

The Western World and United Nations handling of the Russia-Ukraine war: Implications for the global environment

David Fidelis Atnadu^{1*} and Agaba Halidu²

¹Department: Political Science and International Relations, Nile University of Nigeria.

²Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Nigeria.

*Corresponding author. Email: fidelis.david@nileuniversity.edu.ng

Copyright © 2023 Atnadu and Halidu. This article remains permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Received 14th July 2023; Accepted 17th August 2023

ABSTRACT: This work critically examines the way the western world and the United Nations reacted to the Russia-Ukraine war and the implications of such actions for the rest of the world. The work made use of Neorealism as a framework of analysis, and secondary sources of data from books, documents, journals, newspapers, television stations, etc. were used. The study attempted to know the way the western world and the UN reacted to the war, the actions they took, the results of these actions, and the implications these actions have for the global environment. While doing so, the study discovered that the western world reacted quickly by using sanctions and arming the Ukrainian military, which would weaken Russia and possibly force Russia to withdraw its troops in Ukraine. Also, the study discovered that the UN did not react quickly and did not do much to stop Russia from unilaterally declaring an unjust war against Ukraine without provocation. The study made recommendations like the need for Western countries to arm Ukraine more, the formation of a global front as a way to react with one voice in condemning Russia, and the United Nations needing to be reformed as the security council makes it difficult for the UN to intervene when unprovoked attacks are mounted against nations by a superior country.

Keywords: United Nations, war, western countries.

INTRODUCTION

Since Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991, there has been evidence of tensions between that country and Russia. Since that time, Ukraine has become one of the most powerful oligarchic, political, and commercial satellite states of Russia (Gierczak, 2020). Russia is a country that is located in eastern Europe and northern Asia, and Ukraine is also a country in eastern Europe. Both countries used to be part of the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) before its collapse in 1991 under the leadership of former USSR President Gorbachev.

USCRI (2022) pointed out that Ukraine is currently the second-largest country in Europe, Ukraine has a long history of invasion by foreign powers and instability. Since 882, Ukraine has experienced occasional warfare for

hundreds of years, with the 20th century wars having a considerable influence on the present humanitarian crisis and confrontation with Russia. However, the long-standing battle for a national identity based on geography is the one that has been the most significant.

There have been efforts to reduce Russian influence on Ukraine, which, before the agreement with the EU, heavily relied on Russian imports, thereby subjecting its economy to Russian decisions. This is due to the developing feeling of national identity. Only 19 UN members (including Afghanistan, China, Cuba, and North Korea) recognized Russia's annexation of Crimea, and most people still believe it to be illegitimate (Gierczak, 2020).

According to Gierczak (2020), in order to understand the ongoing conflict, it will be necessary to investigate the

conflict issues, which can be categorized into five groups:

1. Russian maintenance of post-Soviet states.
2. Ukraine's sovereignty.
3. Status of the Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk.
4. Ukraine's sense of national identity.
5. International alliances (with Ukraine being at the center of conflicting ideologies).

The actual conflict might be seen as a battle between two opposing ideas, which are the EU, UN, and NATO on the side of the West, and Russia on the other. The European Union, NATO, the United Nations, numerous non-governmental organizations, and the United States, Russia views them as an existential threat because they symbolize the liberal democratic position, and by allowing Ukraine to join NATO, it sees it as a threat to its security and also its position as a world power (Gierczak, 2020). Mearsheimer (2014, pp.79-80) pointed out that the "West's final tool for peeling Kyiv away from Moscow has been its efforts to spread Western values and promote democracy in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states, a plan that often entails funding pro-Western individuals and organizations".

Meanwhile, Western nations are concerned about the respect for human rights in both Russia and Ukraine as well as the rise of nationalist and, strangely, communist ideologies in the Eastern European Union. The conflict appears to be even more complicated as a result of Russia's actions, which are debatable in terms of their legality given that they are ideologically motivated and affect not only Ukraine and Russia but also the post-Soviet states, the European Union, and NATO.

Furthermore, the war can be traced back to 2014, when a pro-Russian Ukrainian president called Viktor Yanukovich was removed from office as a result of a revolution organized by pro-Western Ukrainians. Furthermore, Viktor Yanukovich was removed as a result of the revolution, he quickly went into exile in Russia. Due to these events, pro-Russian unrest in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine erupted into a series of unrests, and a large number of Russian troops moved into Crimea and took control of strategic positions, infrastructure, and even government buildings in that region, which was annexed after a disputed referendum was conducted.

Similarly, in the month of April, some pro-Russian separatists in the eastern region of Ukraine called Donbas were proclaimed the Donetsk People's Republic and also the Luhansk People's Republic in what was obviously a move sponsored and financed by Russia. In a palpable manner, Russia continued to deny its direct involvement in the undeclared war. This conflict, as expected, became a war between Russian and Ukrainian proxies despite the Minsk II agreement that both countries signed in 2015, which they never fully implemented.

On February 24, 2022, Russia decided to invade

Ukraine after amassing many troops along the Ukrainian-Russian border. Russia denied it but eventually carried out what many expected. After the invasion, Europe and the rest of the world reacted in different ways, but the numerous reactions were carried out with the ultimate aim of weakening Russian strength in financing the war. According to the European Commission (2023), various sanctions have been put in place against Russia to cripple its ability to finance the war, and this has been done by the European Union. The sanctions are designed to:

1. Impede the Kremlin's ability to finance the war; this sanction is targeting the Russian ability to finance the war; and the banking sector has been hugely affected due to sanctions.
2. Impose clear economic and political costs on Russia's political elite responsible for the invasion: This sanction is meant to target those who are oligarchs in Russia with close ties to the Vladimir Putin administration. Diminish Russia's base.
3. Another reason for the sanctions is so that the Russian base will become weaker in nature. The Russian-Ukrainian war has cost the world so much, and Ukraine has been devastated as a result of the war, with many lives lost and billions of dollars' worth of properties destroyed.

The ongoing war has seen abuses of human rights, with the Russian military being accused of war crimes due to their modus operandi in Ukraine. International law has been violated in the ongoing war. Gierczak (2020) opined that Russia is supported by a small minority of pro-Russian Ukrainians who identify as Russians. Russians and those who support them claim that they are attempting to defend them against potential discrimination that comes with being a minority. Russia also takes into account Ukraine's attempts to join the EU and NATO. Russia believes that it is fighting to defend its interests, and Ukraine is fighting to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to fully understand the international system and why Russia succeeded in declaring war on Ukraine with little or no provocation, the study adopts neo-realism as its framework of analysis. This theory emerged in the 1970s through an American political scientist named Kenneth Waltz and later through Mearsheimer. Waltz is the main proponent of this theory; he argued that most of the important components of international relations could be explained by looking at the actions of superpower countries and how the structure of the international system is anarchical and how it gives room for powerful countries to exploit nature and increase their power. Neorealism came into existence in an attempt to translate some of the key insights of classical realism into Britannica (n.d). The

theory is a reformulation of the classical realism tradition of Hans Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, George Kennan, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Neorealism is a departure from Hans Morgenthau's writing on what classical realism is all about. Neorealist thinkers believe that it is structural constraints and not strategy, motivation, or egoism that will determine behavior in international relations.

Building on what Kenneth Waltz in 1979 postulated, John Mearsheimer, another proponent of the theory, differentiated his version of offensive neorealism from Waltz's in the book he wrote called "The Tragic of Great Power Politics". This theory holds that the true nature of the international system and its structure are determined by its ordering principle, which is anarchy; the units of the system, which are states; and the distribution of capabilities, which are measured by the number of superpower countries within the international system. Only the last is considered to be an independent variable according to this theory with a change over time. Neorealism believes that the anarchical nature of the international structure is decentralized, which means that there is no former central authority as every sovereign state was formerly equal. According to Ozcelik (2018), Neorealism has the following basic tenets that make the theory different from classical realism, and these points serve as the main essence of the theory: The tenets include the following:

1. The contemporary world has an anarchical character; this means that the international system is anarchical in nature as there is no central authority and states work to increase their power in the system. This is in agreement with the tenets of classical realism.
2. States as sovereign units are the main actors in this system. This means that states being sovereign bodies serves as the main actors in the units as there cannot be international system without these states.
3. The distribution capabilities among units are of utmost importance in the international system. Functions are distributed among the units in the international system according to their capabilities.

The first two are constant while the third assumption is a variable.

Waltz (1979), in his explanation, identified the first two as "units" and the third as "structure". Waltz, in his explanation of structural realism, stated that a good theory in international politics must be systemic since the relations that exist between states affect various governments' behaviors towards one another, which is why structural realism consists of "structure" and "units" (Ozcelik, 2018). In the international system, neorealism believes that states seek their own interests and will not subordinate their interests to the interests of other states in the system. States do everything to ensure their survival, and after doing that, they try to pursue their own goals in the system.

Waltz (1979) opined that the behavior of some successful states is emulated by other states, such as the states that are victorious in war, and that the competition that exists in the international system makes states vigilantly ensure their security and survival through the best means possible, which is why some states form alliances while others increase their armaments levels. Furthermore, Waltz (1979) argued that the anarchical nature of the international system and the inability of states to rely on other states and even organizations prompt states to engage in "self-help" (Mearsheimer, 2001). Due to this, some states are forced to enrich themselves with certain weapons to be able to defend themselves since the international system is unpredictable as a result of its anarchical nature.

Furthermore, neorealists are skeptical of the ability of international organizations to act independently in the international system and facilitate cooperation between states, and this skepticism means that there is less trust in international organizations in the international system (Waltz, 1979). There are two types of structural realism, and both are led by two proponents of the theory.

Defensive realism

Waltz's neorealist views are called "defensive realism", while Mearsheimer's are called "offensive realism". Both branches agree that the structure of the system is what makes states compete in the international system, but defensive realism posits that most states concentrate on maintaining their security, while offensive realism believes that all states seek to gain as much power as possible in the international system, not necessarily because of their security but rather to increase their power (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Offensive realism

This aspect or branch of neorealism was developed by Mearsheimer in 2001, and according to him and other offensive neorealists, states maximize relative power for the fundamental reason of increasing regional hegemony. A classic example of this is Russia in eastern Europe (Mearsheimer, 2001). According to this branch, states in the international system do everything to increase their power, not for the purpose of security but to have control over weaker states in their region and possibly the globe. They do everything to accumulate more military power and threaten other states with it.

Application of Neorealism theory to the Russian-Ukraine war

This theory was adopted as a framework for analysis because it best explains the Russo-Ukrainian war. Offensive realism and defensive realism both explain the

war meticulously. On February 24, Russia unilaterally declared war on Ukraine, a country that had never provoked Russia with attacks. Neorealism believes that nations increase their power in order to show hegemony in their region, and in this case, that is what Russia did. Russia declared war on Ukraine because it is the hegemonistic power in eastern Europe, and while doing that, the international organizations that are supposed to stop such a war or intervene did nothing because Russia is a member of the security council. This further goes to show that the international system is anarchical, and that is why neorealism best explains the Russo-Ukrainian war. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report of 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has likely resulted in tens of thousands of deaths on the Russian and Ukrainian sides, and it is officially the largest refugee crisis since World War II. The estimated number of people who have been displaced from the Ukrainian side is close to 7 million. This further shows that the international system does not have a central authority, and states increase their power in the system either for their own defense or to increase their own power.

THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR

In a hegemonistic manner, Russia in the year 2021 started building up a large military presence very close to its border with Ukraine, with similar moves within Belarus, a close ally of Russia in the region. On February 24, 2022, in an obvious move that the whole world was aware of, Russian President Vladimir Putin persistently denied his intention to invade Ukraine and rather called for Ukraine to be barred from ever joining NATO, a military alliance that Putin has continued to be afraid of.

On the 24th of February, Russia officially sent up to 200,000 soldiers into Ukraine with no direct provocation to warrant such a deployment. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, thought he could sweep and take control of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in a matter of days and eventually remove the government of Ukraine, but that did not go as planned as Ukrainians have been very resilient and the need to defend the territorial integrity of the motherland has instigated them to defend Ukraine passionately (Kirby 2022). Furthermore, when Russia initially attacked Ukraine through the invasion, they were forced into a series of humiliating retreats in different parts of Ukraine. According to Kirby (2022), since Russia invaded Ukraine, Russia has lost more than half the territory seized when the invasion started, which means that things have not gone according to the plan of Vladimir Putin.

On February 24, the Russian president claimed in his broadcast to Russians that his goal was to "demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine". He claimed that his aim in the invasion was to protect those subjected to eight years of genocide and bullying by the Ukrainian government, a claim that did not add up as there was no evidence to

suggest that his claim was right. This narrative seems to have been formed by Russia and its proxy forces to justify the unwarranted and unprovoked invasion. Russian proxy forces seized parts of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in the east of Ukraine in 2014, and this move triggered war with the Ukrainian forces. This move was clearly engineered and sponsored by Russia (Kirby, 2022).

The entire world knows that the primary reason why Vladimir Putin decided to invade Ukraine was to stop it from joining NATO, but his invasion has further demonstrated the fact that Ukraine needs NATO for its protection because if Ukraine were a NATO member, Russia would not have dared to invade Ukraine. Furthermore, Kirby (2022) opined that right before the invasion, Ukraine reportedly agreed a provisional deal with Russia not to join the Western defensive alliance, an alliance that exists primarily for defensive purposes. Apparently, Russia does not want its neighbor to join NATO, as it fears that if this happens, it will encroach too closely on its territory. Ukrainian President Zelensky publicly accepted in March that his country would not join NATO, but this did not stop Russia from continuing its attacks on Kirby (2022).

Reaction of Western World

When Russia invaded Ukraine in an unprovoked and unjustified war, several western leaders condemned the invasion, warning Russia of heavy sanctions to come following the attack. The NATO secretary general reacted by saying that:

This is a deliberate, coldhearted, and long-planned invasion. "Russia is using force to try and rewrite history" (Morin and Lopez, 2022).

The president of the European Commission reacted to the invasion by stating unequivocally that:

It was President Putin who brought war back to Europe, and in these dark hours, the European Union and its people stand by Ukraine and its people. We are facing an unprecedented act of aggression by the Russian leadership against a sovereign, independent country. Russia's target is not only Donbas; the target is not only Ukraine; the target is stability in Europe and the whole of the international peace order. And we will hold President Putin accountable for that (Morin and Lopez, 2022).

How United States reacted

The United States reacted to the war by condemning the invasion and also heavily arming the Ukrainian military. While reacting to the invasion, United States President Joe

Table 1. US sanctions.

S/N	Sanctions
1	restrictions on transactions with Russia's central bank, limiting its ability to draw on dollar-dominated foreign reserves, as well as on transactions with Russia's Ministry of Finance and National Wealth Fund
2	A ban on the import to the United States of Russian oil and other energy products and suspension of normal trade relations with Russia and its ally, Belarus
3	Export controls targeting Russia's defense, aerospace, and maritime sectors; energy production; and a wide range commercial industrial operation

Source: Congregational Research Service (2022).

Table 2. US second phase of Sanctions on Ukraine prohibiting the following with Russia.

S/N	Sanctions
1	prohibition of new investment
2	prohibition of U.S. import of gold, diamonds, seafood and alcoholic beverages
3	export of U.S. luxury goods and dollar-dominated banknotes
4	the provision of accounting, trust and corporate formation, management consulting, and quantum computing services
5	secondary-market transactions by U.S. financial institutions in Russia sovereign debt
6	prohibition of entrance into U.S. airspace
7	prohibition of U.S. trade or investment in Russia-occupied regions of eastern Ukraine

Source: Congregational Research Service (2022).

Biden stated that:

A dictator bent on rebuilding an empire will never erase the people's love for liberty; Ukraine will never be a victory for Russia, for free people refuse to live in a world of hopelessness and darkness (Breuninger, 2022).

He made the statement above, and the United States became the number one country among all the countries slapping sanctions on Russia.

As explained by the Congregational Research Service (2022), Russia launched an attack on Ukraine, a country it once partially invaded in 2014. The US and many other countries vehemently condemned this illegal invasion by Russia, and on March 2, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly voted 141-5 to demand the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine (Congregational Research Service, 2022).

United States Sanctions

Before the invasion of 2022, the United States had previously imposed heavy sanctions on Russia due to its decision to partially invade part of Ukraine in 2014. Starting in December 2021, the United States and other countries had already warned Russia that any new attack on Ukrainian territory would warrant heavy sanctions against the country. Joe Biden, the president of the United States, and Congress have placed heavy sanctions on Russia

since February 2022. As noted by Congregational Research Service (2022), the United States has since then targeted Russian assets, international trade, specific individuals and entities, and broad economic sectors. These sanctions and related actions with regard to the invasion are listed in Tables 1 to 3.

The Table 1 shows sanctions placed by the United States on Russia, restricting transactions with the Russian central bank as well as preventing Russian oil from getting to the United States. In this phase of sanctions, the United States targeted the defense ministry of Russia as well as the maritime sector in a bid to limit and reduce Russia's finances.

The Table 2 shows the kinds of sanctions the United States has placed on Russia. In this phase of sanctions, according to a report released by the Congregational Research Service (2022), the U.S. prohibited new investment by US companies with any Russian entities or investments in Russia, and also, in this phase of sanctions, Russia was prohibited from entering the airspace of the United States and its territories. The United States also prohibited any form of investment in the occupied regions of eastern Ukraine.

The Table 3 shows various sanctions that have been initiated by the United States against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. The sanctions are against key Russian officials, including the president, key ministers, and key Russian organizations. These are heavy sanctions, and they were initiated by the U.S. to limit the funds that are financing Russia and its operations in Ukraine. These sanctions have in a big way limited Russian resources in its war against Ukraine.

Table 3. United States sanctions on targeted individuals and entities from Russia.

S/N	Sanctions
1	Russian president Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, members of the Russian Security Council and administration (including the minister of foreign affairs, finance minister, defense, and heads of the armed forces and central bank), and regional governors
2	Russia's legislature (the state Duma and Federation Council), the Central Election Commission, and their members
3	Seven of Russia's largest banks, including the largest two (Sberbank and VTB Bank), account for 80% of bank deposits.
4	State Development Bank VEB and the Russian Direct Investment Fund
5	Defense, industrial, and technology conglomerate Rostec
6	Alrosa, the world's largest diamond-mining company
7	Severstal and MMK, major steel producers
8	Skolkova, a prominent technology development park
9	Nord Stream 2 AG, the parent company for a Russian natural gas pipeline project to Europe
10	Dozens of Russia's Kremlin-connected business elite (many of whom are referred to as oligarchs), their family members, and business executives
11	Dozens of aerospace and defense-industrial firms, disinformation and propaganda operations, and sanctions evaders
12	Russia or proxy occupation officials

Source: Congregational Research Service (2022).

The Figure 1 shows the kind of weapons the United States has provided Ukraine with. The U.S. has armed Ukraine with various types of weapons, ranging from small and light weapons to heavy weapons. Tactical vehicles, drones, radars, armored vehicles, howitzers, helicopters, etc. have all been sent to Ukraine to aid them in the war against Russia, the invaders. The United States supported Ukraine more than any other country, with at least \$50 billion of support, with over \$20 billion coming in the form of military assistance.

International sanctions against Russia and support for Ukraine

The European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), other countries in Europe (including Norway and Switzerland), Canada, Japan, Australia, South Korea, New Zealand, and so many other countries responded to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine with sanctions of different kinds. Some of the sanctions are identical to those the U.S. imposed on Russia in 2022. The United States, together with the European Union, directed the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) and other specialized institutions and financial messaging services to stop serving 10 top Russian financial institutions. Furthermore, just days before Russia's attack, the German government suspended the certification of the infamous Nord Stream 2 pipeline (Congregational Research Service, 2022).

Furthermore, on December 5, 2022, the European Union banned most Russian oil from entering member states of the Union. The United States, European Union, Canada, Australia, UK, and Japan placed a global price cap of \$60 per barrel on any Russian oil, and this was done by

banning nationals from providing maritime transport and services for transportation above the agreed price (Congregational Research Service, 2022). Also, a task force was formed by the U.S. Justice Department and Treasury Department with counterparts' agencies internationally to create a Russian elite, oligarchs, and proxies tax force to enhance the enforcement of sanctions and take other measures to avoid evasion of sanctions.

Additionally, various U.S. and international companies have exited the Russian market since the war began, which has significantly affected the Russian economy. As a consequence, Russia has had to rely on Iran and other partners to get funds and arms.

The Figure 2 shows the countries that are arming Ukraine to aid them in the Russia-Ukrainian war. The countries arming Ukraine are from North America, Europe, and Australia. Countries in Africa and Asia are not arming or supporting Ukraine. This could be the result of their dependence on Russia for certain things. The countries arming Ukraine are Western countries and NATO members. The figure shows that Ukraine has received a huge amount of support internationally.

Reaction of United Nations (UN)

Apart from various condemnations by United Nations (UN) secretary general Antonio Guterres, his most notable comment in August was when he made the following comment regarding the war:

The war must end, and peace must be established, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law (Better World Campaign, 2022).

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

The weapons the US has provided to Ukraine

The US has committed at least \$54bn in aid for Ukraine, including at least \$20bn in military support.

This is what the US has committed to Ukraine so far:

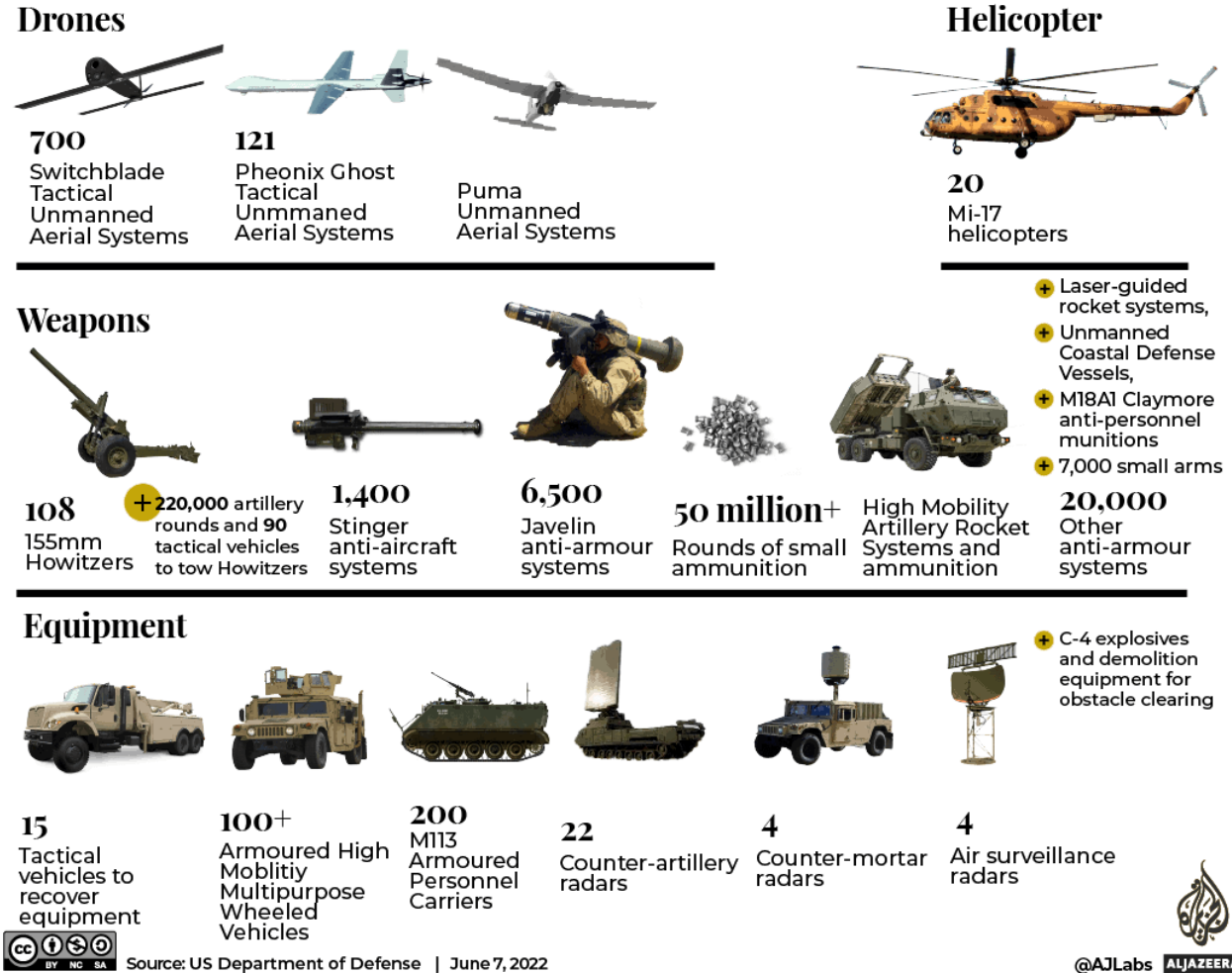


Figure 1. Weapons the U.S. has provided Ukraine (Source: US Department of Defense, cited in the Aljazeera report, 2022).

Since the war, the United Nations has initiated moves to assist Ukraine by cordoning humanitarian action across the entire UN system to ensure crisis-affected people receive the assistance needed and protection as well. According to the Better World Campaign (2022), the following United Nations bodies have assisted Ukraine:

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

This body is at the forefront of coordinating humanitarian

action in Ukraine by assisting displaced persons and others in need as a result of the crisis.

UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

According to the report, over a million people fled Ukraine just the week the war started, and this situation is regarded by many as Europe’s largest refugee crisis in the 21st century. This body has mobilized resources to assist refugees fleeing Ukraine as a result of the war.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Countries arming Ukraine

At least 28 countries have provided Ukraine with weapons since February 24, when Russian forces invaded the country.



Figure 2. Countries arming Ukraine (Source: Aljazeera, 2022).

World Food Program (WFP)

This body has launched an emergency operation to provide food assistance for Ukraine and its people due to the crisis.

UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

This body has been delivering life-saving sexual and reproductive health services and supplies to Ukraine while also working with neighboring countries to respond to the immediate sexual and reproductive health needs of refugees, including women and children.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

This body announced an emergency measure to protect journalists in Ukraine by providing them with personal protective equipment so as to continue to provide free-flowing information regarding the war.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

This body mobilized items and boosted capacity in Ukraine and neighboring countries to respond to the growing humanitarian needs of Ukrainians forced to flee Ukraine. The organization is screening and assessing potential short-term and longer-term vulnerabilities, including human trafficking, health, and vulnerable people with special needs, including sick and wounded people.

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

This body has done a lot to assist children that are under threat, and efforts have been made to provide them with healthcare, education, water, etc.

UN General Assembly

In an unusual move by the General Assembly, the UNG held an emergency session to overwhelmingly adopt a resolution demanding that Russia immediately end its illegal invasion and operation in Ukraine.

UN Security Council

This Council, which is in charge of world security, has failed miserably to perform its functions. First, Albania (a non-permanent member) and the United States (a permanent member) introduced a resolution in the Security Council condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The resolution cited an article of the UN by stating that "Russia's aggression is in violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations—an obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" (UN Press, 2022). After it was introduced, 11 of the Council's members voted in favour of the text, condemning the invasion, while countries that should have added their support to the resolution rather than abstaining ended up abstaining. The countries that abstained are China, India, and the United Arab Emirates. As expected, Russia vetoed the resolution, rendering the whole thing ineffective. China, being a permanent member, is a close ally Russia has in the Security Council, and that is due to the fact that they both share some economic and political ideals. Abstaining was not seen by many as a surprise.

China belongs to the same bloc as Russia, and as a result, they usually support each other in vetoing any resolution that is perceived to be against the interests of one of them. Abstaining during a critical vote like China did on February 25, 2022, was a way of looking neutral in the eyes of the entire world, as its representative stated after the vote that "he did not vote because the Council should react with extreme prudence, acting to put out the fire rather than stoking it". "Instead of serving as a base for powerful nations, Ukraine should serve as a link between the East and the West" (UN Press, 2022). For the remaining permanent members, like France and Britain, they supported the resolution. Britain and France belong to the same bloc as the US, and being countries that promote liberal ideals, they voted in its favour. Countries that voted in favour of the resolution condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine include the US, Britain, France, Albania, Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, Norway, and Kenya. Countries that abstained include India, China, and the United Arab Emirates.

UN Human Rights Council

The United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution agreeing to establish a commission to investigate violations committed during Russia's military attack. In the resolution that was adopted in Geneva, 32 countries voted in favour, which was initiated by Ukraine, while 13 countries abstained and Russia and Eritrea voted against it.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

This body is in charge of ensuring cooperation in the

nuclear field, and this body has been monitoring the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear power reactors while also providing on-the-ground technical assistance.

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

This body has tried to provide food for the vulnerable in Ukraine through the provision of agricultural inputs, cash, and access to critical markets.

The World Health Organization (WHO)

This body has been trying to provide medical support to those in need while also delivering specialized medical supplies. As much as the United Nations reacted by supporting displaced persons and refugees, the organization's Security Council has not reacted adequately to the war because of the veto power of Russia and also because of countries that abstain from voting instead of outrightly condemning Russia for blatant violations of human rights and the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAR

Since the war started, it has had a lot of implications for the international system. The war has had economic and political implications. The following are some of the implications the war has had on Ukraine and the rest of the world:

Food markets

The Russian-Ukraine war has affected world food security. Since the war was declared, the supply of food globally has become an issue. Food prices have increased because Ukraine is one of the largest producers of grains in the world. The war has caused a hike in the price of food all over the world. According to the Economics Observatory (2022), Ukraine is the world's largest producer of sunflower oil, and this supply has been affected. Also, Ukraine, together with Russia, is responsible for more than half of the entire global exports of vegetable oils. They are responsible for 36% of the world's total wheat. This food shortage is affecting developing and emerging countries that depend heavily on Ukraine and Russia for produce. The two countries are known as the "breakfast of Europe" (Economics Observatory, 2022).

Like the Figures 3 and 4 clearly demonstrate, it shows that whether war started or not, countries that rely on Ukraine and Russia for vegetable oil, sunflower oil, wheat,

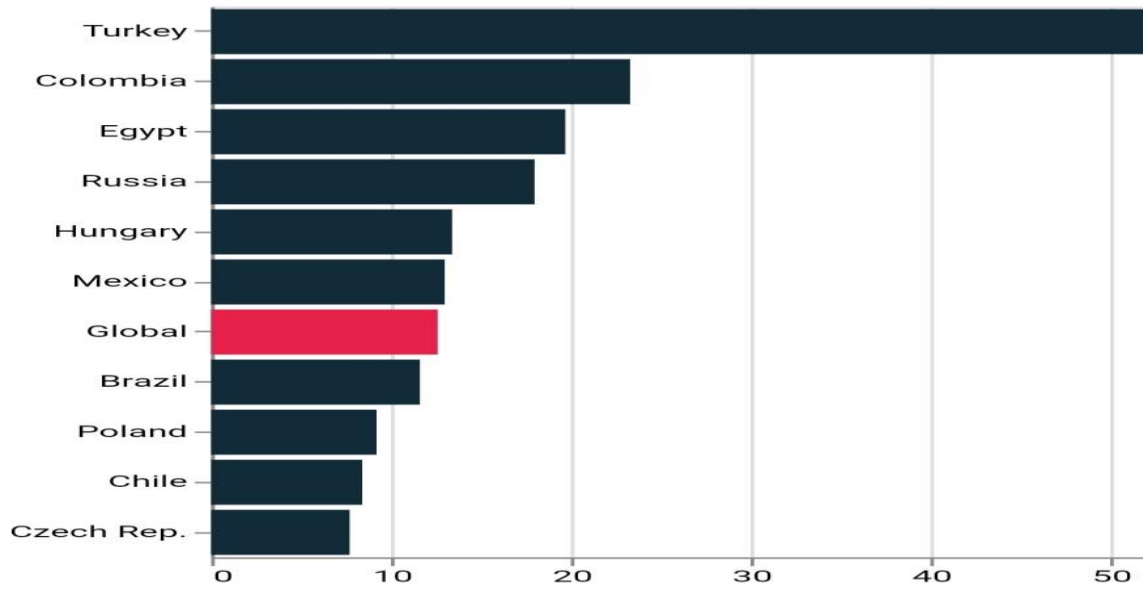


Figure 3. Developing emerging market economies with the highest food price inflation change between February and March 2022 (Source: Economics Observatory, 2022).

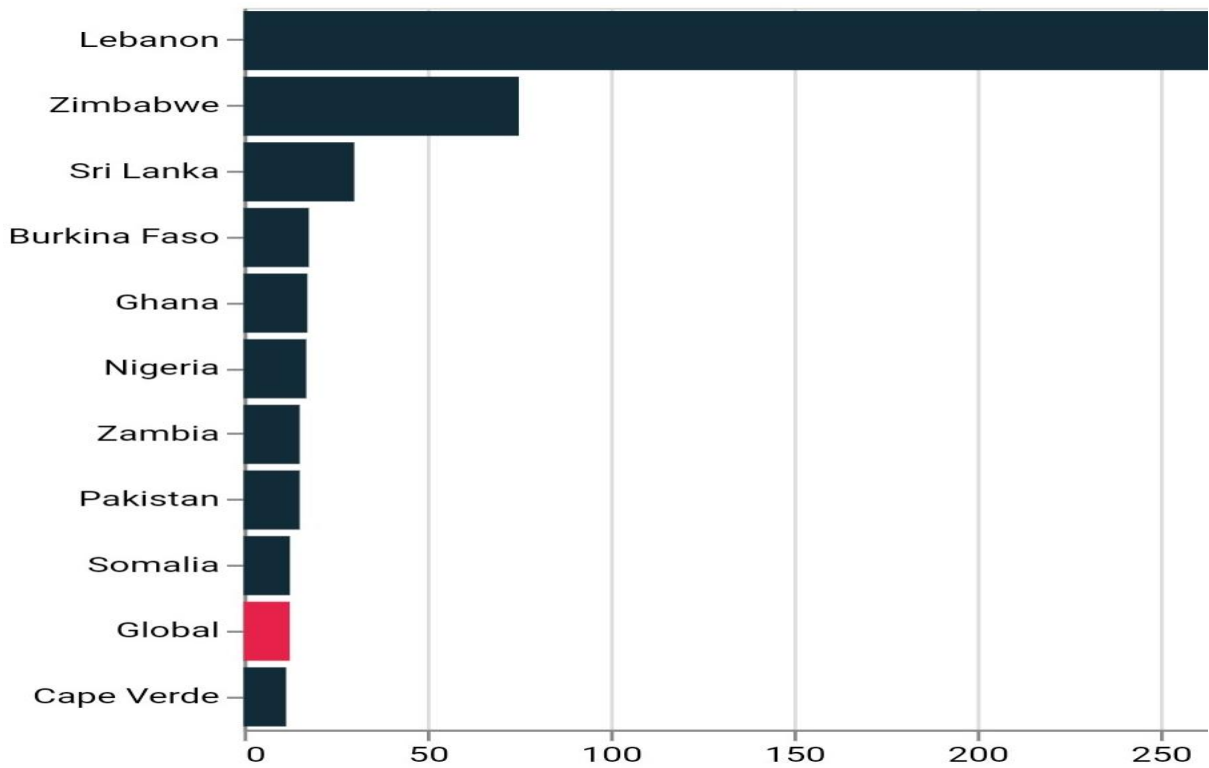


Figure 4. Developing emerging market economies with the highest food price inflation change between February and March 2022 (Source: Economics Observatory, 2022).

etc. have been badly affected, and they are mostly developing markets. The Economics Observatory (2022) and the World Bank estimate that poor households in sub-

Saharan Africa spend about 75% of their total income on food, compared to 10.8% for the average household in the UK in the year 2019.

The destruction of the Ukrainian economy

Many months of relentless attacks on Ukraine via missiles and drone attacks have in a very large way decimated Ukraine's critical infrastructure. Before the relentless strikes, Ukraine was expected to need at least \$55 billion in foreign aid to meet basic expenses, which is by far more than the country's entire annual spending (Stein and Stern, 2022). Furthermore, the European Union and the United States have agreed to send \$30 billion to Ukraine in 2023, though not all of it has been approved. According to the Stein and Stern (2022), some of the aid promised to Ukraine in 2022 slowly materialized, and this forced the country to print money and devalue its currency just to ensure its economy remained competitive in the global market. This move has contributed to a spike in inflation of more than 20%.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Russia-Ukraine war is a war between two countries that were once in the Soviet Socialist Republic. These two countries are the biggest in the eastern part of Europe, and between the two bitter neighbors, Russia is the most powerful country there. Since the structure of the international system is anarchical, powerful nations like Russia are exploiting that, and Russia did it by unjustly invading Ukraine with no direct confrontation. The nature of the international system allows powerful countries to take such action with no control.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine further shows that the structure of the international system is weak and that the structure that exists is not strong enough to stop powerful countries from unjustly attacking the smaller nations, which further buttresses the need for the smaller nations to arm themselves so that they can defend their territorial integrity when such attacks happen by the powerful nations. Also, it is palpable that the war has become a proxy war between Russia and NATO, with NATO arming Ukraine heavily to fight Russia, which is the invader. The war could have been prevented if the UN was well structured, but because Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the body has not been able to do anything to prevent this war. It is evident that Ukraine has every right to defend its territorial integrity, and it is evident that the UN needs to be reformed.

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. There is a need for Western countries to arm Ukraine more. Western countries have been arming Ukraine, and it is palpable that Ukraine is gaining momentum in the ongoing war because of this, but more needs to be done in order for Ukraine to become offensive instead of defensive. Leopard tanks and other needed weapons should be given to Ukraine.
2. Formation of a global front as a way to react with one voice in condemning Russia. Countries need to pile pressure on Russia with condemnation and sanctions as a way to discourage Russia from doing what it is doing.
3. The United Nations needs to be reformed, as the security council makes it difficult for the UN to intervene when unprovoked attacks are mounted against nations by a superior country. The veto power issue should be looked into, and perhaps a 2/3 majority system can be deployed as a way of making the body more efficient.
4. The Russians need to realize that the war does not do the Russian economy any good, and as a result, they need to mount pressure on their president to stop the war and negotiate. The Ukrainian government should also try to dialogue with its Russian counterpart.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

REFERENCES

- AJazeera (2022, June 8). Weapons to Ukraine: Which countries have sent what? Explainer News. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com>.
- Aljazeera (2017, February 5). Ukraine: Who controls what. Maps News | Al Jazeera. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com>.
- Better World Campaign (2023, March 14). Crisis in Ukraine - Better World campaign. Retrieved from <https://betterworldcampaign.org/other-issues/ukraine-united-nations-response>.
- Breuninger, K. (2022, March 27). Biden says Putin "cannot remain in power" in sweeping speech on Russian invasion of Ukraine. CNBC. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/26/biden-says-putin-cannot-remain-in-power-in-sweeping-speech-on-russian-invasion-of-ukraine.html?&qsearchterm=Biden%20says%20Putin%20%E2%80%9Ccannot%20remain%20in%20power%E2%80%9D%20in%20sweeping%20speech%20on%20Russian%20invasion%20of%20Ukraine>.
- Britannica (n.d). *Realism: Definition, theories, examples, problems, & facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/realism-political-and-social-science>.
- Congregational Research Service (2022). *Russia's war against Ukraine: Overview of U.S. sanctions and other responses*. Retrieved from <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11869>.
- Economics Observatory (2022). How is the war in Ukraine affecting global food prices? Retrieved from <https://www.economicsobservatory.com/how-is-the-war-in-ukraine-affecting-global-food-prices>.
- European Commission (2023). EU Solidarity with Ukraine: EU sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. European Commission Report. Retrieved from https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-sanctions-against-russia-following-invasion-ukraine_en
- Gierczak, B. (2020). The Russo-Ukrainian conflict. *Research Gate*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/>

- publication/349948624_The_Russo-Ukrainian_Conflict.
- Kirby, B. P. (2023, February 24). Has Putin's war failed and what does Russia want from Ukraine? *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Retrieved from <https://samuelbhfauredotcom.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/s2-mearsheimer-2001.pdf>.
- Morin, R., & Lopez, L. (2022, February 24.). The world will hold Russia accountable: Leaders react to 'horrific events' in Ukraine. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/02/23/reactions-russia-invasion-ukraine/6919358001/>
- Özçelik, S. (2018). The cold war re-visited: explaining and understanding of the end of the cold war in light of neo-realism. *Milletlerarası Münasebetler Türk Yıllığı*, 49(0), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1501/intrel_0000000315
- Stein, J., & Stern, D. L. (2022, December 16). Russia is destroying Ukraine's economy, raising costs for U.S. and allies. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/12/15/ukraine-economy-russia-war-crisis/>
- UN Press (2022, February 25). Security Council fails to adopt draft resolution on ending Ukraine crisis, as Russian federation wields veto. UN Press Report. Retrieved from <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14808.doc.htm>.
- UNHCR (n.d.). *Ukraine refugee situation*. Retrieved from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>
- USCRI. (2023c). Fulfilling a responsibility to protect: USCRI welcomes Ukraine TPS redesignation. USCRI. Retrieved from <https://refugees.org/fulfilling-a-responsibility-to-protect-uscri-welcomes-ukraine-tps-redesignation/>
- Waltz (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Retrieved from https://adambrown.info/p/notes/waltz_theory_of_international_politics.