step toward qualifying for membership. Russia's strong opposition can impact Ukraine's decision, but the Bucharest memorandum prevents Ukraine from joining NATO. In 2010, Yanukovych won the election and became president. He was pro-Russian and did not show interest in MAP. The people of Ukraine wanted independence

and their own country, but Russia wanted control over Ukraine. The Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovych, wanted to ally with the European Union, but Russia was against this step. At the stage of commitment, Russia offered the offer to the president, and then he accepted the offer and gave support to Russia. Russia wanted to hold in Ukraine, but the people of Ukraine disagreed with the alliance with Russia. They tried to ally with the West. The conflict started, and then the people of Ukraine were against the government of Ukraine. They started the Euromaidan protest against the President, then removed him (Szostek, 2023). The pro-Russian movement was started, and Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Similarly, Russia also wanted the area of Ukraine Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk). While Donetsk and Luhansk were part of Ukraine, the majority of people there were pro-Russian. Ukraine is mainly located in the east and south, according to a 2001 census. Moscow defended its actions in Crimea and the Donbas in 2014 by claiming that it was necessary to defend these people. The conflicts started, and it was an ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine war. President Zelensky changed his plan and moved to ties with NATO. In 2022, Russia's full-fledged attacks on Ukraine sent military forces to Ukrainian borders and also demanded to withdraw the troops of NATO in Eastern Europe. Russia's President Putin rejected Ukraine's NATO alliance because he wanted to keep Russia's control over the area of the Soviet Union that was still Ukraine (Asmus, 2002).

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 created an open territorial dispute and a threat to Ukraine's sovereignty. This conflict between Russia and Ukraine increases the tensions and ongoing war. Russia annexed Crimea to gain control of assets of Ukraine. The location of Crimea was a significant oil and gas resource in the black sea and essential for energy supplies. Russia annexing Crimea was a step to control Ukraine and stop Ukraine from getting closer to Western countries. Russia was unhappy with Ukraine allying with the West because of their trade and cultural ties. Russia is more connected to the eastern part of Ukraine, and Ukraine wants to link with Western countries to improve their countries. Ukraine's alliance with the West is also a border threat to Russia. This situation created a lot of tensions and conflicts between Russia and Ukraine. After the Russian annexation of Crimea, the troops (pro-Russian forces) entered the Donbas region because most Russians favored populations living in this area, supported Russia, and wanted ties with Russia. Russia wanted to take over Ukraine's government, which was friendly with Western countries. These conflicts create a division between Ukraine and Russia. Russia transferred the military to the border of Ukraine

and attacked Ukraine in 2022. In an interview "the respondents view that the half of Ukraine's population speaks Russian and identify as Ukrainians wanting to remain independent. However, the Ukrainian government, influenced by NATO, played along despite high levels of corruption, law and order problems, and political instability. NATO merely used Ukraine as a proxy to engage Russia and minimize its power. Direct involvement was not an option for NATO, as Russia's military capabilities are significant, and a confrontation would have been too costly (Mehmood, Amna. personal communication, April 28, 2024)." Throughout the period, NATO played an essential role in supporting Ukraine and deterring the aggression of Russia. NATO provides Ukraine with material and political support, as well as financial assistance, military equipment and training, and diplomatic support. Deterrence measures were used by the NATO alliance to stop the situation from getting worse, including keeping a military presence in Eastern Europe and holding joint exercises. Russia invaded Ukraine on a huge scale and with full intention in 2022 to damage NATO's authority in the area. NATO's response supported Ukraine and condemned Russia's actions (Shahzad. et.al, 2023).

3.1   Political objective of NATO in the Russia-Ukraine war

3.1.1   Promotion of Democratic Values in Eastern Europe

NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe supports the values of democracy in promoting regional security and stability. NATO aims to strengthen its member states against external threats, including aggression from Russia. Democratic governance can help prevent conflicts, resolve disputes, and peacefully address grievances. By promoting democratic values in Eastern Europe, NATO tries to avoid conflicts. When countries have strong democratic systems, they are better at resolving disagreements peacefully instead of turning to war. This helps reduce the chances of significant disputes like the one between Russia and Ukraine war. Promoting the democratic values of NATO in Eastern Europe is a counterbalance to Russian influence. It seeks to maintain the independence and sovereignty of all countries in the area, including Ukraine. NATO aims to promote stability, prevent conflicts, support Ukraine's sovereignty, and counteract Russian influence. The security and defense of our territories and populations against any attack is the Alliance's main objective. The alliance works together to protect freedom and share our values in human rights, democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Thus, NATO's efforts to advance democracy aid in preserving peace in Eastern Europe (Wales Summit Declaration, 2022).

3.1.2 NATO's supporting sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine became an independent country. After independence, Ukraine wants its sovereign state. The capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, decided on its future, whether it was an alliance with the West or Russia, and which treaties it wanted to join. Ukraine wants its government without any intervention from Russia, but Russia wants to control the government of Ukraine. Russia was unhappy with Ukraine because of its alliance with NATO. 1992, the NATO and Ukraine Commission was created to discuss security issues. Russia was unhappy and against Ukraine for being its own independent country and making decisions for itself after the agreement of the Budapest memorandum in 1994 to return weapons to Russia signed by the UK, US, and Russia that future Russia was not threatening and force Ukraine. Russia promised not to use force and threats to Ukraine, but they forced Ukraine to not ally with NATO; otherwise, they attack Ukraine. The tensions started between

Russia and Ukraine. Some areas of Ukraine were pro-Russian, and President Victor Yanukovych wanted an alliance with Russia. Some people were against this step and wanted an alliance with NATO. After that, protests were started against the president, and he was removed. Ukraine's situation was not good, and people supported the alliance with the West. The majority of Crimean's were pro-Russian and supported Russia at the time of Russia's annexation of the region in 2014, despite Russia's against international law and norms. Russia's action has harmed Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia agreed to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity when it agreed on the Budapest Memorandum with the US and the UK. Still, the annexation of Crimea was a violation of the Budapest Memorandum. Furthermore, Russia broke Article 4(2) of the UN Charter, which prevents the use of force or threat of force against a state's political independence or territorial integrity. NATO defends Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty while criticizing Russia's activities.
(Debates, 2022).

NATO suspended all military and civilian ties with Russia in 2014 due to the illegal annexation of Russia's Crimea. The aggression of Russia violates international law and damages global security. NATO alliance called for Russia to immediately end the war, stop using force in Ukraine, and remove its soldiers from the country at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (Relations with Russia, 2023).

Since the Russia-Ukraine conflict started, NATO has supported Ukraine for its internationally recognized border. NATO also recognized the illegal action of Russia and condemned Russia's aggression. NATO condemned the action of Russia in Crimea and also supported the Eastern Europe. NATO highlights the importance of international law and territorial boundaries. NATO resolved the issues peacefully and promoted dialogues between Russia and Ukraine. NATO cooperation with Ukraine and focusing on supporting their sovereignty and territorial integrity. NATO criticized Russia in eastern Ukraine and the Black Sea region while supporting Ukraine in defending itself. Russia annexed Crimea and, after that, attacked the eastern Ukraine region of Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk) and the black sea region. NATO provided Ukraine with a comprehensive assistance package (CAP) and security reforms in 2016, as well as practical support. To provide Ukraine with greater support during the Madrid summits, the NATO allies strengthened the CAP in 2022. The CAP was expanded by allies into a multi-year assistance program aimed at rebuilding Ukraine's security and

defense during the Vilnius summits in 2023. In contrast, NATO suspended cooperation with Russia and only kept military and political channels open. NATO assists in political development, military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to develop its security and defense sector (NATO-Ukraine relations, 2022).

3.1.3 NATO's Open-Door Policy for Ukraine

NATO countries were encouraged to join the alliance by its open-door policy after the fall of the Soviet Union. NATO's commitment to enhancing regional cooperation is expressed in this policy. Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty maintained the alliance's open-door policy, requiring member nations to agree before a country is allowed to join. This policy aims to promote stability, cooperation, and stability in the region. The NATO-Ukraine Commission agreed on a membership action plan and announced Ukraine's intention to join NATO during the 2002 NATO enlargement summit. In 2008, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko's (Ukraine's Prime Minister) cabinet proposal to join NATO was met with domestic opposition. NATO promised that Ukraine would one day be a member of the alliance. As a result, in the 2010 elections, Viktor Yanukovych won, and once again, NATO memberships were postponed (Schmies, 2001).

The membership action plan (MAP) includes political, economic, defense, security, and legal reforms for aspirant countries like Ukraine. In response to Russian aggression, Ukraine ended its non-alignment plans, which it had been maintaining since 2010. Legislation restoring NATO membership with a security policy goal was passed by the Ukrainian parliament in 2017. However, in the year 2018, NATO decided under pressure from France and Germany not to offer membership action plans for Georgia and Ukraine, and both eventually became members of NATO. The Ukrainian constitution passed a similar change in 2019 (Schmies, 2001).

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and had a full-fledged war in 2022, and the relations between NATO and Ukraine were more closed. The security of Ukraine is very important to NATO and its member nations. The Alliance strongly supports Ukraine's security measures and efforts to defend itself against Russian aggression. A new national security plan for Ukraine was approved by President Zalensky in 2020, and it calls for the expansion of NATO

with the goal of NATO membership. Russia illegally annexed Ukrainian territory in 2022, and Ukraine requested to join NATO. At the Vilnius summit in 2023, it was agreed that Ukraine would join NATO. Furthermore, the Alliance will now support Ukraine without requiring a membership action plan with Ukraine and will review the country's development in the democratic and security domains, which are critical and necessary for Ukraine's future development. Likewise, NATO renewed its invitation for Ukraine to join after conditions were satisfied and the alliance agreed (Relations with Ukraine, 2024).

NATO membership action plan (MAP) was not currently offered to Ukraine. The alliance provided other plans for Ukraine, including an annual national plan and enhanced opportunities for partner status and support to address the needs of Ukraine. Ukraine has not officially joined NATO, but it is considered an aspirant member of NATO. In the Ukraine war, NATO supports Ukraine against Russia politically with defensive, security, and economic aid. NATO steps to modernize the defense and security sectors of Ukraine. NATO condemns Russia's aggressions and imposes economic sanctions on the country. The alliance continues to engage with Ukraine through partnership programs, political support, capacity-building efforts, maintaining an open-door policy, and recreating solidarity with Ukraine in the face of external threats and aggressions (Woehrel, et.al, 2014).

3.1.4 Minsk agreement

The Minsk Agreement was a set of international agreements designed to settle the conflict between Russian-backed insurgents and Ukrainian government forces in Eastern Ukraine. The first agreement, known as the Minsk Protocol, was signed in September 2014 by representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the leaders of the self-declared Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk. The agreement's objectives included a cease-fire, the withdrawal of heavy weaponry from the front lines, the release of prisoners of war, and the beginning of diplomatic negotiations for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. However the accord did not bring an end to the war, and on February 12, 2015, Minsk II, an updated and revised agreement, was signed. A ceasefire, the removal of heavy weaponry from the front lines, the release of prisoners of war, and constitutional reform in Ukraine that would have returned state border control to the Ukrainian

government and allowed some Donbas regions to exercise self-government were among the terms of this agreement (Al-Jazeera, 2022).

Instead of being directly involved in the Minsk accord, NATO's position in this context is mainly about supporting Ukraine, particularly in terms of security aid and cooperation. NATO's commitment comes from its greater responsibility in supporting regional peace and security as well as its commitment to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member states. NATO played a major, though indirect, influence in the Minsk agreements. Several NATO members, especially those that border Ukraine, have been actively involved in diplomatic attempts to facilitate a peaceful conclusion to the conflict, even though NATO is not a part of the accords. NATO has continuously stated that it is in favor of using the Minsk agreements as a framework to end the conflict. Although Russia is involved in the crisis in eastern Ukraine, concerns about regional security and stability have been raised with Ukraine's non-membership in NATO. Members of NATO mostly those in Eastern Europe, have an interest in keeping the conflict from getting worse and in preserving Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. NATO has encouraged each party to fully implement the accords and work toward a peaceful resolution, providing political support to the Minsk process. Furthermore, NATO has provided Ukraine with useful assistance in areas like military training, capacity-building, and reforms aimed at strengthening Ukraine's institutions for defense and security. Overall, NATO's participation in the Minsk Agreements is a reflection of its larger commitment to stability and security in the region of Europe, particularly when there are disputes that can damage the area. NATO's participation highlights the value of international collaboration and diplomatic efforts in resolving conflicts and advancing peace, even though it is not a direct party to the accords.

Minsk I and Minsk II agreements are international agreements that were designed to end, the conflict in eastern Ukraine between separatists backed by Russia and Ukrainian government forces. Minsk I was signed on September 5, 2014, by representatives Russia, and Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), sometimes known as the Minsk Protocol, under the guidance of French and German leaders. On February 12, 2015, Minsk II a revised and changed agreement was signed in response to the continuing violence and hostilities of the first ceasefire. NATO played a largely supportive role in the Minsk agreements, pushing for regional peace and stability. While not directly involved in the

agreements' creation or implementation, NATO provided support for diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. The accords' goals included a cease-fire, the removal of heavy armament, the release of prisoners of war, and the beginning of a diplomatic process to resolve the conflict peacefully. The implementation of the Minsk Agreements faced difficulties and constraints, and their effectiveness was undermined by continuous hostilities and violations. The agreements failed in the face of increasing tensions between Russia and Ukraine since the conflict continued with efforts to make peace.

Minsk agreements came to an end when Russia formally recognized the self-declared Republics of Luhansk (LPR) and Donetsk (DPR) in February 2022. Subsequently, Russia started a large invasion of Ukraine, which increased the difficulty of the situation and placed concern on the reliability of the peace process. Overall, despite their difficult implementation, the Minsk agreements aimed to end the crisis in eastern Ukraine and were made possible by diplomatic efforts on a global scale. NATO played an important part in diplomatic efforts for peace, but ultimately the accords failed to end the conflict permanently, leading to an increase in hostilities and the collapse of the peace process.

3.2   Strategic objectives of NATO in the Russia-Ukraine war

NATO's objectives in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine are multifaceted, including both defensive and economic aspects. The main goal of the alliance is to protect its members' security and stability from external aggression, such as Russia's war against Ukraine. Sometimes, the alliance has considered Russia to be a significant threat to alliance security. NATO aims to deter Russia from further aggression by imposing economic sanctions to weaken Russia's war capabilities and limit its ability to engage in any military activities. Moreover, NATO focuses on enhancing Ukraine's security. It works as a partner by providing practical assistance and backing in opposition to Russia's aggressive actions and demands that its troops leave Ukraine.

3.2.1   Defensive objectives of NATO in the Russia-Ukraine war

NATO is a defensive alliance that supports countries in the face of threat. Its members are committed to protecting any alliance's security and freedom. NATO's main objective is defense and deterrence. The alliance deters aggression by maintaining an adequate defense and deterrence strategy to build defense capabilities. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Article 5 provides that members defend one another (Deterrence and Defense, 2023).

3.2.2   NATO's enhanced collective defense and deterrence

A defensive alliance and members of NATO are committed to defending their alliance's freedom and security from any dangers. NATO's main objectives are defense and deterrence. The deterrence and defense posture that the Alliance maintains depends on defense capabilities, cyber security, training, and capacity building. The conflict started in 2014 with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the start of its military actions in eastern Ukraine. NATO is a defense alliance whose members strongly oppose the illegal and unlawful control of Russia and are committed to defending the freedom and preserving Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. NATO announced the decision to stop all military and civilian cooperation with Russia in 2014 as a result, starting after the fall of the Soviet Union. NATO's response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine is to immediately finish hostilities, withdraw its

forces from Ukraine, and go for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. NATO is currently dealing with the most complicated security situation. Russian aggression towards Ukraine compromises the security of Europe. Russia's aggressive war on Ukraine provides serious damage and harm to Europe. It is considered the most serious threat to both regional peace and the security of NATO allies. Recently, Russia declared that it was placing nuclear weapons in Belarus. This action of Russia can damage the region's stability and challenge European countries around the Atlantic. On the other side, NATO made significant self-defense and security deterrence decisions during the Madrid Summit 2022. The Alliance revised its defense plan to include coverage in all directions rather than just one. This shows NATO's ability to defend itself in the region, in the air, at sea, and in cyberspace. This comprehensive approach wants to deal with any potential risks or problems. At the Vilnius Summit in 2023, NATO leaders built on this new basis by approving essential measures to strengthen the Alliance's defense and deterrence across all levels, including a new era of regional defense strategies that strengthen forward defenses and enhance the Alliance's ability to instantly strengthen any ally that might come under attack. To enhance NATO's deterrence and defense posture, space and cyber capabilities have been added to properly interacting nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities. NATO continues with freedom and flexibility to respond correctly and effectively to various issues. In response to the needs of a changing security environment, NATO has consistently changed its deterrence and defensive policies. In the past decade, NATO has made changes to its plans and structures in response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and its increasingly aggressive actions towards the Alliance. These changes are intended to ensure that Allies are prepared to counter any threat (Deterrence and Defense, 2023).

3.2.3   Readiness Action Plan (RAP) of NATO

In response to Russia's annexation of Crimea, the military response of NATO in the 2014 war with Ukraine decided on a readiness action plan at its summit in Warsaw. The summit meeting also solved a defense investment commitment, which states that all participating countries must either maintain or work toward the twin targets of distributing more than 20% (twenty percent) of their defense expenditures on major equipment and at least two percent of their GDP to defense expenditures over ten years. The summit produced a

better exercise plan with more focus on exercising collective defense, which included thorough responses to challenging civil-military issues (Devanny, 2020).

The readiness action plan was a direct response of NATO against Russia's actions to counter the subsequent aggressive actions in Eastern Europe. The two components of the plan are adaptive measures and assurance. The RAP was a comprehensive package of assurance and adaptation measures to strengthen the alliance's readiness and capacity to respond to emerging threats. The RAP involved assurance measures, covering military operations and presence in Eastern Europe via air, land, and sea to encourage Central and Eastern European NATO allies to prevent aggression and strengthen their defense. The adaptive measures aim to increase NATO's ability to respond to potential crises and Russian challenges by changing the Alliance's force structure. These include building a new "spearhead" force of about 5,000 soldiers, greatly expanding the current Response Force, and prepositioning materiel in member states along the eastern border. By increasing NATO's military presence in particular countries, the Assurance measures aim to provide security to Alliance members that share borders with Russia. These are enhancing air surveillance and monitoring in the Baltics and along NATO's eastern borders. Another goal is to make the military prominent in these countries through more training and exercises. The adaptation measure includes that an alliance can measure the security challenges and enhance military readiness levels to respond to the crisis. After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, NATO took strong action against the country and conveyed a strong message of deterrence to Moscow. The Russia-Ukraine war did not directly involve NATO forces. The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) was developed by NATO as a response annexation of Crimea in Ukraine by Russia. The NATO member states that are in Eastern Europe considered this action by Russia as aggressive and dangerous.

The RAP aimed to strengthen NATO's capabilities and readiness in the region to deter any further aggressive actions by Russia or any potential threats to NATO member states. This plan was formulated at the Wales Summit 2014 and designed to enhance NATO's defense posture and respond swiftly and decisively to any emerging security challenges, particularly those caused by Russia's actions in Eastern Europe. The RAP increased forward presence in Eastern Europe by improving military exercises and increasing readiness. NATO member states in Eastern Europe were reassured of their security and territorial integrity by the RAP.

Implementing the NATO readiness action plan (RAP), which was started at the Wales Summit in 2014, enhanced the alliance's deterrence and defense measures. The plan aimed to give its member states in central and Eastern Europe assurance and support. This idea was designed to increase defense capacities while reducing violence. Plans to counter any security threat to Russia were prepared, as were NATO's actions to stop more aggression and preserve stability and peace in Eastern Europe (Brooke, 2016).

3.2.4 Enhanced Forward Presence

In response to Russia's aggressive activities against Ukraine, NATO has increased its military presence in the eastern portion of the alliance. The security of the alliance in the region faces a direct threat from Russia. NATO leaders decided to strengthen their defense and deterrence after meeting in Warsaw in 2016 after the release of the readiness action plan (RAP). They wanted various options to reply to any threats from any way and protect territories of NATO, people, airspace, and sea routes. They established an Enhanced Forward with four multinational battlegroups deployed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland northeast of the Alliance as part of this plan. Also, they went in addition to improving security in the southeast, establishing a tailored Forward Presence in the Black Sea and southeast regions. Tailored Forward Presence in Romania is the second. This outcome is a nearly ongoing NATO presence in Romania through an extended series of rotational exercises. The leadership of the Alliance must start recognizing that NATO's maritime posture is weak. NATO's increased involvement in the Black Sea to enhance situational awareness and expand training and exercises was decided upon by Alliance defense ministers in February 2017 as part of the Tailored Forward Presence effort. While deterrence is a more significant issue, this may improve the situation in the Black Sea. Russian aggression in the seas surrounding Europe will continue unchanged by this ineffective approach to maritime deterrence (Deterrence and Defense, 2023). In an interview "the respondent's views on exercises of NATO members in Eastern Europe that NATO's Eastern European military presence has significantly increased since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. For example, In Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, the alliance formed four multinational battlegroups, each with about 1,000 soldiers. Additionally, NATO conducts regular exercises such as the "Defender Europe" series, involving tens of thousands of troops from multiple member and partner countries. These exercises demonstrate NATO's capability to swiftly reinforce its eastern flank

in response to any potential aggression. Furthermore, according to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, the alliance has tripled its defense spending in the Black Sea region since 2014, further underscoring its commitment to deterrence and defense in Eastern Europe (Zeb, Muhammad. personal communication, April 29, 2024)."

Increasing NATO's forward presence on its eastern flank is an important aspect of the alliance's deterrence, defense, and reassurance strategies, and it was decided upon during the 2016 Warsaw Summit. To increase regional alliance activity and improve situational awareness, connectivity, and responsiveness, the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom started the formation of the first four multinational battlegroups in 2017 and deployed them to Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The NATO plan, Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), is an essential response to the security threats that developed from Russia's actions in Eastern Europe. The main objective of the EFP is to send multinational battlegroups to nations such as Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Increasing deterrence, showing member unity, and strengthening NATO's defense posture in the area are the main objectives of this deployment. These battlegroups consist of soldiers from several member states and are commanded by direction nations. The United States doubled its troops in Poland by 5,000 to 10,000. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, there were four new battlegrounds added to the first four: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. NATO's expanding presence was extended to the eastern border with the deployment of troops in four multinational battlegroups Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia along with the ones already in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. As a result, there are now eight battlegroups instead of just four on NATO's eastern border. The eight battle groups extend along NATO's eastern flank, from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south, strengthening the transatlantic tie and the alliance's resolve, cohesion, and capacity to counter any aggression. Moreover, they decided to boost cyber defenses and increase exercises focused on collective defense and interoperability by rotating the troops regularly and conducting joint training exercises to strengthen the defense capabilities and provide a rapid response capability to potential security threats along NATO's eastern border. After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the alliance helped promote steps in the east of the alliance and sent more ships, aircraft, and soldiers to NATO territory in Eastern Europe to strengthen the alliance's defense and deterrence posture. They are a visible indication of NATO's resolve to protect its eastern flank. Along with NATO's eastern border, EFP aims to strengthen military capabilities,

promote better Allied forces cooperation, and provide an immediate defensive capability against potential risks to security by continually rotating soldiers and conducting joint training exercises with host countries. When everything is considered, the EFP is an essential part of NATO's plan for safeguarding the security of its Eastern European supporters (NATO's military presence in the East of the Alliance, 2013).

Many countries in NATO get together during these exercises. They include operations on land, in the air, and at sea, in various other areas. NATO plays a role in Eastern Europe in the deployment of troops and providing military aid to Ukraine. In 2022, the presence of 40,000 soldiers directly under NATO command in the alliance's eastern region for commitment to the collective defense of NATO. These troops were deployed to enhance deterrence and ensure rapid action against further action by Russia. NATO aims to deter aggression and ensure the security of all member states. NATO leaders met in Brussels on March 24, 2022, after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, to talk about the impact of Russia's actions and to strengthen NATO's defense. They made several decisions to strengthen deterrence and defense. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zalensky calls NATO for direct involvement, but NATO provides military assistance and diplomatic support for further escalation of the conflict. Since Ukraine gained its independence, the NATO allies have engaged with it on security cooperation projects, concentrating on defense reform, planning, and capacity building. Western allies significantly increased their support in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the ongoing crisis in Eastern Ukraine, and their support of the Ukrainian government as an essential part of their strategic plan; they have maintained their commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to providing military assistance to the Ukrainian armed forces. The assistance program of allies was a form of logistical aid, intelligence sharing, technical support, and training for the Ukrainian military. Ukraine's training included a wide range of military activities and capabilities. Training teaches soldiers in Ukraine the basics of combat methods, military actions, and targeting. Ukrainian military members taking medical training can help them be more prepared to manage injuries and provide treatment on the front lines. Ukraine has become stronger in logistics, including shipping, supplier organizational leadership, and equipment maintenance, intelligence training for Ukraine to recognize and address security threats more effectively. The training's main objective was to improve the Ukrainian armed forces' ability to operate effectively, fight against external challenges, and maintain regional

stability. NATO increased its support after Russia started its aggression against Ukraine in 2022. This involved sending in more soldiers, shifting defensive plans into equipment, establishing multinational battlegroups in Eastern Europe, and strengthening the security of NATO's rapid reaction forces. This support is given in cooperation with other NATO members to make Ukraine stronger in response to Russian aggression and to strengthen its defense (Woehrel, et.al, 2014).

3.2.5 NATO strengthened the maritime posture in response to the Russia-Ukraine war

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, NATO formed the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) during its summit in Wales as part of its commitment to collective defense, which can mobilize rapidly in situations of a potential threat and serve as a deterrent against attack. VJTK consists of 5,000 troops led by seven countries: Turkey, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, UK, and Spain. The VJTF was the first warning and indicator of potential threats to Russia. In 2014, the Warsaw summits declared that it consists of land, air, maritime, and unique operational forces. In 2017, the UK will be the leader of the VJTF. During mid of 2015, defense ministers gave their approval for the establishment of a new Permanent Joint Logistics Headquarters. This will allow us to move forces more quickly around our Alliance's territory while providing them with the supplies, tools, and transportation they need. Similarly, Poland is expected by the UK to improve on its participation in the VJTF in 2017 and commit a battlegroup consisting of 1,000 men to the VJTF commanded by Poland in 2020 (Woehrel, et.al, 2014).

In response to the emerging crisis for collective defense, the NRF is a rapid military response. Rapid military action in response to the growing need for collective defense is known as the NRF. NATO first used high-readiness NRF units in a deterrent and defense capacity in response to the full invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022. To guarantee the NRF's continued ability to protect NATO territory and individuals, the Allies have committed thousands of extra troops, armored cars, missile units, ships, and aircraft to high readiness. Furthermore, NATO increased the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF), improving the force's capacity to handle a range of security-related issues. The responsive force increased the 13,000 troops to 40,000, and the VJTF of around 5,000 soldiers was to be held in rotation, which is essential for seven nations, starting in 2017. The function of NRF is

to improve alliance readiness and the ability to counter new threats. Allies commit air, land, and sea capacity to the NRF, which is based on a rotational basis (NATO Response Force, 2023).

One component of the NRF Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) is the Standing Naval Forces. In reaction to Russia's full-scale, aggressive invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Standing Naval Force was designated as the maritime component of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), which is a part of the NATO Response Force. Four groups make up NATO's Standing Naval Force: two Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Groups (SNMCMG1 and SNMCMG2) and two Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMG1 and SNMG2). They cover the whole maritime region of NATO's duty, operating in the Atlantic, Baltic, North, Mediterranean, and Black Seas. NATO has enhanced its security efforts since February 2022. To perform a wide range of traditional maritime operations and improve maritime situational awareness, NATO also strengthened its Standing Naval Forces. These naval forces contribute to the overall defense of NATO member states because they watch essential sea lines and provide maritime security. Force Integration Units (NFIUs) and a standing joint practical support group headquarters have been established by NATO in crucial regions. By working with Allied forces, these units provide readiness for rapid deployment. Several Naval Strike Groups and Allied naval ships had to be deployed for it. NATO's commitment to defending its territory, mainly its maritime borders, and safeguarding its people is shown by these deployments. NATO Allies and partners are improving overall marine capability for different missions, maintaining and improving their war-fighting abilities, and promoting better force-to-force cooperation through maritime exercises. In addition to protecting sea lines of communication, these exercises include developed warfighting abilities, which include anti-submarine warfare, underwater operations, countering hybrid threats, integrating air and missile defense, deep-precision strikes, defending against cyber threats, and countering threats against the provider strike groups. NATO is increasing its response to Russia's activities in Ukraine through its maritime exercises and activities to ensure security and cooperation among partners and Allies. These efforts aim to improve NATO's maritime deterrence posture and defense capabilities (NATO's maritime activities, 2023).

3.2.6 NATO Ballistic missiles defense (BMD) and Air policing mission

NATO supports air monitoring and air surveillance at eastern borders and in the Baltics because Russia is increasing its military presence towards its border. With this step taken by Russia, NATO established its six-small headquarters in Baltic and Eastern Europe. For NATO forces in the region, these headquarters serve as the main headquarters and communication centers. The existence of these headquarters increases NATO's ability to meet new security threats. In addition, by displaying NATO's prominent and ongoing presence on the ground, they enhance the commitment of the alliance to collective defenses and reassure allies in the area. NATO has taken different strategic actions to strengthen its defensive posture and response abilities in response to increased tensions caused by aggressive actions by Russia in the Baltic region and Eastern European regions. One of the steps is to have equipment prepared in the Baltics and Eastern Europe. NATO aims to ensure the quick mobilization and strengthening of forces of allies in case of a growing crisis or military invasion by having equipment ready in advance of time. NATO's defensive capabilities strengthen, deterrence improves, and the alliance's commitment to ensuring each member state's security in the Baltic and Eastern European regions is shown by this effort (NATO Air Policing: securing Allied airspace, 2023).

In response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and annexation of Crimea in 2014, NATO has started providing more security to its eastern allies. One aspect of this is the expansion of NATO's air policing operations. The combined Air and Missile Defense of the NATO system includes NATO Air Policing, which protects Alliance forces, people, and territory against air and missile threats and attacks. NATO's purpose in Air Policing is to maintain the safety of Alliance airspace during times of peace. It is a collective effort involving an ongoing existence of fighter aircraft and groups prepared to act fast and safely against potential violations of airspace. When a NATO member does not own a fighter jet, Allied fighter jets monitor that ally's airspace. In response to the actions of Russia in Ukraine, NATO expanded the air policing mission. At the start of the situation in March 2014, the US sent six more F-16C Eagles fighter aircraft to Lithuania in addition to the four aircraft already stationed there for the Baltic Air Police Mission. NATO as a whole decided to enhance the Baltic air policing operation and expand the number of facilities and aircraft

deployed. In March 2014, airborne surveillance operations over Poland and Romania were scheduled to be done by NATO AWACS (Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft) monitoring aircraft. While NATO has stated that flights are limited to Alliance territory, the decision was taken in light of the developments in Ukraine. Sentry aircraft from the UK were used in the operation. Allies are assisting Bulgaria and Romania in enhancing their air policing capabilities, contributing to the overall security of NATO's eastern borders. Romania, which shares a border with NATO members Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey, has been supportive of a stronger NATO presence in the Black Sea as a means of deterring Russia (Brooke, 2016).

NATO was strengthening its defenses against potential threats. The Alliance has created a defensive system for ballistic missiles to protect its members from missile attacks, notably those from Russia. By providing a multi-layered defense system to stop incoming missiles before they can reach their intended targets, this system plays a critical role in both deterring and protecting against missile threats. NATO's broader goal is to guarantee member security and effectively address changing security concerns, which include ballistic missile defense capabilities. In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, NATO is working to strengthen its defense of Eastern Europe through the start of its new "air shielding" mission. This effort safeguards the Alliance against air and missile threats and is an important expansion of NATO cooperation in the area. The mission connects missile and air defense units from NATO member nations under the supervision of NATO to "provide a near-seamless shield from the Baltic to the Black Sea, ensuring NATO allies are better able to safeguard and protect alliance territory, populations, and forces. Romania received France's "Mamba" surface-to-air missile defense system; the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands built Defender systems in Slovakia and Poland; and in Latvia, Spain is making use of its National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS). The declaration of Germany's commitment to lead the European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI), was signed by NATO members and Finland. The Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Estonia, and the United Kingdom were among the 14 members. To strengthen European security and save expenses for all parties involved, ESSI was established to encourage shared missile and air defense deployments and operations among Partners and Allies of NATO. The detectors and other Ballistic missile defense equipment from NATO help improve situational awareness

regarding the launches of ballistic missiles and their direction; NATO can rapidly respond to such threats and offer an early warning (NATO Air and Missile Defense, 2022). More fighter aircraft are strengthening the defensive structures in the east. The United States recently sent F-22 Raptor fighters from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, to Poland and F-35A Lightning II aircraft from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, to Estonia as part of the mission's expanding force (Cohen, 2022). The exercise's planning and execution certainly were affected by the current increased tensions due to Russia's continuous attack on Ukraine, NATO, and Russia, although NATO's careful claim that the exercises do not exist to be directed against any specific nation (Cancian, 2022).

3.2.7   Hybrid warfare and cyber attacks

After Russia's 2014 actions in Ukraine, NATO developed and chose a hybrid strategy in December 2015. NATO and Ukraine work together to deal with hybrid threats, combining tactics like disinformation, cyber-attacks, and efforts to weaken society (Countering hybrid threats, 2024).

In the context of Ukraine's conflict with Russia's hybrid warfare campaign against the country, cyberattacks have been extensively observed. Even before the Crimean crisis developed, a variety of such operations were widely used, including denial of service (DDoS) attacks, damage to Ukrainian websites, hacking of data systems and malicious traffic routing, cyber espionage, and propaganda and information manipulation. For instance, a computer virus known as Snake, an effective secrecy instrument that provides access to the computer systems of the Ukrainian government, has been targeting Ukrainian computer systems since 2010. The military and political issues in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine have links to the cyberattacks. In the same way, it is also against NATO cyber-attacks. The NATO headquarters was the target of several DDoS attacks in 2014, which were linked with the high-profile Wales summit in August and September and the declaration made by allies during the Ukraine crisis in March, which was linked to the so-called cyber burst. Russia's same things were used in the past, from conventional military operations in Georgia in 2008 and cyberattacks in Georgia and Estonia to energy security used for political purposes in Ukraine. In Ukraine, all these tactics were used more professionally, coherently, and on a large scale with more resources and a good plan. This is because of Kyiv's efforts to stabilize the country

and strengthen its ties with NATO and Europe. The NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) program promotes practical cooperation in civil and security and focuses on cyber defense and energy security. NATO provided Ukraine, its Eastern border, and its partner in the Black Sea region an area for the advanced research workshop on countering hybrid threats. This is important and suited for security at the alliance's eastern border of great concern, bordering states and all NATO partners. The range of security threats is vast, from conventional military maneuvers to non-conventional, asymmetric, and hybrid ones. This platform provides research, training, and expert support to help the nation learn from past experiences, counter disinformation, and strengthen its security. NATO confirmed its support for Ukraine's defense sector's capacity development and building during the 2014 Wales summits, identifying this as a top priority for the country's democratic growth and for strengthening its self-defense capabilities. Ukraine can also count on practical and political support and NATO trust funds for Ukraine within the domain of cyber security, a part of great importance for us all in dealing with hybrid warfare. The heads of state and government of NATO accepted the Wales summit declaration included a particular task regarding countering hybrid warfare besides the tasks for consolidation of the collective defense and readiness action plan (Fortuna, et. al, 2016). In an interview, "the respondent views on cyber-attacks that NATO strengthens member states; resilience by bolstering cybersecurity, countering disinformation, and enhancing readiness through training programs. This involves protecting critical infrastructure from cyberattacks, promoting media literacy to counter propaganda, and sharing intelligence to identify hybrid threats. Regular exercises prepare NATO forces to respond to unconventional tactics, ensuring readiness against asymmetric threats. By enhancing resilience, NATO aims to mitigate the impact of hybrid warfare and maintain stability in Eastern Europe amidst the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Zeb, Muhammad. Personal communication, April 29, 2024)."

At the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw, the NATO-Ukraine Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare was created. It improves the nation's capacity to deal with hybrid threats by facilitating cooperation in their identification and counteraction. Disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and efforts that target public institutions and destabilize societies are examples of hybrid tactics. Sergiy Mukosii, the head of Ukraine's NATO mission's state section defense section said that.

"Russia uses hybrid strategies to defend its annexation of territory."

To address the dangers of hybrid warfare and consider potential solutions, NATO and Ukraine organized workshops on their implementation in diplomacy between countries. During these workshops, decision-makers, government professionals, think tanks, and academics come together to increase cooperation in identifying and addressing hybrid threats. The primary objective of NATO's recovery plan is the strong collaboration between the civilian and military sectors to ensure the military and national operating under the command of NATO have enough access to facilities and civilian resources. These projects show how committed NATO is to fighting off hybrid threats within the context of the Russia-Ukraine war through using expertise, cooperation, and planned actions to strengthen defenses and effectively resolve problems. "Cyberwar" is often used to describe warfare in which people, state and non-state, try to gain access to a different computer or network to damage or disrupt. In the Russia-Ukrainian war, Russia damaged the computers or systems of Ukraine by deleting the data permanently, and is not recoverable. During the war, Russia's cyberattacks turned off the communication and modems to damage Ukraine. At the early stage of the war, Ukraine was not facing a problem. Still, with the help of NATO, Microsoft made malware for Ukraine's computer in 2023, which the computer emergency response team in Ukraine discovered. In an attack on Ukraine in 2022, Russia used tactics for Propaganda, and misinformation was spreading through the media in Ukraine. Together with its allies, Ukraine strengthened its nation's information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure defenses and improved its ability to respond to incidents both before and during the conflict. This involved carrying out efforts to improve Ukraine's cyber security both before and after the military invasions in 2014 and 2022, as well as collaborating with the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE). Since it has been the target of cyberattacks for a long time, Ukraine has been preparing through collaboration between the public and private sectors (Duguin & Pavlova, 2023). The respondent's views on emerging technologies of cyber security are that Emerging technologies, especially cyber capabilities, play a pivotal role in NATO's response to the situation between Russia and Ukraine, particularly in terms of defense and deterrence. NATO leverages advanced cyber capabilities to protect member states critical infrastructure, communications networks, and military systems from cyberattacks orchestrated by adversaries like Russia. These capabilities enhance NATO's ability to detect, attribute, and mitigate cyber threats, bolstering overall defense posture. Moreover, by demonstrating a credible cyber deterrence posture, NATO aims to dissuade potential

aggressors from engaging in malicious cyber activities, thus contributing to the alliance's broader deterrence strategies about the crisis between Russia and Ukraine.

3.2.8   A comprehensive assistance package (CAP) for Ukraine

The Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP), which was decided upon at the Warsaw Summit in 2016, provided NATO military backing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The goal of the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) is to assist Ukraine in ensuring its security and implementing significant reforms by NATO standards. For many years, NATO has supported Ukraine in modernizing its security and defense industry under the CAP. The NATO Mission to Ukraine provides strategic assistance at the highest level, while several capacity-building programs and projects offer practical support. NATO has significantly improved Ukraine's security and military sector capability, strength, and ability to counter hybrid threats through these programs and assistance. The NATO-Ukraine Council on Countering Hybrid Warfare was founded during the July 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw. It provides a method for improving the ability to identify hybrid threats, developing the capacity to do so, and strengthening the state and society. Additionally, NATO and its allies have given capability development a great deal of support, primarily through equipment assistance, training, and capacity building (Mills, 2024).

In this comprehensive package, Ukraine is receiving assistance from NATO and its allies on various defense-related issues, including logistics, hybrid, and cyber threats. Developing civilian personnel's professional skills, institutional and capacity building and strategic communication are essential forms of support, and eight institutes of defense education, the Diplomatic Center for Ukraine, and three training facilities have been established. Five Trust Funds were formed to support Ukraine by partner leaders at the Wales Summit in 2014 in reaction to the country's activities by Russia, including Computers, Communications, Command, Control, Logistics, and Standardization (C4) Counter-IED (created after the Wales Summit) Medical Rehabilitation Counter-Defense Cyber Defense Military Career Transition (the US, and NATO Efforts in support of NATO Partners, including Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, 2016).

During the June Madrid meeting, this package was strengthened in two ways. Initially, an additional $100 million in non-harmful military support will be provided, including transportation fuel, medical supplies, anti-drone devices, and countermine equipment. Secondly, it should encompass extended assistance for the after-the-fact recovery and modernization of Ukraine's defense and security. NATO has aided Ukraine in restoring its electrical infrastructure and addressing power shortages in response to Russia's opportunity winter bombing campaign against civil facilities. NATO allies have imposed severe sanctions on the Russian economy and given Ukraine an estimated $150 billion in financial and military support to aid in its freedom of self-defense. The amounts offered for military assistance to Ukraine totaling about $50 billion, or "more than eight combat brigades," include air defense systems, heavy weaponry, modern major battle tanks, and training for Ukrainian fighter jet pilots. There are two main problems with the financial support given to Ukraine. First, supplies and equipment need to get to Ukraine faster, particularly before Russia's spring attack gets up to speed. Jens Stoltenberg, the NATO secretary general, highlighted the significance of rapidly delivering essential supplies to Ukraine, such as fuel, weapons, and repair supplies, to safeguard lives and keep Russia from getting the upper hand in battle. The second issue is the impact of arms transfers on NATO's weapons and equipment stocks. There can be shortages of weapons since Ukraine decreases it faster than its NATO allies can create it. During a recent summit, the defense ministers of NATO discussed this issue but did not provide a solution. Furthermore, a few NATO countries have joined a project to store weapons, which does not close the production shortage. All in all, these difficulties show that to support Ukraine and maintain NATO's preparation and capabilities, a more rapid and long-term plan is required (Monaghan & Bolstad, 2023).

During the Madrid summits at the end of 2022, allies decided on a new aid package for Ukraine that would offer consistent, long-term support. The assistant offers military modernizations and development up to NATO standards. The Madrid Summit Declaration states that "the package for the quick delivery of safe defense equipment, strengthen Ukraine's cyber defenses and strength, and support modernizing its defense sector to strengthen long-term connectivity." NATO will help Ukraine recover from a conflict and reform in the future. In a news conference on June 29, 2022, the Secretary General of NATO provided more details regarding the safe equipment that will be supplied. Allies will still offer strong financial and military support. The Allies decided to expand the CAP into a continuous

assistance initiative (multi-year support program) for Ukraine based on reliable and regular support at the 2023 Vilnius Summit. Developing the Ukrainian security and defense industry and advancing Ukraine's shift from Soviet-era standards, training, and tactics to NATO standards, training, and complete cooperation are two goals of the aid provided. Leaders also decided to increase our assistance by finalizing a Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine equipment, including protective clothing, transportation fuel, medical supplies, secure communications equipment, and further defense and security establishments (Mills, 2024). In an interview "the respondents view that the ongoing war has severely impacted Ukraine, much like Iraq, leaving half of Ukraine in ruins and aligning more closely with Russia. NATO cannot now integrate Ukraine, as the country is already heavily involved with Russian interests. NATO and the US continue to provide weapons and economic grants to Ukraine, not out of generosity but to keep Russia engaged and minimize its power (Mehmood, Amna. personal communication, April 28, 2024)."

"The respondents further views on financial assistance for Ukraine that NATO politically supports Ukraine through condemnation of Russian actions, backed by sanctions. Economically, the NATO Trust Fund has allocated over €40 million to aid Ukrainian defense reforms and infrastructure while the $6 billion aid package program is committed by the Biden administration. Defensively, NATO has provided non-lethal military assistance worth millions of dollars, including equipment and training. Additionally, joint exercises with Ukrainian forces, like Exercise Sea Breeze, involve thousands of troops annually. These efforts underscore NATO's commitment to Ukraine security amidst the conflict with Russia (Zeb, Muhammad. personal communication, April 28, 2024)."

3.2.9 NATO committed G7 security guarantee for Ukraine

The G8 country was formed as a forum for the world's leading industrialized nations to discuss and collaborate on various global economic issues. It originated from G7 countries like the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States of America. In 1997, Russia accepted an invitation to join and in 1998, Russia joined the group and the Group of Eight (G8). The main purpose of these G8 countries was to provide a platform for its member countries to address economic challenges, promote cooperation on international trade and finance, and coordinate policies on issues such as energy, environment,

and global security. However, Russia was removed from the G8 in 2014 due to its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. The response to Russia's violations of international law in Ukraine was the action. Without Russia's involvement, the organization has continued as the G7. A group of seven countries has announced security assurance for Ukraine against Russia's aggression. The G7 countries are the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States. These countries have been influential in helping Ukraine in its ongoing conflict with Russia. In a joint declaration, the G7 has promised Ukraine long-term security commitments, including providing military equipment, intelligence sharing, and support for cyber defense, training initiatives, and financial assistance to allow Ukraine to maintain its territorial integrity and fight against the aggression of Russia. In exchange, Ukraine would commit to better governance measures, including increased transparency and judicial and economic reforms (Very dangerous': Russia slams G7 security assurances to Ukraine, 2023).

The G7's support to Ukraine in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is essential for improving its defenses and protecting it against Russian invasion. On the other hand, NATO has strengthened its support for Ukraine by expanding its existence in the Black Sea, increasing maritime collaboration with Ukraine and Georgia, and providing practical aid to Ukraine in enhancing its capabilities and cooperation. To strengthen Ukraine's security and prevent further Russian aggression, NATO is acting in partnership with the G7. The G7 and NATO are connected in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict by their shared commitment to protecting Ukraine's security and sovereignty. NATO supports the defense capacities of Ukraine and capacity-building projects, while the G7 focuses on offering the country long-term security commitments and aid. Both groups must improve Ukraine's security and stand against Russian aggression (Mills, 2024).

3.2.10 NATO's Support to Ukraine for Military Capabilities and Modernization

NATO has opposed Russia's actions from its illegal annexation of Crimea and the start of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, refusing to accept the annexation as legal. The alliance criticized Russia's violation of international law and expressed its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. NATO's response has included increasing its efforts to expand and strengthen its capabilities to better support Ukraine. As part of this cooperation,

NATO Allies are training tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers, which aims to improve Ukraine's defensive abilities and readiness for defense against additional aggression. NATO seeks to help Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression and maintain regional stability by strengthening Ukraine's military capabilities. NATO's continuous support shows its commitment to maintaining international law, protecting territorial integrity, and improving Eastern Europe's stability and security. As part of its assistance efforts, NATO has been actively supplying Ukraine with equipment and supplies. NATO has assisted Ukraine in modernizing its armed forces and defense institutions since Russia annexed Crimea illegally in 2014 by arming, funding, and training tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers. The alliance has dramatically increased its direct support to assist Ukraine in maintaining its right to self-defense. It now provides various military equipment, including guns, ammunition, air defense systems, tanks, drones, and fighter jets. NATO Allies have also committed to assisting Ukraine in ignoring standards from the Soviet era, doctrines, and training to NATO standards and training through a multi-year aid package. In addition to financial and humanitarian support, this support is also made up of military assistance; since February 2022, when Russia started its full-scale invasion, only the United States has contributed USD 75 billion in aid. NATO's assistance also includes fulfilling essential requirements, assisting with post-conflict recovery, and restoring Ukraine's security and defense industry. The United States' package included over twenty separate military systems, each valued at $2.5 billion. The only system larger was a $3 billion set of weapons. The United States maintains over five hundred armored vehicles, including landmine-resistant MRAPS, Infantry Fighting Vehicles, and Soldier Armored Personnel Units. Ukraine can use all of these armored vehicles in ground attacks in other areas of the country that Russian forces control or in the intense fighting that currently takes place in the eastern Donbas region of Ukraine. Along with many armored vehicles and air defense equipment, several other European nations also announced support for Ukraine. The conflict in the eastern town of Bakhmut is currently the center of the fighting in Ukraine. The area has experienced fighting for several months. Also, the Russians regularly launch airstrikes to take down Ukraine's power lines in all of the nation's cities. NATO has committed to technical cooperation in communications and information with Ukraine by signing agreements such as the Memorandum of Agreement with the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency). This partnership aims to support Ukraine's communication infrastructure and guarantee efficient technical collaboration between NATO and Ukraine in this critical area (Myre, 2023).

The alliance has helped Ukraine locate weaknesses in Russian air defenses by providing significant signals intelligence support. With Ukrainian military intelligence developing modern drones capable of affecting Russian air defense sensors and missile defense systems, this intelligence sharing has been essential in Ukraine's capacity to carry out drone strikes in Russia successfully. Enhancing Ukraine's capabilities and Strength in the continuing conflict has been made achievable by NATO and Ukraine's intelligence-sharing collaboration (Ukraine NATO intelligence sharing key to Ukraine drone strikes in Russia, 2024).

To entirely digitize Ukraine's military supply chain management and completely deal with paper-based procedures, NATO has given considerable logistical help to that country. One example of this support is deploying an automated military logistics system standardized by NATO. Managing military logistics will be more effective and efficient because this digital platform coordinates Ukraine's logistical processes with NATO standards. Ukraine's military preparedness and operational capabilities have been improved entirely due to the implementation of this system, which has allowed the country to modernize its logistics capabilities and operate more efficiently and in coordination with NATO standards (Shandra, 2014).

Although NATO and Ukraine work together to enhance the capabilities of the Ukrainian military, they also offer training programs and exercises. By enhancing strategic expertise, military security, and cooperation with NATO troops, these training programs aim to modernize Ukraine's defense capabilities. NATO provides financial support to Ukraine's modernization initiatives so that weapons and equipment may be secured and defense capabilities can be strengthened. With the help of this financial assistance, Ukraine can improve its military capabilities by getting weapons, defense systems, and advanced weapons. To improve Ukraine's defense industry capabilities, NATO helps to encourage the transfer of knowledge and creative exchanges between Ukraine and NATO member nations. NATO assists Ukraine's weapons industry and defense equipment modernization by exchanging knowledge, best practices, and technological developments. To support the modernization of weapons production and the creation of a strong military sector, the Arms Trade Organization (ATO) develops strategic alliances with Ukraine. NATO helps Ukraine strengthen its defense

capabilities by working together and exchanging information, which promotes security and stability in the region. To strengthen Ukraine's military sector and increase its ability to produce modern weapons and equipment, NATO promotes industrial cooperation between Ukraine and its member states. NATO supports regional stability and modernizes Ukraine's defense capabilities through cooperative production, spending, and technology sharing. To strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities and advance regional stability, NATO supports the country's modernization of weapons, weapons industries, and defense capabilities. These support measures include financial assistance, training, technology transfer, strategic alliances, and industrial cooperation.

3.3   Economic objectives of NATO in the Ukraine war

Ukraine is important for Russia. After Russia, Ukraine is the second-largest country. Moreover, Ukraine is a gateway for Russia to Europe. Ukraine is like a lifeboat for Russia because it is an oil and gas transit route to Europe from Russia through Ukraine. Ukraine's joining NATO was directly affect the Russian economy. So, Russia's concerns over Western influence are genuine. However, Russians made up 60% of Crimea's population. Crimea was strategically important for Russia and the only access to the black sea. Russia mainly trades through the black sea. Russia annexed Crimea for its interests. Ukraine is a crucial state for the West and the US for stopping the trade of Russia, and it has affected the economy of Russia. If Western influence is in Ukraine, it is a severe border threat for Russia, and the Russian economy will lose control over gas pipelines, which could be a setback for Russia's economy. Russia could not lose its grip on Ukraine because it is a matter of survival.

3.3.1   Economy of Russia and Western interests

The Russian economy was better in the 1990s because of selling oil and gas to other countries. When oil and gas prices dropped, the world faced problems, and Russia's economy shrunk to 8%. The worldwide financial crisis of 2008 affected Russia's natural resource export industry. After 2019, the prices increased, and Russia survived much better. When the world faces economic problems, Russia also faces this problem of ups and downs. Russia's control of Ukraine was important for Russia's energy sector because these exports play a 30% role in Russia's gross domestic product (GDP). Ukraine is a strategically important position between the primary energy producers, Russia, and the consumers in Eurasia. Ukraine is an important participant in the European energy transit landscape because of its extensive transit network and underground gas storage capabilities. The Ukraine border links 1579 km with Russia in the east and Western powers aiming to prevent Russia from expanding its influence westward. The control of Russia maintains a grip on gas pipelines for their economic interests. If Western powers influence Ukraine, it poses a serious threat to Russia and also loses control of these pipelines. Crimea is necessary due to its location in the black sea. Sevastopol, located in Crimea's southern seaside, is home to Russia's black sea navy and marine staff. Russia historically connected to Crimea when the Soviets controlled half the Soviet naval force.

When Western-supported President Viktor Yushchenko (western favor president) demanded Russia withdraw, the situation turned upside down when Viktor Yanukovych (pro-Russian) became president. Under his leadership, an agreement was reached allowing Russia to extend its presence till 2042 and, in return, the concession to Ukraine. In 2014, the new president signed a free trade agreement with Russia. The ethnic group of Ukraine started protests, and then Russia entered the force and annexed Crimea. The world's major shift arose; Russia did not follow international norms and controlled Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. These areas are close to Russia and aim to be allies of NATO and the European Union (EU). Additionally, Russia uses strategies to stop shipping, cutting off gas, and trade embargoes. Russia is serious about annexing Crimea and also uses tactics to control the influence of NATO and the EU and has plans to bring these countries under Moscow's (Ashraf, et. al, 2018).

Russia and NATO entered a crisis at the beginning of February 2022. Up to 190,000 Russian troops had been deployed along Belarus' and Russia's border with Ukraine, sending a message that the former was ready to use force to achieve its objectives. Relations between Russia and NATO have reached a low point since the start of Russia's aggressive invasion of Ukraine. The US, EU, UK, and Canada all recently used a variety of sanctions in response to the actions of Russia to restrict Russia's financial resources in Ukraine to continue its war of annexation of territory (NATO-Russia Relations: Impacts on Global Geopolitical Risks, 2020).

3.3.2   Russia and Ukraine's resources

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine became an independent state. Russia aimed to strengthen economic integration and promote economic collaboration with Ukraine and neighboring regional states. Russia has a wide range of minerals, coal, natural gas, crude oil, and rare earth metals. Ukraine also has rich energy, minerals, and agricultural assets worldwide. During the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, Ukraine's resources were underdeveloped and left un-explored. They only export resources to Russia and control Russia in Ukraine as well. Western countries took advantage of Russia's weakness because of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and many countries became independent states. After that, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary joined NATO. The clashes started when Ukraine was interested in joining NATO. Russia was unhappy and worried. The expansion of NATO

was Russia's weakness because most of the Soviet Union's countries joined NATO. Some countries, such as Ukraine, are essential to Russia. Russia has a significant interest in the region. If Ukraine sits in the Western bloc, then Ukraine can create issues for Russia in its mass transit routes (NATO-Russia Relations: Impacts on Global Geopolitical Risks, 2020).

"The structural realist theory says states secure their national interest at any cost, even waging war sometimes if necessary."

3.3.3 Russia's Annexation and control over resources in Ukraine

The president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, was interested in dealing with a free trade agreement with the West. In 2013, Ukraine started a significant effort to sell its oil and gas resources to Russia and private companies, and Russia got involved. The Russian army entered Ukraine and annexed Crimea after that military invention in Donbas. Crimea was important to Russia. Mainly pipelines of gas and oil Russia transport through Ukraine to Europe. If Ukraine allied with NATO and became a member of NATO, then Russia would face an economic crisis. NATO aims to expand its existence in Europe and control the dominancy of Russia. Russia's lifeline is Ukraine. Ukraine was strategically important for Russia and the only access way to the sea. Through the black sea, Russia exports its resources. NATO's mission is to affect the economy of Russia, promote free trade agreements, and expand NATO. Russia is dependent on Ukraine's gas and oil pipeline transit route. Ukraine is a boat for Russia if any foreign domination in this country directly affects the Russian economy. So, Russia's concern was genuine. NATO's presence in Ukraine presents a threat to Russia. Russia used the routes through Ukraine if NATO's existence on the border of Russia could block its transit routes. Russia had its national interests in Ukraine; they attacked Ukraine and annexed Crimea in 2014 after military intervention in Donbas. Russia was protected, and their border security was ensured. Ukraine was planning 2017 to use its minerals and resources, but Russia attacked Ukraine, disrupted the efforts of Ukraine, and controlled the area. Ukraine's resources were discovered in the country's east and under the Black Sea. Ukraine also has farm assets, but Russia has controlled ports and stopped ships from moving to other countries. Ukraine areas near the black sea are mainly under the control of Russia. Russia is in control of Ukraine's eastern and southern territories. Now, nearly all of Ukraine's coal, 72% of its natural gas, and half of its regular oil are under Russian control. The highly demanded rare metals and crops like wheat, corn, barley, and sunflower oil came into

the Donbas area under Russia's control. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine messed up the production of resources and stopped the supply of these items. The actions of Russia are causing many problems for Ukraine. Russia wants to use underwater resources and connect them to its energy system. Many countries in Europe rely on Russia (Muggah, 2022).

3.3.4   Russia's transit routes to Europe

Energy is the basis of relations between Russia and Ukraine. The transportation of Russian fossil fuels to Europe through Ukraine's extensive pipeline network is about 28000 miles. Russia's company, Gazprom, is sending large amounts of gas to Europe, and the transportation of thousands of barrels of Russian oil continues. Russia gives Ukraine transit fees of billions of dollars. The payment continues in ongoing conflicts of the Russia-Ukraine war. Russia was its natural gas producer. Simultaneously, Druzhba, Pomary Progess, Soyuz, Urengoy, and Uzhgorod transport Russian oil barrels across Ukraine. Furthermore, Russia agreed to pass the Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines through Ukraine to Germany, but new pipelines directly deliver them to Germany. Russia's goal is to reduce its dependency on Ukraine's transit routes. This strategic move was aimed at Russia to diminish its reliance on Ukrainian transit routes. Now, western European states like Belgium, Spain, France, and Hungary are increasing imports of Russian gas. In 2022, a European Union (EU) report showed that Spain, approximately 27%; Belgium, 37%; and France, 40%, relied on Russia's liquefied natural gas (LNG). In 2022, the European Union (EU) reduced reliance on Russia's fossil fuels because Russia conflicted with Ukraine. The EU imports the most liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States, whereas Nigeria, Qatar, Algeria, and Norway import the second-most LNG from the US (Semonsen, 2023).

Transit payments for Russian gas passing through its pipelines toward Western Europe resulted in significant profits for Ukraine. In the five years following 2020, it earned about US$2.5 billion in transit fees every year on average. However, this quantity dropped by 25% as a result of Russia's decrease in the supply of gas via Ukraine's pipelines in 2021, which was seen as a sanction for Germany's shutdown of the Nord Stream 2 project as part of sanctions. The amount of gas passing through Ukraine and the money collected in transit fees would have decreased significantly if both Nord Stream pipelines were still in service. Ukraine's

transit charge revenue was anticipated to decline to about $1.2 billion annually once both pipelines were effective (Lawrence, 2022).

As an opponent to NATO expansion, the Russian tactic of making EU members more dependent on Russian oil and gas supplies, mostly through the incomplete and currently stopped Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines, encouraged stronger economic ties between Russia and the EU. These pipelines bypass Ukraine and go via the North Sea to Germany. The US and UK led the sanctions against EU members, especially Germany and the countries of central Europe that depended heavily on Russian energy supplies. This caused early tensions. Because NATO influences the EU, the majority of EU countries agree with its position. As a result, Europe's gas imports from Russia have decreased since consuming countries found substitute supplies, such as LNG, coming from the USA, Australia, and Qatar. In response, Russia can completely cut off gas supplies. Some central and eastern European nations could face a decrease of six percent in GDP, which can significantly impact the economy. However, to further expand its export capacity, the USA has expanded its LNG exports to Europe and is building more ports in 2023. Consequently, US dominance in Europe has increased, broadening its influence eastward and reducing chances for a joint "Eurasian" project (Lawrence, 2022).

These steps by NATO (US) weakened Russia's economy. After moving part of its exports from Asia for use in the European market, the United States continues to lack enough excess LNG supply to fully meet Europe's demand, even though despite being on plan to become the world's largest producer of LNG by 2023. Now, sixty-eight percent of US LNG exports go to EU nations. That will likely increase when Germany builds LNG terminals to facilitate gas imports during the invasion (Jenkins, 2023). In an interview "One of the respondents views that Russia is the frozen area and oil and gas is the major economy for Russia. If the economy is not in line with your potential, you do not fight about the war so just here power is deprived the Russian economy is deprived and society is deprived. The sanction imposed by the US on Russia (oil and gas) weakens the economy of Russia (Khan, Muhammad. personal communication, April 25,2024)."

Before the invasion of Russia in Ukraine in 2022, nearly half of Ukraine's coal, over two-thirds of its oil, and one-third of its natural gas were imported. Ukraine's ranking is

Europe's second-largest natural resource after Russia, up to 5.4 trillion cubic meters. Ukraine also has extensive coal reserves and operates 151 coal mines, among the world's largest. Ukraine is a potential powerhouse that produces crucial industrial metals like titanium, iron, neon, nickel, lithium, etc. The total values are $3 trillion to as much as $11.5 trillion. The Russia-Ukraine war break disturbed working with companies like Arcelor Mittal idling production. Russia was also interested in Ukraine's rare earth metals and occupied that area because Ukraine is the largest supplier in Europe with lithium and electric vehicle battery production reserves. Before to the invasion, Ukraine invested in essential minerals and received over 100 offers from companies in North America and Europe. The European Union (EU) also partnered strategically with Ukraine to reduce reliance on China for raw material extraction. However, the Russia-Ukraine war badly impacted the production and export of food. In 2021, Ukraine supply wheat, corn, barley, and sunflower to Asia and Africa. The countries of Asia and Africa are dependent on Ukraine's agricultural exports, which total about $28 billion. Asia and Africa are getting food from Ukraine, and now they are facing severe difficulties and do not have enough food to eat (Are Ukraine's vast natural resources a real reason behind Russia's invasion?, 2022).

In the Russia-Ukrainian war, the Western countries, including NATO, did not use direct military force against Russia, but they imposed economic sanctions on Russia. Russia was dependent on Ukraine because of its oil and gas trade through Ukraine to Europe. "The respondent's views on economic sanctions imposed by the US is that Sanctions have had some effects. According to the IMF, Russia's GDP is around 7% lower than the pre-war forecast. Despite all of this, Russia's economy has not collapsed. But it does look very different, and is now entirely focused on a long war in Ukraine which is driving economic growth (Zeb, Muhammad. personal communication, April 29, 2024)."

Ukraine's steps to join NATO created tensions between Russia and Ukraine. NATO aims to join Ukraine because it hit the economy of Russia, weaken Russia, and maintain Europe's power, particularly in Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe is important for Russia to trade and border links. Russia is attached to the border with Ukraine, and it is a border threat for Russia if Ukraine joins NATO. NATO can also stop the Russian economy if Ukraine can join. Ukraine is a lifeline for Russia. First, Russia annexed Crimea, and then the Ukrainian Donbas states, and it is now near the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv. NATO and others imposed

economic sanctions to weaken Russia. NATO's main objective is Russia's oil and gas industry, as it provides Russia with an income of living. European Union (EU) also reduced buying of Russian fossil fuels because of the verbal support given to Ukraine. European Union (EU) is a significant buyer of Russian fossil fuels, but they have reduced because Russia attacked Ukraine and Ukraine joined NATO as a Western alliance. Russia was the largest exporter of oil in Europe. Because of this conflict, the US did not import significant amounts of oil and gas from Russia in 2021. The main target of NATO is to impose sanctions on Russia to weaken the economy of Russia and limit exports of Russia to other countries (Ukraine, Putin, gas and sanctions, 2022).

The country's economies depended on heavy industry based on the extraction of mineral resources. Both economies have comparatively low per capita incomes as compared to their Western neighbors, with Ukraine being much the poorest. After the 2010s, both countries' economies changed and increased before the global financial crisis. An important point for heavy industry in the USSR, Ukraine particularly the Donbas region in the east of the nation had extensive coal deposits and significant steel, weapons, helicopter engine, and rocket launcher manufacturing capacity. Russia aims to take back control of Ukraine's heavy industries, as it achieved in the USSR. Without Ukraine, Russia wouldn't have been as powerful since the country produced a significant amount of sunflower oil and wheat, earning it the nickname "the breadbasket of Europe." However, after Russia annexed Crimea and a full-fledged war, Ukraine's GDP fell by 8.5% in 2022. The economic sanction of NATO on Russia does not damage the economy of Russia because Russia can still afford the cost of war and sell its oil at the lowest prices. Moreover, Russia saved much money when the prices of oils were high. Lastly, Russia is no longer providing as much gas to Europe; they are being paid in Russian roubles (Russian monetary unit), which helps to support their currency. With sanctions, European nations continue to depend on Russian gas and worry about declining availability. Due to an illegal oil leak, Nord Stream 1 was recently shut down. Europe considers this as Russia using gas as a weapon. However, consumers in countries cannot boycott this gas because replacement supplies are not yet available. Russia likely thinks it can still profit from its natural resources even with the US-led embargo. Russia still provided oil and gas at discounted prices to countries that have not been boycotting yet (Lawrence, 2022).

A few days before, the 75th anniversary of NATO in Brussels member states revised their budget to counter the aggression of Russia in Ukraine. The budget increases by 2% of GDP in defense to counter such invasion in the future and also the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. In response to the situation between Russia and Ukraine, NATO changed its defense and economic spending to strengthen its posture of deterrence and defense. This includes increased investment in cyber security and other emerging threats, as well as a commitment by member nations to allocate a minimum of 2% of their GDP to defense. The plan included military aid for Ukraine that's worth $17 billion for the next five years. NATO is expected to regain its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, as well as its commitment to collective defense and deterrence, at its 75th-anniversary summit. This could include inviting Ukraine to join the alliance, which would greatly improve the security and stability of the nation in the long run.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1   Conclusion

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization played an essential role in the Russia-Ukraine War. The NATO objective is multifaceted regarding political, economic, and defensive dimensions in the Russian-Ukraine war. One of my respondents views that "Russia-Ukraine war is the dark chapter in the history of Europe and Ukraine is a power play between the United States of America and Russia more specifically say European Union on one side and Russia on the other side. Russia has less military power and ability as compared to the US. The war started on 24th February 2022 and now more than 2 years Ukraine has been particularly destroyed by Russia. America consistently supports Ukraine and Putin is very clear now a way if NATO allowed to entering in Ukraine because Ukraine is next to Russia and NATO is enter to Ukraine and operate to Ukraine and this is going to a great challenge and threat for sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russian federation and there is a time Russia consistently engaged in Ukraine".

NATO's main objectives are to maintain regional peace and security as well as the security and stability of its member states. The political and strategic objectives of NATO are to maintain everything peaceful and secure, prevent crisis, and protect the democratic norms and values among members. NATO enhances international security through political, military, and economic cooperation. NATO tried to establish alliances with Russia and Ukraine before the invasion of that country, focusing on discussion and practical collaboration in areas of mutual interest. However, the Russian annexation of Crimea was a step toward suspending all practical military and civilian collaboration with Russia. NATO was essential in defending Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty after the invasion, condemning the actions of Russia, and providing economic aid and military assistance for military and security reforms. Ukraine was not a member of NATO, but as an aspirant member of NATO, it provided support and assistance for Ukraine in the defense and security industries. "The respondent's similar reviews that Economic sanctions on Russia aimed to isolate it, but Russia's main exports, oil, gas, and wheat, have found other buyers. India, for instance, refused to observe the sanctions and is buying cheap oil from Russia, refining it, and exporting it to Europe. Despite sanctions, Russia continues to trade with Iran and has offered Pakistan a barter trade

system. Russia hasn't faced significant economic collapse, but Europe has experienced a crisis due to high fuel costs and harsh winters, which has affected the quality of life. Middle Eastern countries, like Saudi Arabia, continue to keep friendly relations with Russia. The sanctions have been counterproductive for NATO, especially affecting the common people in Europe rather than significantly harming Russia. While Russia is impacted, the effect is not as severe as intended. The sanctions have had a more pronounced adverse effect on Europe, where fuel and heating costs have surged, impacting the quality of life, especially for pensioners and the aging population. In conclusion, NATO's involvement in Ukraine serves more as a strategy to contain Russia rather than a genuine commitment to Ukraine's independence or well-being. The geopolitical dynamics have pushed many countries to pursue bilateral relations to protect their interests, often undermining the intended impact of international sanctions (Mehmood, Amna. personal communication, April 28, 2024)."

Allies agreed to provide Ukraine with ongoing support through a multi-year assistance program that will help rebuild the country's security and defense industry, help Ukraine move from Soviet-era standards, training, and doctrines, and continue fulfilling its basic needs. "The respondent's views on NATO's long-term strategy to Eastern Europe is that NATO's long-term strategy in Eastern Europe amidst Russia-Ukraine tensions centers on collective defense, bolstered by multinational battlegroups and increased military presence. Resilience-building against hybrid threats, including cybersecurity measures and countering disinformation, is prioritized. Diplomatic efforts seek peaceful resolutions while maintaining a robust deterrent posture to dissuade aggression. Collaboration with partner countries in initiatives like the Enhanced Opportunities Program strengthens security cooperation. Overall, NATO pursues a comprehensive approach combining defense, deterrence, resilience, and diplomacy to promote stability in Eastern Europe (Zeb, Muhammad. personal communication, April 29, 2024)."

4.2 Main Findings

The main findings of the study are:

The historical goal of NATO was to "keep the Russians out and the Americans in and German down". The goals of NATO reflect its role in maintaining stability in the region. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the goals of NATO were to expand towards Eastern Europe and invite the states to join the alliance to strengthen its presence in the region.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia and NATO maintained good and cooperative relations and the NATO-Russia Council aimed to facilitate consultations, cooperation, and joint decision-making on security issues and focus on dialogue between NATO and Russia. NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe raised concerns and tensions between Russia and NATO and led to conflicts such as the Crimea annexation and the full-fledged invasion of Russia in Ukraine. On the other side, NATO supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty after the Russian annexation of Crimea suspending the military and practical cooperation with Russia and working with Ukraine to improve its military capabilities and committed to support Ukraine from any external aggression. The NATO-Ukraine platform on fighting hybrid warfare was established to promote collaboration and identify countering hybrid threats, including disinformation, cyberattacks, and efforts to enhance Ukraine's strength against any threat. NATO has provided significant financial and military support to Ukraine over $150 billion for enhancing Ukraine's defense capabilities and countering the external threats of Russia and is committed to supporting Ukraine's stability and safety. Overall, the partnership between Ukraine and NATO has been more fruitful, with NATO providing strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and Ukraine's continued pursuit of membership for its future security. On the other side, the partnership between NATO and Russia increases the confrontation and tension after the annexation of Crimea and the full-fledged attack on Ukraine.

In the Russia-Ukraine war, the basic goal of NATO was to prevent Russia and present their alliance as strong and united against Russia. NATO supports the Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russia and also promotes democratic values in Eastern Europe. They invited the former Soviet Union member states in Eastern Europe to join the alliance

to promote regional stability. They wanted to ensure that countries joined their alliance to strengthen their democratic values. The expansion of NATO towards Eastern Europe created a security dilemma with Russia because it was a border threat for Russia. The expansion of NATO not only increases the tension between Russia and NATO but is also a reason for Russia Ukraine. Ukraine wanted an alliance with NATO but Russia was not happy with this step Ukraine that's why Russia annexed Crimea and then attacked to Ukrainian region of Donbas. Due to their common Soviet culture and Ukraine's independence in 1991, Russia and Ukraine's relationship has always been complicated. Russia has strongly condemned Ukraine's efforts to build deeper ties with the West, especially to become a member of NATO. Russia wanted to maintain control over Ukraine and restrict it from joining the West, which caused an increase in tensions between the two countries. As a result, there was a significant increase in violence in eastern Ukraine during the invasion of Crimea in 2014. NATO condemned the actions of Russia in the Russia-Ukraine War against Ukraine. It demanded that Russia end the conflict, stop using force, and remove all of its forces from Ukraine without any conditions. Furthermore, on Russia's complete invasion of Ukraine in 2022, NATO imposed sanctions on Russia and provided military support to Ukraine in the kind of equipment and training. In the Baltic States, the alliance has strengthened its marine presence, enhanced its cyber capabilities and defenses, and improved its readiness to deploy nuclear weapons against Russia. NATO's actions during the Russia-Ukraine war highlight an issue facing the alliance as it aims to keep its assistance to Ukraine to a limit to keep the conflict from becoming worse while continuing to improve Ukraine's capacity to prevent Russia from winning. NATO's role in the Russia-Ukraine war has been one of strong support for Ukraine, increased unity and cooperation within the alliance, heightened tensions with Russia, the potential for NATO membership expansion, and heightened security risks for member states. NATO has faced significant challenges as a result of the conflict, but at this point, the alliance has responded strongly to preserve its values and support Ukraine.

NATO sent a membership action plan and invited Ukraine to join when conditions are met. Ukraine was not a member of NATO but they helped the Ukraine to prevent the aggression of Russia. From a political point of view, NATO has continuously condemned Russia's aggressive activities against Ukraine and called on it to end the conflict, stop using force, and remove all of its forces from the country without any conditions. In reaction to Russia's actions, NATO stopped all military and civilian cooperation while maintaining

military and political talks with Russia. "The participant views that Ukraine has twice expressed a desire to become a NATO member, but NATO has only raised the slogan without granting membership. If NATO had accepted Ukraine's application even a couple of days before the war, it would have been legally obligated to defend Ukraine. However, NATO did not do this, as they didn't want to intervene. They aimed to use Ukraine to destabilize and irritate Russia (Mehmood, Amna. personal communication, April 28, 2024)."

Defensively, NATO increased its military assistance to Ukraine to strengthen its ability to maintain security and to strengthen its defense. The NATO-Ukraine Commission is for helping Ukraine against Russia to modernize its security and defense sectors. NATO responded against the invasion by Russia into Ukraine by deploying thousands of extra troops and establishing multinational battlegrounds in various countries like Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), enhancing defense and deterrence measures. The deployment of NATO troops in four multinational battle groups in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, as well as the ones already in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, expanded NATO's forward presence along with the alliance to the eastern flank. This effectively doubled the number of battlegroups on NATO's eastern flank from four to eight. The alliance deployed more than 40,000 troops and readiness forces, which totaled about 300,000. The alliance provides long-term military support, fuel, and medical supplies, provides weapons, and enhances defense capabilities. The alliance increases its military presence in the region. It conducts exercises, supporting Ukraine through training, and equipment. They also seek to maintain its relevance and credibility as a security guarantor in Europe while promoting stability and cooperation with non-member states like Ukraine. They cover various areas including maritime, land, and air. To ensure the defense of the sea, the NATO alliance also increased intelligence sharing and maritime surveillance while increasing its naval presence in the Baltic States. Since the full invasion of Russia, the Standing naval forces (SNF) of NATO were deployed to strengthen the alliance's maritime posture. NATO's employment of ballistic missiles keeps against Russian military invasions into its boundaries to protect its forces, people, and land across Europe. The objective of the peacetime air policing role is to maintain the security of NATO airspace through air control, air surveillance, and standing ballistic missile defense. "The respondent views on the defense and deterrence posture of NATO in Eastern Europe that NATO plays a critical role in

defending its member states in Eastern Europe against the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war by enhancing their security and resilience. This includes deploying multinational battlegroups in countries like Poland and the Baltic states to provide reassurance and deter potential aggression. Additionally, NATO conducts regular military exercises and implements infrastructure improvements to bolster defense capabilities in the region. The alliance also provides political and diplomatic support to Eastern European member states, reaffirming their sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russian pressure (Zeb, Muhammad. personal communication, April 29, 2024)."

Economically, the economy of Russia is heavily dependent on oil and gas to Europe through pipelines that transit Ukraine. This makes Ukraine a critical economic lifeline for Russia. if Russia were to align with NATO then the Russian economy would move down. Ukraine's extensive pipeline network earns significant transit fees from Russian gas exports to Europe, amounting to about $2.5 billion annually, albeit decreasing due to Russia's efforts to bypass Ukraine with projects like Nord Stream. The members of NATO have imposed economic sanctions on Russia targeting its financial system and energy sectors. These sanctions aim to weaken Russia's economy and its ability to fund the war in Ukraine. Oil and other energy product imports into the United States are banned, and all normal trade relations with Russia, Russia's export controls in defense, aerospace, and maritime were targeted as well as NATO pressure on Germany to cancel the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project and Russia gas pipelines to Europe targeted and these efforts of alliance to stop Russia to rebuild its tanks, missile, and weapons. These sanctions were a result of Russia invading Ukraine on a large scale in 2022 after annexing Crimea in 2014. NATO called for an end to the conflict and the withdrawal of all Russian forces from Ukraine, condemning Russia's actions. NATO members, particularly in Europe, increasing their imports of LNG (Liquefied natural gas) from the United States to reduce the dependence on Russian gas. These steps can hit the economy of Russia.

4.3   Recommendations

The recommendations are:

➢ NATO should work towards a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukrainian war by supporting diplomatic and political dialogues beyond being a military institution. In an interview "the respondent's view is that ending the war as soon as possible, otherwise Russia's win would mean disaster for NATO (Mehmood, Amina. personal communication, April 28, 2024) .

➢ In an interview "one of the respondents suggested that Ukraine is a red line drawn by Russia, any state that crosses this red line will be punished by Russia. NATO should not interfere in the affairs of Ukraine and let Russia and Ukraine live in peace (Ali, Ather. personal communication, April 19, 2024)."

➢ NATO should step down and move towards a resolution to address the global losses, such as food shortages and disruptions in wheat exports from Russia. The whole world is facing these problems, and restoring these supplies would benefit everyone. In an interview "the respondent's view that NATO should bit a from it's you can say directly and indirectly support Ukraine and Russia should reconcile because Russia should already face the blood and the Russian economy being deprived and the main power is being derivative including the military more so this war did Russia-Ukraine war impacted the International community in the world at Large and Ukraine itself provided food grains to rest of the world with particularly that are also be stopped somehow it's at least export has been reduced and then it's not the issue of export it's a war, you are not growing wheat, you cannot grow the food and food production and all that and grains cannot be produced, if there is a return of peace and then the entire business is started and this benefits helpful for the rest of the world (Khan, Muhammad. personal communication, April 25, 2024)."

➢ NATO is supplying Ukraine with military and financial aid and strengthening itself through military exercises against Russia. However, it lacks direction and effective military planning. Additionally, the economic sanctions are not working and have

failed. NATO needs to improve its military planning and direction; otherwise, it will not be effective against Russia.

➢ Encourage direct dialogue between Ukraine and Russia with the mediation of neutral parties such as the United Nations or countries with good relations with both parties (e.g., Turkey, and Switzerland). "The respondent's views on negotiations is that NATO should step down from its current position and convince Zelensky (President of Ukraine) to sit down with Putin and try to resolve the conflict. Instead of seeking help from the US and Europe whenever he faces challenges, Zelensky should come to terms with Russia. He needs to recognize that if even powerful countries like Israel and the US can't fully defend themselves due to the emergence of smaller powers, it would be even harder for Ukraine. Russia has now emerged both economically and militarily as a revisionist power, and it's not easy to defeat them (Mehmood, Amna. personal communication, April 28, 2024)."

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