

## Russia-Ukraine War and Implications of Finland's Membership of NATO

**Stephanie Ngelale\***

### **Abstract**

This study examines how the war between Russia and Ukraine has tilted Finland into the orbit of NATO. Therefore, the research approach is a qualitative systematic literature review, and it examines scholarly papers, foreign policy reports, and websites like Carnegie Europe and the Atlantic Council that deal with international relations. In addition, the study examines what this milestone poses for East-West relations within the international system going-forward. The study as a concluding remark indicated that the war between Russia and Ukraine has significant geo-political ramifications which are discussed in this study. Likewise, Ukraine's struggles on the battlefields are still raging, while neighbouring nations like Finland and Sweden have sought stronger ties with both of them making connections with NATO for increased security in response to the crisis. Similarly, the defection of Finland into the NATO alliance is of consequential impact on global dynamics. As a result, insightful information on the changing dynamics of the area and the difficulties of post-conflict international cooperation and security are gleaned from the comprehensive literature research.

**Keywords:** Russia, Ukraine, Finland, NATO and Global Security.

### **Introduction**

It is a fair argument to advance that the special military operations which Russia launched in 2022 against Ukraine have made the international system more convoluted and unstable. This not minding that both countries have a shared deeply intertwined and complex relationship stressing many centuries. The shared history between both nation-states is ancient with classic examples of how relations between entities can suddenly go sour (Isoh, 2022). However, many international relations scholars and commentators are puzzled that a relationship that dates back to several centuries can rupture and cause so much devastation and by miseries (Beemer, 2014).

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\* Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti;  
[arelle711@gmail.com](mailto:arelle711@gmail.com)

At the dismemberment of the Soviet Union in 1991, all the republics sought to carve out a niche for themselves and become independent. Ukraine being a part of the defunct Soviet Union also was declared independent. Having lost a large part of its population and natural resources, Russia's newly formed government was not amused by this decision (Foy & White, 2019). Although Russia always wanted to preserve the identity and ideology of the Soviet Union even after its collapse, Ukraine on the other hand always wanted to create a new identity for itself. This then laid the foundation for conflict in the later years. Independence and Sovereignty have become a complex concept between these two states and their supporters in the international system with the security implications.

Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine has faced external threats from Russia. The quest for enhanced security, sovereignty and international recognition then drove Ukraine to seek membership at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Gordon & Kravtsova, 2020). Being a part of NATO would help increase security for Ukraine both internally and externally, and also improve its political stand with western powers as well as gain more resources to defend itself (Kagan, 2021). Russia have maintained that ..... NATO's push towards its territory is not acceptable and will provoke dire consequences.

Russia has always been apprehensive of Ukraine's possible membership into NATO. Other factors have contributed to this unease in Moscow, ranging from ideological sentiment and consideration of power politics, to military capabilities and security issues. At the ideological level, Russia worries that Ukraine joining NATO would signify a betrayal of its own identity as a Slavic state (Eberhart & Miller, 2008). Also, Ukraine joining NATO stirs up security concerns for Russia, due to the level of proximity between Russia and Ukraine.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Russia launched a military operation in Ukraine after months of troop's build-up around the Ukrainian borders and recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Donbas in Ukraine as independent states. This special military operation has now turned out to what is now called the Russia-Ukraine crisis. This crisis was borne out of the conflicts between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists in the Donbas region of Donetsk and Luhansk, as well as Ukraine's quest to join the North Atlantic Treaty as well as membership of European Union Organization (CNN, 2022).

The Russia-Ukraine crisis is an issue of high international interest as well as a subject of growing controversy due to its potential implications for both state's future and also as a result of the extraordinary influence that Russia wields in the sphere of international organisations. At the heart of this crisis lies the inevitability of Russia's use of its extensive military power and the western backing for Ukraine and other complexities that could negatively affect the international system and orders. As much as some literatures continue to refer to the conflict between both Russia and Ukraine as either special military operation, crisis of outright areas depending on which side of the divide is pontificating, the complex nature of international politics has taken place and it is manifesting on the battle field and even beyond in such places as the United Nations, European Union and beyond in the UN. According to the Article 27 of

the United Nations Charter, any decision concerning matters related to international peace and security requires nine votes from UNSC members, but if at least one permanent member votes against it, such resolution cannot pass (United Nations Charter, 1945). Deliberations at the UNSC have consistently marred by Russian obstructionism (Bogdanova & Vladimirova, 2020). As a permanent member with veto power, Russia and the United States effectively hold immense influence over issues related to global security; therefore, their exercise of veto has prohibited the adoption of certain provisions in the draft resolution that would have been critical for improving Ukraine's relationship with Russia, as well as putting an end to the crisis.

With Russia and even the United States' ability to unilaterally deny any proposed solution within the United Nations Security Council, it has made resolution difficult as there is no incentive for either side to come to a compromise that may satisfy both camps. Ultimately, this paper assessed the implications of Russia-Ukraine war and its implications in pulling Finland into the NATO orbit.

Undeniably, the offensive military action ordered by Russian president Putin set a whole of reactions across the world but particularly in Europe, hence Finland to hitherto United States hasty reaction by defecting to the Western Alliance. Before, the Russia offensive against Ukraine, Finland was a pacifist and neutral state in the international system. The political leaders and citizens of Finland thought it wise that it was in their security and strategic imperative to stave off a potential Russian aggression by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which was founded in 1949 and played a pivotal role during the cold war by ensuring that not a single western European country fell to the scourge of communism and was equally able to secure all member-states of the alliance. Indeed, the alliance was created to maintain both security and peace amongst its members, not such was expected of the organization until recently when tensions between the West and Russia once again flared up and dominated international discourse.

While some scholars have maintained that Russia's action against Ukraine unsettled many pundits and scholars of international relations, the actions of Ukraine leading to the Russia's special military operations against her cannot be overlooked. The encroachment of the West was in itself a trigger but some un-intended consequences included the defection of Finland and some other auxiliary actions. The membership of NATO may have bloated but the wanton destruction of lives and properties and accompanying economic recession occasioned by the military actions as led by Russia cannot be ignored. At the opening stage of the military action by Russia, some commentators dismissed it as a storm in the tea cup. Close to two years on, the West, particularly the United States appears to be foot dragging in further underwriting the cost of Ukraine's resistance, a reflection of the political undercurrent in the country. Regardless of this, this study shall take an in-depth look at the changing dynamics occasioned by the war and particularly its impact on Finland leading to its jumping into the NATO alliance.

The sequence of events which enabled Finland has both domestic and international implications. Finland has been a member of the (NATO) since 4 April 2023 and has continued

to shape international discourse and animate heated debate about the viability or otherwise of the action. This being so given the historical nature and political dynamics playing out both in Europe, Ukraine and the world as a whole. Some have likened the move as a resurgence of cold war dynamics, while some view it as a new phase in the post-cold war scenario which a resurgent Russia is trying to challenge by recruiting to outright military operation in Ukraine. Throughout the cold war, that Finland maintained a position of neutrality, in what became known as Finlandization, its often complicated relations with the Soviet Union is giving some measure of concern. The possibility of membership became a topic of debate in the country after the end of the Cold War and following the country's accession to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme and the European Union (EU) in the mid-1990s. In spite of these new bonds to Europe and the West, public support for NATO's accession remained low.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### War

War is not alien to the international system, as a matter of fact, it has dominated human discourse and activities for as long as one can recall. Following the end of the first and second world wars (1914-1919 and 1939-1945) and including several intra and interstate wars, statesmen and global icons have devoted considerable amount of energy to bringing an end to the scourge of war which has brought untold hardship, miseries and wanton destruction to lives and properties to no avail. The international system is said to be convoluted and anarchic, hence some states are quick to resort to hard tactics to addressing their national interest or defending an entrenched core interest. The victorious allied powers including the United States of America and the defunct Union of the Socialist Soviet Republic with Russia as its successor entity attempted to install a measure of decorum to regulate the international system by installing the United Nations and a novel mechanism called the United Nations Security Council, all in an attempt to defuse tensions that could flare into a war, yet it has not totally succeeded since these same countries and their allies often times violate some of this protocols whenever it is convenient for them or whenever it runs contrary to their avowed interest. The clamour for sustainable peace and security and much touted desire to prevent the outbreak of another war appears still popular but in the realm of real politics, it is desirable but not attainable. It was on this accord and as a result of the contributions of the then-president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson that the league of nations was formed. Even though much effort was put into the creation of the league of nations to prevent other wars and ensure peace and security, the league was not short of problems. The league of nations suffered neglect and lack of cooperation on the part of its members. These issues then paved way for a second world war (Bessel, 1993).

While this study is not essentially about the United Nations, it is not disputable that the multilateral platform was not indeed a novel attempt at building enduring peace and security and possibly saving the world the resort to the outbreak of a 3rd world war. Hence, the

United Nations sprung out of the ruins of the league of nations. While the United Nations was built from the ruins of the League of Nations and it did not take long for former allies, that is, the United States and defunct Union of the Socialist Soviet Union to go their separate ways occasioned by divergence of ideological leanings. The former has maintained democracy and capitalism as its political and economic roadmap while the defunct USSR elected to go with socialism and communism as its political and economic models.

### **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a collective security pact formed in 1949 by the leader of the free world, the United States of America to check the spread of communism in Western Europe. The United States, Canada, and other 10 democratic states of Western Europe felt that the security alliance could act as a buffer zone which it indeed became as not a single Western European country felt into the communism entrapment after its creation. The alliance's first secretary general, Baron Hastings Ismay, described its purpose bluntly: "to keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."

The birth of the NATO alliance reinforced the strategic thinking that the most functional edge the free world has against the spread of communism during the cold war was to impose a deterrence strategy which worked effectively as not a single country from Western Europe fell to the communism grip of the defunct USSR. It is crucial to fully understand that why such a strategy worked effectively during the cold war, it was far from being a functional strategy in this renewed resurgence of Russia. Indeed, NATO membership has grown beyond the initial members at birth but the dynamics within the international system and especially geo-politics has not remained the same. For example, in October 1990, newly reunified Germany, and former Warsaw Pact members such as Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic joined NATO. By 2004, new admission of Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Baltic States, joined, further expanding and increasing the NATO Alliance. This new admission has further increased tension between the Alliance and Russia which sees such new members from states near its eastern flank as an encroachment by NATO which has grave national security implications. A further four Southern European admissions between 2009 and 2020 brought the alliance's membership up to 30. The growth in the membership of NATO member states is indicative of the general acceptance and increasing acceptability of the western model of economic and political ways since the end of the cold war in 1990. Whilst one may not be entirely correct to wave off Russia as inconsequential within the international political system but frankly speaking, the collapse of the USSR and defection of many member states under its influence and many of its client states into the warm embrace of the United States of America is a telling effect of the signs at hand. America has indeed prevailed in harvesting many of the formerly neutral states and ardent communist states under its influence and increasingly controlled leaving Russia despondent and vulnerable to the point that NATO is at her gate. Throughout each phase of expansion Russia vocally protested, but for the most part

was too weak to do anything more than publicly criticize NATO enlargement. While it was undoubtedly in the interests of smaller, weaker states like Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which border Russia, to join NATO, the alliance's eastward expansion helped sour U.S.-Russian relations at a time when there was still potential for a more constructive post-Cold War relationship. Many defense analysts also argue that eastward NATO expansion, particularly in the Baltics, left the alliance overextended and responsible for difficult-to-defend territory, making its deterrence against Russia less credible. NATO-Russia tensions deteriorated even further after the alliance's Bucharest Declaration of 2008, which stated that Georgia and Ukraine, both bordering Russia, would ultimately become members. Russia's war with Georgia later that same year confirmed warnings from U.S. intelligence officials that Russia might react strongly based on its fears of encirclement by an alliance that it still felt was oriented against it, particularly when it came to countries such as Ukraine for which Russia feels deep historical and cultural ties. Part of Russia's rationale for its unjust annexation of Crimea and support for Eastern Ukrainian separatists in 2014 was that the new government brought into power after Kyiv protests toppled a Moscow-oriented one. Russia feared the new government would seek both economic and military alignment with the West through European Union and NATO membership. Ukraine's internal challenges and long border with Russia and Belarus made it a poor candidate for NATO membership. In 2022, Russia launched a pre-emptive though special military operation against Ukraine and since then fundamentally speaking, the wanton destruction of lives and properties is a telling effect of the sour relations between both states.

### **Russia- Ukraine Relations**

Russia and Ukraine have often shared a complex relationship due to their geographical location and several common histories. Both countries trace their origin to the same medieval kingdom, called the Kievan Rus. It was founded in the 800s by a group of Vikings, the Varangians, who came from Northern Europe to rule over the local people. Kievan Rus spanned what is now known as Russia and Ukraine, and its people, the Slavs, are the ancestors of today's Russians and Ukrainians. Its capital was the city of Kyiv, the same Kyiv that is now the capital of Ukraine. Moscow, capital of today's Russia, was also part of the Kievan Rus (David, 2022).

At the dawn of the 17th century, a progressive and expansionist Russian empire was created and during the 18th century, imperial Russia controlled most of Ukrainian territory. During the mid-1800s, Russia was divided into three parts called Great Russia, White Russia, and Little Russia. In the modern day, many of its territories have become their own independent countries, but the history shared with Russia remains. What was once referred to as 'White Russia' is now known as Belarus and Lithuania. Modern day Russia was known as Great Russia, while the Little Russians are now called Ukrainians (Torresarpi, 2022).

With the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917 by the communists under Vladimir Lenin, Ukraine was able to achieve a brief period of independence. However, in 1922 Ukraine was integrated into the Soviet Union with a tattered economy and systematically repressed national

identity. During the Soviet rule, collective memory and literary language were removed to lessen cultural distance between Ukrainians and Russians (Herb & David, 2008).

However, the state of relations between Russia and Ukraine has been strained since the early 1990s, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union of which both countries were part of (Wordpress, n.d.). After gaining independence in 1991, it emerged as a separate nation with its own language, culture, and political identity. However, many Ukrainians still maintain close cultural and linguistic ties to Russia, and there are significant Russian-speaking populations in eastern and southern Ukraine. Additionally, the two countries share a long border, and many Ukrainian regions have been historically linked to Russia through trade, migration, and intermarriage (Kudelia, 2022).

Ukraine sought closer ties with the West while attempting to maintain good diplomatic relations with its neighbour, Russia. The two countries have had differences based on political ideology, culture, economy and religion. The 2014 crisis further strained the relations between Russia and Ukraine when Russian forces invaded Crimea and other parts of Eastern Ukraine (BBC News, 2020). Several attempts for reconciliation have been made, but tensions still remain between Russia and Ukraine.

### **Russia -Ukraine War**

Some western backed analysts have maintained that Russia's military action against Ukraine constitutes a blatant assault on the concept of sovereignty, hence should be resisted at any and every cost. This has inflamed the passion in which the United States and its allies have resisted though without deployment of military forces in combat operations against Russia. Putin has defended his military action against Ukraine by listing a linity of allegations against both Ukraine and the West on the inordinate expansion of NATO to its backyard, the shape of post-cold war security architecture as well as the legitimacy of the Ukrainian identity and statehood (Jeffery Mankoff, 2023). The roots of the crisis can be traced back to the previous decade, with Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 acting as a pivotal moment in the geopolitics of the region. Ukraine has been largely divided between a pro-Western government in Kiev and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Donbas region since then. Russia's annexation of Crimea further heightened the tensions and led to conflict in Donbas, which persisted until the ceasefire agreement reached in July 2020. After that, intermittent skirmishes continued but the situation was relatively stable until 2022 (Smith, 2022).

In recent times, tensions started simmering again, especially after Ukraine and Russia failed to agree on gas prices, and there were allegations of military build-up along the borders. On February 24, 2022, Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine's territory, citing the need to protect Russian speakers in the region, despite Ukraine's assurances to the contrary. This move swiftly led to a United Nations Security Council meeting where both sides traded accusations, sanctions were imposed and there were calls for peaceful negotiation.

Since the crisis started, there have been reports of casualties from both sides as the fighting continues. Major world powers, including the United States and European Union nations, have condemned Russia's actions and have imposed economic sanctions to try and force Russia to withdraw. Additionally, Ukraine has called for international support to try and fend off Russian aggression, with several nations supporting them in various capacities (Smith, 2022).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **NEOREALISM**

The theory of Neorealism, also known as Structural realism is a school of thought in international relations theory that views the state as an autonomous actor and stresses the aggressive pursuit of power by states in an anarchic system. Kenneth Waltz is credited with developing neorealism into a coherent theory of international politics, mostly because of his 1979 seminal book "Theory of International Politics", a book which sought to explain the recurring pattern of state behaviour and interaction in the international system and also to address the defects of classical realism (Walling, 2015). According to the neorealists, states must continually strive to maximize their own security while minimizing threats posed by other states. Subsequently, they pursue strategies designed to attain dominance and military superiority over potential competitors.

Neorealism is based on Neo-Gramscian notions about an "international anarchy" which comprises a world devoid of any central authority capable of imposing or enforcing laws or regulations upon nation-states (Cox, 1981). Since there is no predominant authority able to impose limitations to interstate competition, each state has the incentive to expand its own security by maintaining a certain level of military supremacy (Waltz, 1979).

Neorealism emphasizes the role of power in shaping state behaviour, and how states are more concerned with self-preservation than any other goal. According to this theory, states seek to maximize their power and control over their surroundings, thus leading to conflicts that are rooted in power differentials. In this theory, states are viewed as unitary actors whose first priority is preserving their own security. This theory explains Russia's use of its veto power in the context of Russia-Ukraine crisis and also why Russia is carrying out a military operation in Ukraine. When juxtaposing the tenets of neorealism with the reasons for the Russia-Ukraine crisis, it is easy to understand why Russia has used its veto power on a number of occasions in order to protect its interests in Ukraine.

Neorealism suggests that international politics is generally competitive and often adversarial. It is based on the notion of having an anarchic structure of world politics, which leads states to act unilaterally to ensure their security (Cohen, 2019). This can be seen in Russia's use of its veto power over the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as one way of securing its own safety interests.



In the context of Russia-Ukraine crisis, neorealist power politics explains how Russia has used its veto power as a strategic instrument to further its influence in Ukraine, as well as protect itself from any potential consequences from western powers (Leonard & Lukin, 2020). Russia exercises its veto power on United Nations Security Council resolutions pertaining to Ukraine by preventing any measures from being adopted that would oppose or undermine Moscow's foreign policy interests in the region. Also, it prevents declarations or resolutions that would recognize Ukraine's sovereignty in areas where Russian forces are already operating.

Neorealism suggests that powerful states will consistently act in their self-interest and seek to maximize their power and security, and this seems to be the case with Russia's actions in Ukraine. However, veto power also highlights the limitations of international institutions like the United Nations Security Council, which often fail to take decisive action in response to major crises due to the veto power held by its permanent members.

The Russia-Ukraine crisis highlights the role of power in world politics, and the limitations of international institutions in preventing powerful states from acting in their own self-interest. As such, it provides a valuable case study for understanding the behaviour of states in the international system.

### **RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY**

The rational choice theory is an economic and social theory that aims to explain how people make decisions based on rational and logical considerations. According to the theory, individuals make rational decisions by weighing the costs and benefits of different choices and selecting the option based on limited resources and competing interests. The rational choice theory was developed in economics but has been applied in various fields. There is no single person or entity that can be credited solely with propounding the theory. However, influential scholars who have contributed to its development include James Buchanan, Gordon Tullock, and Gary Becker (Banks, 2011).

The rational choice theory explains individual or collective decision-making by rational actors who maximize their own self-interest. In the case of Russia's use of veto in the United Nations Security Council on the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the theory suggests that Russia made a calculated decision to use its veto power to serve its own interests. One possible explanation for Russia's veto is that it aimed to protect its economic and strategic interests in Ukraine. It has historical ties with Ukraine, including its former status as a Soviet republic, and Ukraine serves as an important buffer zone against NATO expansion. Hence, it would be in Russia's best interest to maintain stability and control in the region, which could justify its intervention.

Another probable explanation for Russia's use of veto power is that it was responding to perceived threats from other actors in the international system, including the United States and its European allies. Also, the rational choice theory suggests that in making decisions, actors consider both the benefits and costs of different options. In this case, it is likely that Russia weighed the potential consequences of using its veto, such as its long-term relationships

with other United Nations members and its reputation in the international community. However, Russia may have assessed that the benefits of ensuring its own interests and maintaining its position of power and sphere of influence outweighed these costs.

### **Finland's NATO Membership and its Geopolitical Implications**

The dispute over Ukraine's potential membership in NATO obviously has far-reaching geopolitical consequences and the international political system is worse off for it. It has provoked a war with accompanying destruction and deaths on both sides of the divide. It has caused great economic hardships on a scale not imagined before the war. The conflict has elicited divergent opinions whether it is within the right of a sovereign state to act in one way or the other in pursuit of its own national interest. The right or otherwise of Ukraine to join NATO is at the heart of the war which has birthed an unexpected twist of event, Finland membership of NATO. This singular move by a hitherto neutral state is at the heart of this on-going war between Russia and Ukraine. Which is that states will act in its own national interest. However, some in the West are not favorably disposed to Ukraine membership of the alliance (NATO, 2023a). Uncertainty and possibly conflict between NATO and Russia have resulted from hazy pledges and security guarantees provided to Ukraine on NATO membership. Therefore, Ukrainian ambitions for NATO membership are complicated and complex. Additionally, Ukraine has condemned Russian aggression and worked to expand its partnership agreement with NATO, but the West has only offered vague pledges of membership and security (Quirk and Sharma, 2022). Similarly, the United States and Europe hesitate to award Ukraine full NATO membership for fear of an all-out war with Russia. This hesitance increases doubts and divides Western nations' goals from those of Ukraine (Weber, 2023). As a result, the absence of a concrete timetable for membership only adds to the difficulties and unknowns that Ukraine faces in its pursuit of NATO membership which is why some continue to dismiss the alliance as luring Ukraine to take the hard road approach by fighting Russia while it has turned around and given membership to Finland and Sweden. Besides, there are several causes behind the problems. To begin, several allies in NATO are worried about what joining Ukraine may mean for their security (Bezerra, 2022). Consequently, a precarious security scenario has emerged due to the war between Ukraine and Russia. Fearing to provoke Russia further and perhaps cause a direct military clash, several NATO allies are reluctant to extend membership to Ukraine (NATO, 2023b). Supporting Ukraine while preventing an escalation of the crisis requires a careful strategy like this. Second, the question of Ukraine's membership has strategic and political ramifications for the relationship between NATO and Russia. Russian perceptions of its sphere of influence have been challenged by NATO's expansion into the post-Soviet region, especially near Russia (Cross, 2018). Russia is vehemently opposed to Ukraine's possible participation because it regards Ukraine's accession as a danger to Russian security (Larrabee, 2010). As NATO countries assess the advantages of Ukraine's membership against the dangers of antagonizing Russia, this resistance further complicates the decision-making

process. Thirdly, Ukraine's ambitions to join NATO are complicated by domestic issues (NATO, 2023a). To achieve the conditions specified by NATO for membership, Ukraine must address corruption, internal divides, and the execution of reforms. Thus, NATO members and other Western nations have voiced worry about Ukraine's development in these areas, emphasizing the need for on-going efforts to fortify democratic institutions, improve the rule of law, and root out corruption (Demir, 2022). These difficulties doubt Ukraine's preparation and the timing for a future NATO admission. The joint statement delivered at the Vilnius summit significantly affected Ukraine's chances of becoming a member of NATO (Dempsey, 2023). The statement confirmed support for Ukraine's NATO membership bid and pledged to keep sending weapons to the country as it fights Russia. However, it stressed that membership would be effective for Ukraine if the "conditions are met" (Clem, 2018). These circumstances are linked to Russia's current involvement in Ukraine and the state of the conflict. Moreover, the statement issued during the Vilnius summit reflects the NATO member states' cautious stance on Ukraine's membership. The conclusion of the current war, with all its complications and problems, is necessary before full membership can be given (Marten, 2023). This strategy is the outcome of trying not to escalate tensions with Russia while showing support for Ukraine's independence. However, the statement does not provide a date for Ukraine's membership. Yet, it does reaffirm NATO's commitment to Ukraine's security and resolve to aid Ukraine in enhancing its defensive capacities (Hickson, 2022). Consequently, NATO's acknowledgement of the significance of preserving peace and security in the area is reflected in this pledge. On the other hand, the statement draws attention to the challenges and unknowns Ukraine may face on the road to NATO membership. Progress in ending the war with Russia and restoring peace in Ukraine is a prerequisite for NATO membership (Sharp, 2023). The onus is now on Ukraine to maintain its reform initiatives, fortify its democratic institutions, and find a way to end the crisis peacefully. As a result, the geopolitical ramifications of discussing Ukraine's membership in NATO are substantial. Security threats, political factors, and the need for internal changes all contribute to the uncertainty and difficulty surrounding Ukraine's objectives. NATO's declaration at the Vilnius summit reaffirmed the organization's commitment to Ukraine's security while also stressing the need to improve the situation on the ground before full membership is given. Given the numerous dynamics in the regional geopolitical scene, Ukraine's route to NATO membership remains complex and dependent on several circumstances.

#### **Recommendation**

The research paper will be beneficial for both students and researchers in analyzing the geo-political implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and its effects on various global political and economic aspects. It seeks to give clarifications to the changing power dynamics occasioned by both the war between Russia-Ukraine and fallouts such as the defection of a hitherto neutral state such as Finland to the Western Alliance. Indeed, while the international system cannot be said to be immune to war(s), however, we can argue that there should be no place for needless wars. Fundamentally speaking, it should be stressed that the national interest of

any state if not a threat to the global community should not be allowed for another state to dictate. It may appear naïve but with the scale of destructions and losses of lives, it is better off for the international system to be made safe as peaceful co-existence should be encouraged.

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