



Foreign Policy-making, Immorality, Public Opinion, Russia-Ukraine War and a Looming 3rd World War: Challenges, Prospects and Stakes for International Relations and Human Security

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ABSTRACT

The Russia-Ukraine war would hardly shirk the philosophy that, historically, wars are created and fought but hardly have they ended without meaningful, multilateral and multifaceted diplomatic shuttling in roundtable conferences and dialogues between belligerents and their sympathisers. Usually, the aftermaths are the unavoidable humiliation or gallantry gives and takes in irreparable damages of human and material resources. In the Russia-Ukraine war, given the politics, amorality and public opinion orchestrated by Western media with incessant calls for NATO to declare a No Fly Zone over Ukraine, and informed by the Rational Actor Model, which assumes that, the main actor in foreign policymaking is a rational individual or group of individuals, who can make informed, calculated decisions that maximise value and perceived benefits to the state, (Allison, 1971, Zerbe 2021), and using the historical research methodology, this paper examines the challenges, prospects and stakes for international relations and humanity, in terms of the global insecurity intrinsic in the Russian-Ukraine War. Consequently, it advocates the international community's refraining and dissuasion of escalation of a looming 3rd World War.

Keywords: Foreign Policy-Making, Immorality, Public Opinion, Russia-Ukraine, War, International Relations, Humanity

INTRODUCTION – THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: ITS THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SETTINGS

In this paper, I argue that, the Russia-Ukraine war, might metamorphose into a 3rd World War. This thesis is contingent upon the ostensible objective or subjective mindsets of its actors in this conflict. Given this hypothesis, I disparage a 3rd World War scenario, especially in this era, which is inundated with unbridled and reckless accretion of nuclear weapons, even by reclusive states, all of which operate within the international political, economic, social and cultural-psychological landscapes. Essentially, this war, like most wars, is fought in defence of objective or subjective national interests, whatever such national interests mean (Walzer 1977, Zerbe 2021).

As Walzer, (1977:78) notes, “For as long as men and women have talked about war, they have talked about it in terms of interests, in right or wrong – objective or subjective perspectives.” But, when people consider as important, what they always attach to warfare, it is astonishing to note how little empirical research has focused on the moral or immoral justifications for wars; even as most people justify their militaristic actions to what they call, ‘the defence of their national interests’. As Ojo and Sesay, (1988) Mink (2013) observe, national interest is perhaps one of the most contentious and elusive concept in international relations. This elusiveness can be explained by several factors, which are very vital in the gamut of literature in international relations.

First, the concept has been, and continues to be the subject of various interpretations and misinterpretations by scholars and practitioners alike. Second, and closely related to the first point, is the blatant abuse of the concept, particularly by politicians and decision makers world over. Third, the concept is not easily susceptible to analysis, given its multifaceted views. Fourthly, and closely related to third factor, is that, there is as yet no universally acceptable single definition of what constitutes the national interest of a state. Thus, as some cynics argue, there is nothing as the national interest of the state; and that, what might be called the national interest is nothing more or less fluid; as it represents just what policy makers – the ruling elites, at any given time say it is.

Ultimately, this can mean policymakers’ personal politico-economic and socio-cultural desires within the state. Thus, given their control of; and grip over state power, these personal desires could be projected as national interest. Consequently, as Ulrich (2022), notes, “Russia fights to defend what it calls its ‘national security’ as perceived from what it calls, ‘NATO’s or West’s expansionism; while Ukraine and NATO fight to defend their interest in what they call ‘freedom and democracy’”. Certainly, these appear fluid, because, what could mean national security for Russia’s Putin could actually mean his personal security and survival. Equally, what could mean democracy and freedom to Ukraine’s Zelensky and NATO could also mean something else – the eclipsing of perceived communist expansion. In the later, democracy being a powerful cajoling and intoxicating concept to the masses; leaders constantly dangle it in order to hang onto political power for their personal gains. So, although what Putin and Zelensky declare as their national interests appears fluid, these actually represent their national interests in this war; moral or immoral, whatever it is. But some questions arise, namely: How objective are Russia’s and Ukraine/NATO’s sets of national interests, which have no regard for any moral considerations – safeguarding human and material lives? Does this respond to Machiavelli’s mantra of ‘no morality in politics’?

Nonetheless, as Adeniran (1983) opines, “when statesmen and bureaucrats are expected or are required to act in defence of their national interests, what is meant is that, they are being called upon to take action on issues that would improve on the general political situation, the economic and social well-being, the health and culture of the people; and not their personal political survival.” On his part, Frankel (1973) argues that, national interest can be viewed from three analytical perspectives; namely: (i) the aspirational (ii) the operational, and, (iii) the polemic. Accordingly, the aspirational refers to the vision of the good life, to some ideal set of goals, which the state would like to realise if this were possible. On the operational, he refers to “...the sum total of interests and policies actually pursued.” While the polemic refers to “...the

use of the concept in political arguments in real life, to explain, evaluate, and rationalise or criticise international behaviours of statesmen and women”.

Still as Holsti (1967), Hartman (1967) and Rosenau, (1971), believe, when people sometimes say or ask that a state's policy should reflect the national interest, what they have in mind essentially is that, they desire to see the makers of national policies rise above their contracted, bigoted and self-seeking political, economic, social and cultural rewards translated as national interest; and to focus on all parts of the nation as more inclusive tenets of national interest. Given the foregoing, wherein does Russia, Ukraine, NATO and their sympathisers fall? Hereto, Russia talks of its national interest to mean its national security arising from the threat orchestrated by NATO's expansionism, Ukraine and NATO talk of protecting its freedom and democracy. As this argument ranges, the aftermath might lead to total irreconcilability, with an eventual 3rd World War. Here lies this paper's worry.

Nonetheless, the main marker that helps political realism find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. This concept seems to provide the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood. It sets politics as an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres, such as economics (understood in terms of interest defined as wealth), ethics, aesthetics, or religion. Without such a concept, a theory of politics, international or domestic, would altogether be impossible, for without it, we could not distinguish between political and non-political facts, nor could we bring at least a measure of systematic order to the political sphere. We assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out. That assumption allows us to retrace and anticipate, as it were, the steps, which a statesman - past, present, or future has taken or will take on the political scene. Thinking in terms of interest defined as power, we think as he does, and as disinterested observers, we understand his thoughts and actions perhaps better than he - the actor on the political scene.

Off-course, as Morgenthau (1948) opines, “...the concept of national interest defined as state power, attempts to impose a high degree of intellectual discipline upon the observer, as it infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible. On the side of the actor, it provides for rational discipline in action and creates that astounding continuity in foreign policy which makes American, British, or Russian foreign policy appear as an intelligible, rational continuum, by and large consistent within itself, regardless of the different motives, preferences, and intellectual and moral qualities of successive statesmen.” Thus, a realist theory of international politics, then, will guard against two popular fallacies: the concern with motives and the concern with ideological preferences, which though, must not erode the moral considerations for war.

Given that, the Russia-Ukraine war is apt to metamorphose into a 3rd World War, with devastating global insecurity, the central purpose of this paper is to dissuade such an occurrence. It seeks to examine and provide theoretical and empirical evidence to the challenges and prospects; specifically as these concern the significance of morality in the conduct of international relations, particularly as Russia, Ukraine, the US and its NATO allies, engage into politics and foreign policies within the framework of rational actor model. Also, this paper is mounted to bridge the existing gap on the moral or immoral justifications for wars,

beyond the justification based on 'national interests'. It infers that, any failure for the protagonists and the international community to dissuade escalating this war, the aftermath would be the eruption of a 3rd World War. Certainly, no right-thinking person would encourage a 3rd World War in this nuclear age. However, in the practice of international relations, which aims to achieve national interests, the formulation and implementation of foreign policies are not just rational scientific processes devoid of pungent politics and immorality, with less attention to domestic politico-economic and socio-cultural inputs.

Rather, these are processes that are more political, and in some cases disjointed and amoral, than they are scientific or rational. This, essentially arises as it does, from the combination of internal and external politico-economic and socio-cultural dynamics (Allison 1971:67, Zerbe, 2021:23). Thus, it becomes compelling and important to discern the impracticability of disentangling foreign policymaking and implementation from domestic bureaucratic apparatuses, because it is this combination that gives rise to the challenges and prospects inherent in shaping international relations, and specifically foreign policymaking, whose goal is the pursuit of national interests (Asobie 2002, Whitkolf 2010, MacFarlane, 2020).

Thus, when scholars talk about foreign policymaking, they do not in terms of the single unit process of individuals, who form decisions on themselves, nor do they do so in a vacuum, without any institutionalised specialists' setting. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that, some foreign policymaking processes are sometimes the outcomes of dictatorial mindsets of politico-economic mentalities of egoistic rulers; especially in emerging African and Eastern European states (Mink 2013:45, Zerbe 2021:36). As a result, for sound foreign policy decisions to emerge, there is need for local apparatuses which enable the decision-making processes evolve in decorum. Definitely, foreign policies cannot be formulated and implemented without functional local bureaucracies; thus, the bureaucracy is essential to modernity, as modern societies cannot function without bureaucracies (Kurtz 1988, Maxwell 1990). So, essentially, it is the character of foreign policies, backed by the character of domestic politico-economic and socio-cultural dynamics that persist or desist wars. This is aptly true of the Russia-Ukraine war, or better still Russia-NATO war, with Ukraine acting as a proxy.

Conversely, the Russian-Ukraine war would hardly shirk the philosophy that, historically, wars have easily been created and fought, but historically too, these wars have hardly ended without meaningful, multilateral and multifaceted diplomatic shuttling in roundtable conferences and dialogues; between the belligerents and their sympathisers. From this, the aftermaths are the unavoidable humiliation or gallantry gives and takes; in colossally irreparable damages of human and material resources, with devastatingly traumatised societies (Hoffman 2009, Steiner 2011). Given the character of politics, immorality and public opinion arising from Western media and informed by the Rational Actor Model, which is the most widely used foreign policy analytical tool – the RAM assumes that, the main actor in foreign policymaking is a rational individual or group of individuals who can make informed, calculated decisions that maximise value and perceived benefits to the state, (Allison, 1971, Zerbe 2021). Cuing from this premise, this paper examines the challenges and prospects that encumber the conduct of international relations, especially its application of the rational actor model in the dimensions of global insecurity intrinsic in Western nations' public opinion, their foreign policymaking and moral considerations, radiated through the Russian-Ukraine War. Accordingly, it cautions and

advocates the dissuasion of a 3rd World War scenario, which looms with the incessant calls for a No Fly Zone over Ukraine.

The Methodological Setting of the Research

Our methodological setting is fixed on what people perceive about wars and the insufficient research on this perception, particularly the associated immorality, which wars breed from specific strands of foreign policymaking. Using the rational actor model in foreign policymaking as our tool of analysis in conjunction with the historical research method, with its avalanche of primary and secondary sources of data and research tools - sampling, questionnaire, direct and indirect interviews, content analysis, archival materials, and so on; we shall attempt showing that, wars are anathemas to mankind, and that, foreign policymaking and implementation are frequently non-scientific and morally bankrupt. Further, we shall show that, in most part, the feedbacks which foreign policymakers obtain from the implementers or the 'street level bureaucrats' are also not scientific (Lipsky 1980, Lester 1990, Quentin 2013). Moreover, I stress like Burken (1998), Parson (1990), that such punch-line politicking, amorality and mostly irrational foreign policymaking and their outcomes are functions of undemocratic domestic bureaucratic politics, which unwittingly produce severe irreversible human and material loss on large scales.

Politics, Wars and Morality: An Overview of Niccolo Machiavelli's Moral Philosophy

Cuing from a historical perspective, Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) opines that, "...there is no morality in politics" (Lamas 2017). An avid bookworm, Machiavelli stripped out the ideals of empathy in politics – foreign policymaking and implementation, as he drew instances from historical precedents. He believed that anyone who controls political power and ignores reality in a misguided attempt to live up to certain ideals, especially that of preserving human lives and materials of internal or external opponents will quickly destroy himself in the arena of politics. Consequently, Machiavelli de-emphasised the importance of moral considerations, and focused instead on narrow effectiveness in ruler-ship. Thus, the maxim that, "the end justifies the means" encapsulates this political and moral thought, and by this adjective, Machiavellian means total lack of scruples, (Lamas 2017:34, Aaron 2019, O'Neil 2020). As Steiner (2011) states, "Machiavelli believed that, public and private morality had to be understood as two different things in order to rule well within a given state. So, a ruler must be anxious not only with his repute, but also to act unscrupulously at the right times," whatever the right times represents. Consequently, this thinking has given rise to the popular conception that Machiavelli's political methods are amoral, evil, irrational and pragmatic, thus, characterising him as someone with great subtleness, unscrupulousness, cunning, deceptive, expedient, or dishonest in the game of politics.

Yet, according to Riker (1986), "Machiavelli's moral precepts are rooted in his conception of human agency as 'bounded' and 'responsible'; as he posits that human nature generates a capacity for choices and actions that permit him to overcome threatening external forces, which bring fortune or misfortune, in order to realise tangible or intangible moral or immoral objectives. Apparently, in continuance of this philosophy, or out of sheer acquisition and maintenance in self-aggrandisement in the ruling process, most political leaders have over the centuries; engaged into politics and wars with less mindfulness to the consequences of human and material devastations, thus, giving the fake credence that, morality should be devoid in politics. As Lefort (1972) posits, "The idea of a Machiavellian politics implies that it is indeed

possible to acquire a mastery over ends, over the choice of the means to achieve those ends, and even a mastery of one's own self. Yet, as Lefort shows, it is just the impossibility of such a mastery that is the principle of Machiavelli's political thought.

However, Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) succinctly provides a different political thinking in this domain, as he elucidates the superiority to preserve human life over all other considerations. According to Nnoli (1981), Ake, (1981) Marx argues that, the acquisition and use of state power in politics should transcend the negation of human and material lives opining that man's life and material wellbeing should co-habit exhilaratingly. For Marx, man must endow himself with honesty, diligence and commonness in the management of public affairs, stressing that, the public good must not be regarded as private good no matter the materialist temptations. Marx, in his social, political, and economic theory focuses on the struggle between capitalists and the working class, insisting that, it is an aberration that one group of mankind (the capitalists) must live to subjugate, exploit and imperialise on the other group (the worker). He wrote and abhorred the power relationships that exist between capitalists and workers as inherently exploitative. Thus, Marx viewed such relationship as akin to the inevitability of creating class conflict and outright wars. So, Marx invariably advocates for morality in politics, economics, social and human relations.

Consequently, irrespective of the Machiavellian age-old philosophy in politics, this paper like Marx, advocates morally oriented and precautionary public and foreign policies, which produce the character of politicking and public opinion geared towards the preservation of human and material lives. It is this direction that, the paper formulates its theoretical setting that, in order to unambiguously stem the ugly tide of a 3rd World War scenario, arising from the 24th February 2022 Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the character of politics and public opinion ensuing from the Russian and Western media must guard against escalating rather de-escalating this war. All political and military circles must be guided by morality so as to shun the looming 3rd World War scenario. Given this thesis, there are corpulent challenges and prospects in international relations for creating relationships that enhance global peace, stability and happiness rather global human and material ruin through a nuclear war.

Currently, the character of politicking and public opinion incubated and churned by Western media outfits in the form of inducing the United States of America to accept the Ukrainian President Zelensky's call for the US and its NATO allies to declare a No-Fly-Zone over Ukraine is predictably disastrous towards global human and material security. Certainly, this would be a dangerous declaration if embraced by the US and its NATO allies, even in their covert show of support for Ukraine against Russia. The US and its NATO allies fully understand the implications of any overly military support to Ukraine - their baby political sweetheart, whose envisaged admission into NATO is the bane that provokes Russia's trepidations and aggressiveness.

Evidently, Ukraine appears engaged into a proxy war with Russia – a war which actually pits the US and NATO against Russia. But, the US and NATO rather than directly confront Russia to realise their expansionism epitomised by propelling Ukraine into seeking NATO membership, a membership considered by Russia as a severe threat to its national security, appear to indirectly wage war against Russia through Ukraine, with the predictable consequences of a 3rd World War. But as (Ulrich 2022, Reiner 2022) observe, Russia's action against Ukraine has far-reaching historical anecdotes, incarnated by the US. The United States invasion of

Grenada began at dawn on 25 October 1983. In this, the U.S. and a coalition of six Caribbean nations invaded the island Nation of Grenada, 100 miles (160 km) north of Venezuela. Codenamed Operation Urgent Fury by the U.S. military, it resulted in a US military occupation of Grenada within a few days.

President Ronald Reagan, citing the threat posed to American nationals on the Caribbean Nation of Grenada by the then Grenada's Marxist regime, ordered U.S. forces to invade and secure the safety of the 1000 US citizens on the tiny island. These approximately 1,000 Americans in Grenada at the time were mainly students at the island's medical school. In little more than a week, Grenada's government was overthrown. Obviously, wars are not new to mankind, even with the rise of modern international state system, which arose from the Westphalia Peace Treaty concluded in 1648 in Münster, Germany, which ended the Thirty Years' War. This war which was started by an anti-Habsburg revolt in Bohemia in 1618; but that became an entanglement of different conflicts concerning the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire, religion, and the state system in Europe spread too fast.

A Historical Nexus between the Thirty Years War and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine: An Overview

Paradoxically, the Thirty Years War, whose roots stem from man's historical egoism and proclivity for highly esteemed political, economic and social status, created the absolute character of the modern state in international law, ascribing it with four distinct characteristics, namely: a government, a population, a territory and sovereignty (Nnoli 1981:53). This characterisation of the state, though limited and questionable in several respects, actually became the turning point in human history; and the legal and political cornerstone in the conduct of international relations and politics (Nnoli 1981:56, Cohen 1989, Osagifo 2021), which extensively shaped the present global state system and the conduct of international relations, including the emergence of the realist theory (Morgenthau 1948, Williams 1990, Chebbs 2019). Although the conditions that created the Thirty Years War erupted some years earlier, the war is conventionally held to have begun in 1618, when the future Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, in his role as king of Bohemia, attempted to impose Roman Catholic absolutism upon his domains, and the Protestant nobles of both Bohemia and Austria rose up in rebellion. Although Ferdinand won after a five-year struggle, (Williams 1990:41, Chebbs, 2019:67), he enacted precedence, now being reproduced by Russia's trepidations of Ukraine, its closest neighbour being dragged as a NATO member Russia's doorsteps, given that NATO is a traditional ideological opponent or better still enemy to Russia, even if communist has been set aside.

Evidently what Ferdinand did in 1618, is repeating itself in the year 2022; that is centuries-old scenario, which simmers in the current Russian-Ukrainian entanglement. Russia's apprehension that, should Ukraine become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, (NATO), the threat of Western Europe and the US against Russia's security and its very existence will not only be latent but manifest. By this, Russia's real or imaginary trepidation is that, its ambition to be counted and recognised not only as a major global actor, but a decider of rights and privileges at the world state will be weakened and perhaps completely eroded. Given this, Russia rightly or wrongly took up arms to stop the US and NATO's affront against it via a proxy Ukraine (Beltis, 2022, Yeti 2022, Razzes 2022). As Machiavelli notes, whether Russia's fears are founded or unfounded is irrelevant in the application of morality in politics.

Thus, as precedence for Russia, in 1625 King Christian IV of Denmark saw an opportunity to gain valuable territory in Germany in order to balance his earlier territorial loss of Baltic provinces to Sweden, so the King went to war. Accordingly, Christian's defeat and the Peace of Lübeck in 1629 finished Denmark as a European power, but Sweden's Gustav II Adolf, having ended a four-year war with Poland, invaded Germany and induced many German Princes to his anti-Roman Catholic, anti-imperial cause.

Nevertheless, the conflict widened, fueled by political ambitions of the various powers. Poland, having been drawn in as a Baltic power coveted by Sweden, pushed its own ambitions by attacking Russia and establishing a dictatorship in Moscow under Wladyslaw, Poland's future king. The Russo-Polish Peace of Polyvanov in 1634 ended Poland's claim to the Tsarist throne but freed Poland to resume hostilities against its Baltic archenemy, Sweden, which was now deeply embroiled in Germany. Thus, in the heartland of Europe, three denominations vied for dominance: the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheranism, and Calvinism (Chester, 2017, Genghis 2018).

This resulted in a Gordian tangle of alliances as Princes and Prelates called in foreign powers to aid them. Overall, the struggle was between the Holy Roman Empire, which was Roman Catholic and Habsburg, and a network of Protestant towns and principalities that relied on the chief anti-Catholic powers of Sweden and the United Netherlands, which had at last thrown off the yoke of Spain after a struggle lasting 80 years (Okoye 1988, Adele 1990). Similarly, a parallel struggle involved the rivalry of France with the Habsburgs of the empire and with the Habsburgs of Spain, who had been attempting to construct a cordon of anti-French alliances (Chester 2017:56, Genghis 2018:87, Teddis 2020). Thus, in 2022, Russia might not be wrong in protecting its very existence against the attempted installation of a NATO member in the doorsteps of Russia.

Ironically, this egoistic historical proclivity is further exacerbated by the niceties that usually accompany high political offices, which also spur the inordinate or ordinate seeking and eventual acquisition of political power by political leaders of competing states, who assiduously purport to act and rule in the name of national interests, (Ojo and Sassey 1996:67, Asobie 2002, 2019). In framing the conduct of international relations, incarnated by states' foreign policies, contending theoretical perspectives arise, one of which is realism. Realism, also known as political realism, is a view of international politics, which stresses its competitive and conflictual side. Actually, it is this competitive and conflictual character of realism that renders the international state system, in its constant tensions with ensuing absence of morality and gratuitous aberration towards global human security (Jackson 2008, Bunck et al 1996).

Consequently, the negative side of the realists – the emphasis on power and self-interest is often its skepticism regarding the relevance of ethical norms to relations among states. In this sense, national politics is the realm of authority and law, whereas international politics, realists claim, is a sphere without justice, characterised by active or potential conflict among states. Of-course, realists consider the states as the principal actors in the international arena, mostly concerned with their security, which act in pursuit of their own national interests, struggle for power and hegemony. However, realism contrasts with idealism or liberalism, as the later rather emphasis cooperation amongst states.

Thus, according to Crozier and Friedberg, (1992:21):

“It is commonplace to have situations international relations in the conduct of multilateralism, where an actor, who may be an individual, organisation or nations, with strong, sometimes imaginably inelastic capabilities for devising personal or group strategy or strategiesto act autonomously in order to achieve certain reasonable or unreasonable, goals in the international political, economic, social, psychological or cultural system and environment.”

Ostensibly, this seemingly awkward theory is backed by another seemingly awkward theory, (Bernie 2011 Sealskin 2013), which Rodee et al, (1963) calls, “Might is Right.” Certainly, might is right, because, in the insinuations that accompany the rational actor theory, the actor overly perceives himself as having unprecedentedly inelastic capabilities for overpowering any adversary. So, his imaginations become enormous and boundless to undo the real or imagined capabilities of his adversary (Jackson & Sorensen 1999, Nye 2007, Combos, 2010, Rankin 2015). Of particular importance for this paper, and its quest for framing challenges and prospects for international relations, and human security, foreign policy makers must constantly be mindful that, there are transnational actors that wield considerable influence in politics, economic, social and cultural and even psychological lives across national borders, such as states, non-state actors, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), multinational corporations (MNCs), archeologies actors, terrorist rebels, criminal actors, and diasporas and ethnic actors.

Thus, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, although not the first of its kind, (because, the US has done so on several occasions – Grenada, 1983, Iraq 1991) has had global considerable influence in terms how states must think in ascending to membership of international organisations. For instance, Cameroon under Ahmadou Ahidjo, refused becoming a member of ECOWAS for fear that, Nigeria with its growing economy would set the pace for member countries – (Ahidjo); hence Cameroon preferred being a member and a leading one; in that matter, in the CEMAC – the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, (Jess 2016, Richardson, 2016, Kitschy 2019).

Theoretical Framework of Analysis: Rational Actor Model, Russia’s Ukraine Invasion and Morality in Foreign Policymaking and Implementation

Thus, the rational actor model, which is this paper’s theoretical framework for analysis is an approach in international relations, which was ostensibly developed by Adam Smith in economics for solving economic issues (Jerker, 1999, Cooker 2002); and catapulted into political science (Rattier 2003, Hogan 2005). It now appears to be the most widely cited foreign policy analysis approach otherwise simply referred to as, the rational actor model, (Allison 1971, Dye 1984). There are four main steps in the rational actor’s decision-making process: (i) identify the problem, (ii) define desired outcomes, (iii) evaluate the consequences of potential policy choices, and (iv) make the most rational decision to maximise beneficial outcomes. This approach assumes that the main actor in foreign policy is a rational individual who can be relied upon to make informed, calculated decisions that maximise the value(s) and perceived benefit(s) to the state(s), organisation(s) or individual(s).

Invariably, the rational actor model falls within the broad three most prominent schools of thought in international relations, namely: realism, liberalism and constructivism. The modern study of international relations, as theory, has sometimes been traced to realist works such as

E. H. Carr's The Twenty Years' Crisis (1939) and Hans Joachim Morgenthau's Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (1948). So, within these three schools of thought is found some models of analysis of international relations, one of which is the international or systematic level of analysis which argues that, foreign policy-making can be understood without even looking at the internal characteristics of nations or individuals. Rather, characteristics of the international system lead nations to behave in particular ways based upon how much power they believe to hold, what Rodee et al. (1963:22) call "Might is Right".

International relations, is inherently complex, both in practice and as an academic discipline. Since the publication of Kenneth Waltz's Man, the State, and War in (1959), scholars and diplomats have found it useful to think about the numerous factors that shape international relations by breaking them into different levels of analysis - individual, state and international. These different levels of analysis illuminate different reasons why countries go to war, sign treaties or pursue alliances - characterised the personalities of individual leaders, the values of particular nations in particular or the characteristics of the international system as a whole. Besides the rational actor model, brief narratives of related models or levels of analysis, used in international relations will illuminate this papers' research problem and its theoretical underpinning.

International or Systemic Level Analysis

The international or systemic level of analysis argues that all foreign policy can be understood without looking at the internal characteristics of nations or individuals. But research has shown that, strong foreign policies are fundamentally a function of strong domestic policies. Accordingly to Witskop (2010), "Essentially, it is the sound or weak character of public policies that dictate the character of foreign policies". Thus, it is misleading to hold that, the characteristics of the international system alone must lead nations to behave in particular ways based upon how much power they hold, because such power holding is a function of the states' domestic political stability in economic and military prowess. However, the most easily understood example of international level analysis is the Cold War, when there was a bipolar system where two nations - the United States and the USSR -- both held substantial domestic and international power.

When two nations hold the majority of international power, there will inevitably be tensions between the two nations, and all their decisions will be based on maintaining their power among nations and preventing the other nation from gaining more power. But this is exactly what the US and NATO intends to achieve, which is to undo Russia's capabilities to wage war at the regional or international level (Austin 2022, Penny 2022, Boesky 2022). As China gained power in the 1970s, a tripolar system emerged, and no one wanted to be the "odd man" out, with the other two nations allied against the third. The United States used this to its advantage by reopening relations with China and thus forcing the USSR's hand in diplomatic relations. A more modern example would be U.S. intervention in Iraq; supporters of international level analysis argue that the United States is the only power - the superpower in a unipolar system, necessitating its military action to demonstrate and maintain its power.

State Level Analysis

Supporters of state level analysis argue that the international system level tells only part of the story of international relations, but looking at the backgrounds of states, type of government, economic performance, geography, history and cultural values, can offer a more complete explanation. In this view, it is important to note that the Cold War was not just a conflict between two superpowers but that one of the two powers was a democracy, hence the tendency for antagonistic postures was real, since democracies hardly fight each other (Bells 2020, Sanders 2021). Similarly, the economic systems of the two powers such as the capitalist and communist are also significantly opposed. A state-level analyst could point to the collapse of the USSR's economy in the 1980s as one of the factors leading to the end of the Cold War. The U.S. intervention in Iraq supposedly to thwart the development or usage of weapons of mass destruction or to transport democracy, could be explained by the U.S. cultural belief that its political and economic systems are "good" while other systems are "bad."

Individual Level Analysis

Finally, the individual level emphasizes the "great man in history" concept. In this view, the very personalities of leaders shape foreign policy. Leaders are not simply mechanically responding to international or state systems, but taking an active role in determine international relations. Perhaps the most obvious example of a individual level analysis is explaining World War II through Adolf Hitler's leadership; another would be when scholars attribute the end of the Cold War to the relationship between President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev. Once again using the Iraq War example, an individual level analysis would examine the character and ideology of George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and other key players in influencing the U.S. military action.

Marxism and Levels of Analysis

Most theories of international relations fall into one of the three levels of analysis. Marxism, however, does not rely simply on individual, state or international levels, but sees class as the category that underlies all political relations. Decisions are made by power brokers who are members of the ruling, or elite class. The wealthy, capital-holding class exerts power over the working class, and will continue to do so until the working class gains control over the means of production. On an international level, imperialism is also explained by class relations. In the late 19th and 20th centuries, capitalist nations needed raw materials as well as outlets for their factory-made products. These factors led to the imperialist foreign policies of most of Western Europe, something that Marxists argue has continued to shape international relations today through the international financial oligarchy of multinational banks and corporations. In the Marxist view, it is class relations that motivate and underlie decisions at the individual, state and international levels.

In the discipline of international relations there are several contending general theories or theoretical perspectives. The foremost, Realism, also known as political realism, is a view of international politics that stresses its competitive and conflictual side. It is usually contrasted with idealism or liberalism, which tends to emphasize cooperation. Realists consider the principal actors in the international arena to be states, which are concerned with their own security, act in pursuit of their own national interests, and struggle for power and hegemony over other actors – states (Morgenthau 1948). The negative side of the realists, which emphasis power and self-interest is often their skepticism regarding the relevance of ethical norms to

relations among states. National politics is the realm of authority and law, whereas international politics, realists sometimes claim, is a sphere without justice, characterised by active or potential conflict among states.

Not all realists, however, deny the presence of ethics in international relations. The distinction should be drawn between classical realism—represented by such twentieth-century theorists as Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau and radical or extreme realism. While classical realism emphasises the concept of national interest, it is not the Machiavellian doctrine “that anything is justified by reason of state” (Bull 1995:189). Nor does it involve the glorification of war or conflict. The classical realists do not reject the possibility of moral judgment in international politics. Rather, they are critical of moralism, an abstract moral discourse that does not take into account political realities. The realists assign supreme value to successful political action based on prudence: the ability to judge the rightness of a given action from among possible alternatives on the basis of its likely political consequences (Feline 2020, Vesey 2021).

Realism encompasses a variety of approaches and claims a long theoretical tradition. Among its founding fathers, Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes are the names most usually mentioned. Twentieth-century classical realism has today been largely replaced by neorealism, which is an attempt to construct a more scientific approach to the study of international relations. Both classical realism and neorealism have been subjected to criticism from IR theorists representing liberal, critical, and post-modern perspectives.

Realism, Human Security and International Relations: Challenges and Prospects

Irrefutably, given its power element and the urge for it (power); and the *raison of the state* syndrome, realism as a concept in international relations threatens human security, because, in most cases, the application of realism in the conduct of international relations breeds disagreement, controversies, and finally wars. Off-course, As Morgenthau and Thompson opine, "Realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states. The individual may say for himself: "Let justice be done, even if the world must perish", but the state has no right to say so in the name of those who are in its care. Thus, while the individual has a moral right to sacrifice himself in defense of such a moral principle, the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation of the infringement of that moral principle get into the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival. So, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 is aptly explained by this position, because, Russian acted on the premises of national survival - realism, whose outcomes belittle any concerns for human security in Ukraine as well as in Russia itself. Said otherwise, in pursuance of it national interest, such as solid security assurances against any future NATO attack, and to demonstrate is power over Ukraine, Russia threw overboard any considerations based on moral precepts to invade Ukraine. As Mearsheimer, (2001) posits, "The statesman must think in terms of the national interest, conceived as power among other powers. The popular mind, unaware of the fine distinctions of the statesman's thinking, reasons more often than not in the simple moralistic and legalistic terms of absolute good and absolute evil."

Thus, realism is not an approach that can be defined explicitly by a set of propositions and assumptions. Rather it is a theory with general orientations and philosophical dispositions. According to Gilpin (1986:304), realism can be defined as a 'set of normative emphases that

shape other theories in domestic as well as in foreign policymaking. Ferguson and Mansbuch (1987:79) on the other hand view realism as 'an attitude of the mind' that is comprised of 'distinctive and recognisable flavour.' In addition to this, Garnet (1984:110), perceives realism as one with 'a loose groundwork' and a vast tent with room for various theories (Rosenthal 1991:7; Eldridge, (1979:12). As an overview, realism is a model in international relations that has simultaneously emerged through a number of research studies from analysts who have positioned themselves within, and thus delimited, concise but still diverse analytical tradition (Donely, 2000, Uche 2020, Fansa 2021).

Representative Definitions of Realism in International Relations

There a number of definitions used to represent realism in international relations. First representation is described by state's interest that provides the spring of actions. Secondly, development of realism in international relations was encouraged by the policies that arose from unregulated competition of states. Waltz also holds that calculation grounded on the necessities can uncover policies that best protect and serve the interests of a state. The success of this representation of realism is demonstrated through putting the policies to test. If it preserves and strengthens the state then, it can be considered as a success (Donely, 2000:32). According to Morgenthau, representation of realism in international relations is described by six distinctive aspects. First, realism is presented by politics that is governed by objective laws, which have their roots founded on human nature. Again, the main incentive that enables political realism to fix itself towards the international landscape is the concept of interest described in terms of power. Thirdly, this approach perceives interests and power in international community as a variable content. It also holds that the universal moral principles cannot be imposed to the actions of countries; hence Russia refused to be accept that, NATO must rule the world or precisely Europe West and East. Likewise, the political realism described in this approach does not identify the moral aspirations of an individualised country with morals that govern the international community. Realism in this approach is also demonstrated by the autonomy of the political spheres (Donely 2000:36).

Neo-realism, Human Security and International Relations

On its part, neo realism is an approach in international relations also known as structural realism. Unlike the classical realism whose concepts is grounded on the 'nature of human beings' to account for politics in the international community, neo-realism capitalises on a more systematic approach. In general, the model holds that the structure of international relations acts as a bridle on the behaviours of a nation. Thus, countries whose outcomes lie within an expected range in the international relations survive. According to this approach, international relations are described by an imposing principle known as anarchy. Similarly, it is described by its distribution capacities leveraged by the number of great powers in the international community (May et al, 2010, Waltz, 2009).

The characteristic of anarchy is that, it is decentralised and has no official central governing authority. In this case, it is comprised of equal sovereign nations that act according to the logic of helping and protecting its interests. In privilege to pursuing other goals, it is assumed that, the main objective of the nations is to ensure their own survival in the international realm. Further, it is assumed that, its driving force to enhance survival is to maintain and attain power over other states. Thus, one of the main factors that influence their (states) behaviours is ensuring that they develop offensive military capabilities for the purposes of foreign

interventions. The lack of trust existing amongst countries (security dilemma) requires individual state to always be on guard against relative losses of power to other countries, (as it is in case of Russia's trepidations over NATO's expansionist tendencies in Eastern Europe (Jackson, & Sorensen, 1999; Waltz, 2009:14) Menta (2004)

As Menta (2004) posits, "...certainly, the needs of countries are perceived to be same, although the means of how they intend to satisfy those needs differ from one country to another. Since resources are unevenly distributed across the nations, cooperation among states has been limited due to the fear of relative of gains." So, the abilities of individual countries to maximise relative power in order to attain desired and needs and results have limited each other and this has led to the seemingly balance of power in the international relations. There are two main methods that balance of power can be attained in the international community. The first is through internal balancing where nations grow their own capabilities and resources through capitalising on economic development and growth. Secondly, balance of power can be attained through external balancing where nations form alliances to leverage the power of more powerful alliances/countries (Waltz, 2009:66).

NATO and US's Foreign Policy Shortfalls and the Future of International Relations between Europe, US, Russia and China

As Whitney (2022) posits, "Henry Kissinger's speech at the World Economic Forum touched off an extensive fit of anger, because, therein, Kissinger did not criticise the way the war in Ukraine is being conducted or the lack of progress made thereafter. Rather, Kissinger criticised the NATO and US's foreign policies, which triggered the war based on the misguided rational actor model in politics." Thus, Kissinger was flinging a pail of chilly wet liquid on the people who concocted these foreign policies, as been fraught with professional and scholarly shortfalls. Consequently, as Kissinger opines, "...the character of foreign policies pursued against Russia, will eventually hurt the US, its allies and their strategic interests. For example, when the US sets out as to say: "Our basic strategy is to "weaken" and "isolate" Russia by severing Russia's economic ties with Europe and goading them into a long and costly quagmire in Ukraine...", it only sends Russia packing from the comfort zone in Europe and the US economic spheres into the search for more comfortable zone elsewhere, and probably in the zone of the US's primary adversary – China, which would quickly embrace Russia's oil and energy markets.

So, someone might view the soundness, attractiveness and perhaps rationality of this US's thinking, but in Kissinger's analysis, it's the wrong plan, because, if the US National Security Strategy identifies China as America's primary rival, naturally thus, any foreign or domestic policy that makes China stronger runs counterproductive to US and its allies' strategic interests. So, one may ask: Is the proxy-war in Ukraine not making China stronger? Certainly, it is, given that; it forces Russia to turn to China for the strengthening of political and economic relations. Politically and economically, this implies that, the relations between the world's manufacturing powerhouse (China) and the world's second biggest producer of hydrocarbons (Russia) would get closer and better; because of Brussels' and Washington's counterproductive foreign policies against Russia. In the conduct of weak international relations, which is what the current character of NATO and US foreign policies mean; this must be understood as such. Furthermore, it means that, as relations between the two countries (Russia and China) improve the pace of US imperial decline is going to accelerate as the non-dollar zone expands and bilateral trade gradually replaces the current US dominated global trade system.

The war in Ukraine appears to have triggered highly outrageous collapse in global trade, major disruptions in critical supply lines, unprecedented food and energy shortages, and the greatest re-division of the world since the breakup of the USSR – Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics in 1989. To most analysts, “Washington has decided to bet its future and the future on an imperial senseless geopolitical scheme, which could turn out to be the greatest strategic foreign policy shortfall in US history” (Whitney 2022:23). Thus, Kissinger grasps the gravity of the situation which is why he decided to put it bluntly. However, he did not just criticise the foreign policies, but he also offered resounding warning that has perhaps been ignored by the overly vocal or is it democratic Western media!!! According to Whitney, (2022:12):

“Kissinger feels, negotiations need to begin in the next two months before it creates upheavals and tensions that will not be easily overcome. Ideally, the dividing line should be a return to the status quo ante (...) Pursuing the war beyond that point would not be about the freedom of Ukraine, but a new war against Russia itself”.

An analysis of this would imply the following interpretations:

- (i) The US and its NATO’s foreign policies against Russia are faulty and thus, wrong;
- (ii) These foreign policies must be changed; else, the eventual damage to the US and its allies will be severe and permanent.

That might sound too apocalyptic for some, but I think Kissinger is on to something here. After all, look at the massive changes the world has already experienced since the conflict began; the disruptions in supply lines, the food and energy shortages, and the rolling-back of the globalisation project. Pretty big changes, I would say, but these are probably just the tip of the iceberg, because, the real pain is still ahead of us, with the heeding of calls for the declaration of a No-Fly Zone over Ukraine. In fact, Putin appears to be benefitting strategically from the blunders from the West in several fronts. For instance, has vowed that Russia will not put itself in a position where it will ever be economically dependent on Europe again. Rather, he is redirecting critical energy flows to China, India and beyond.

To Putin, Europe is no longer a priority customer or a trusted economic partner, since it has emerged as a threat to Russia’s economic survival. The strategic economic and even political implications of this are that, Russia will now reorient its production and seek its economic interests towards Eastern Europe, China, India and other Asian economic and political allies. Maybe that would also forge a new world order, which might in the long run, be beneficial to the African continent, if only Africans are learning any political, economic and diplomatic lessons from this Europe, US and Russia’s dancing amply enunciated in Spanier et al.,’s (1981) ‘Games Nations Play’, which reveals the shifting balance of power in the world, and the domestic factors and varying perceptions of reality that influence public and foreign policy decisions. The authors also reveal the disturbing continuation of the dangerous adversary games that nations play, which is what, is taking place now.

Changes in Realism, Neo-Realism and International Relations

Changes in the conduct of international relations as associated to realism and neo-realism date back to decades between the first and the Second World War. Here, scholars as well as political analysts were contemplating the causes of the Great War. Politicians on the other hand were aspiring to create institutions such as the League of Nations that prevent a reoccurrence of international aggression by institutionalising a normative and collective order. The main pitfall

of the League was that it represented the liberal ideals of democratic peace. It also placed emphasise on the possibility of developing a *modus Vivendi* beyond state boundaries. In order to stop the outbreak of other calamities; international war further emphasised the rise of doubts on the effectiveness and the assumptions that upon which it had been based upon (Crawford, 2000, Sassari 2018, Ojai 2020).

Many practitioners within the academic discipline of international relations perceive the most influential model during the first quarter century of World War 11 as realism. According to them, this realism arose as a reaction to the perceived downfall of the policy appeasement (and idealism) that occurred between the 1920's and the 1930's. According to realists, the international society was anarchical and was ruled by individual nations that were all striving to maximise their own security and power. Since most nations were predisposed towards competition and conflicts, cooperation in international relations was usually futile and elusive, even when countries across the world perceived the overall benefits of such arrangements (Carr, 1981, Jinadu 1988, Igwe 1991).

To some extent, some theorist hold that realism actually problematises a country through endowing it with variable extent of domestic agential supremacy. According to these theorists, realism further imposes that international system is formed by the international agential powers of a nation at a unit level. Thus, this is a drawback since it brings back a nation to the second tier; and back as an independent agential variable in international relations. When it is compared to neo-realism, it assigns the country more at the centre of analysis. In this case, international politics in most parts is contrived as changes in a country's domestic agential powers. This is regardless of the anarchic conditions which exist in international relations or changes in the distribution of power. Carr and Morgenthau in addition to this emphasise place emphasis on the significance of norms. To some extent, both authors also link norms to the domestic agential power of countries. Moreover, they describe the autonomy of norms that promotes both an 'emancipation realism' and 'practical realism' (Morgenthau & Thompson, 2001, Hobson, 2000).

As a matter of fact, major changes in international relations have been leveraged by perestroika, the reunification of Germany, the dissolution of Soviet Bloc and the end of the Cold War. These occasions have played vital roles in explaining the changes of realism approach and neo-realism in the international community. Accustomed to account for changes in terms of shifting patterns of distribution of capabilities, development or growth, neo-realists have denied the fact that, major changes of 1989 and 1990 were as a result of redistribution of power. This is because according to them, the military of erstwhile Soviet Union remained virtually same throughout the immediate years after the collapsing of the Berlin Wall. Moreover, these alterations had occurred rather in unexpected way. As (Morgenthau & Thompson, (2001:87), and Carr, (1981:23) observe, this implies it occurred without the outbreak of hegemonic war.

Additionally, given that changes in international relations emerged from reconstitution of local political (public policy) networks, rather than systematic factors, it believed that, the significance of democratisation and the respect for human rights have led to the formation of a new 'civil societies'. In this case, neo-realism is seen to hold no hypothesised network for understanding the scope, nature and direction of the changes. Thus, the adage of Thucydidean can still be seen as viable as it states that 'the strong do what they can do while the weak suffer

what they must' or Rodee et al's (1963:21) adage that, "Might is Right". However, at the long run, changes in the international relations can be attributed to the extensive realisation by the strong that, what they can do was relatively different from the repertoire of politics and economics alone. Similarly, the weak noticed that the trend of 'must' was as well subjected to a continuous almost unheard of form of alterations. Simultaneously, a curious reversal occurred where movements of mass population brought skidding changes via new understanding of empowerment. At this time, the apprehension of lack of power of leading strata pointed to problem in 'power' (Kratochwil, 1993; Williams, 2005).

Advantages of Realism and Neo-Realism in the Conduct of International Relations

One advantage of realism is that it constructs, animates and supplies a lot of discourse in the academic field of international relations. In this case it contributes to powerful explanations on the endemic nature of war comprised within international communities. Secondly, the approach of realism has played a significant role of providing neo-realism a basis for developing its approach. Here, neo-realism is founded on the third dimension of realism (international system) where it demonstrates systematic images. The other two dimension of realism are man (human nature) and the state (Buzan 1996). Thirdly, the other advantage of realism is that it recognises every country as a sovereign entity. It further demonstrates how every nation has a right to rule itself as a rational player in the realm of international relations. The main rationale in this model is that as a rationale player, every state makes its decisions that seek to protect its own citizens, property and on the basis which is translated as national interest (Grieco, 1990, Stenard 1995, Jakande 1999).

Another advantage of realism theory is that, which is stipulated in its justification of anything by rationale of state. Thus, the model bestows relative consideration of the possibility of moral judgment in existence among states in the international politics. This is because the theories of the approach provide significant value to successful political actions that are grounded on prudence, such as the capacity to decide the correctness (rightness) of an individualised action from among other viable alternatives. Furthermore, the other advantage of realism is that it encompasses a number of models. This has played a significant role in helping people (readers, researchers, and so on) to understand their origins in relations to existing conditions of international relations. Likewise, encompassing of a variety of models has enabled other theories and research work to be developed (Julian, 2010, Kegley 2009, Inkles 2016).

On the other hand, neo-realism has also played a significant role of demonstrating the reproductive nature of international relations. Here, theorists such as Waltz claim that, the model unlike that of wars demonstrates the operations of associations within international relations systems. This theory captures the eternal aspects of international politics via contemplating throughout all the centuries that we can contrive and survive as humanity in sincere security. Other advantages of neo-realism include; the theory that helps one to better understand the successes and failures of balance of power. The approach also uses deductive methodologies that are more scientific such as can be identified, measured and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The approach can also be used to generalise inferences across time and space. Moreover, the model clarifies what anarchy in international relation is and the role it plays in changing the international arena. It also clarifies aspects such as relative gains and balancing of power as instruments open to man in the conduct of international relations (Halliday, 1994, Hench 1991, Resins 2001). Therefore in the conduct of international relations

and in the application of politics, morality, and public opinion therein, five key models are available to statesmen, practitioners and scholars, who offer advises to governments in their interaction with other governments in the realisation or analysis of desired foreign policy goals. Before elucidating these models, it is important that, I highlight the uses of foreign policy analysis. In this direction and as an immediate localisation, it is also pertinent to state that, the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine is a foreign policy decision, which is to curtail the perceived expansionist tendencies of NATO in Eastern Europe. Thus, the narrative on foreign policy analysis is significant in this paper, because, it will permit readers to better understand how political actors such as Russia's Putin and others make foreign policy decisions and how they relate to other foreign governments, including even non-government entities. Foreign policy in itself is a complex discipline, wherein numerous actors work within structures both inside and outside the state to have an impact on the decision-making process. It is useful to have analytical process models to illuminate the dynamics in this field which aptly help to explain how states conduct their foreign policies, international relations and the diplomatic enterprise. These models are:

- The rational actor model,
- The bureaucratic politics model and
- The organisational process model.

These three of which were developed by foreign policy analyst and scholar, Graham Allison, and outlined in his book, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1963).

- The inter-branch politics model and
- The political process model.

In order for international relations professionals to effectively analyse foreign policy as a whole, it is necessary to determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of each model therein and understand the ways in which each approach has the potential to remedy the inadequacies of the others.

Rational Actor Model

Given the weight of the subject-matter of this paper – the security of humanity globally, I elect revisiting the rational actor model, because, it is the chosen theoretical framework hereinafter. Thus, as I pointed out earlier, the most widely mentioned foreign policy analysis approach is the rational actor model. This approach thinks in terms of the main actor in foreign policy being a rational individual or group of individuals, who can be relied on to make informed, calculated decisions that maximise value and perceived benefits to the state. Thus, Russia, seen as a rational actor, decided to invade Ukraine based on its calculation of its national interest, irrespective of the number of human and material loss in from Russia or in Ukraine. Consequently, the rational actor model relies on individual state-level interactions between nations and government behaviour as units of analysis. It assumes the availability of complete information to policy-makers for optimised decision making, and that actions taken throughout time are both consistent and coherent, irrespective of their moral considerations. As stated above, this model comprises main steps in is called, the rational actor's decision-making process, namely: identification of the problem, definition of the desired outcomes, evaluation of the consequences of potential policy choices and finally, making of the most rational decision

to maximise beneficial outcomes. A schema of the model is reproduced below for a quick perusal and appreciation.



Figure One: The Rational Actor Model

Source: <https://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/ethics-101/a-critique-of-rational-choice-theory/>

A Brief Theoretical Account of the Rational Actor Theory

The rational actor or choice model is a theoretical paradigm in which individuals' choices are explained based on maximising their preferences against other preferences open to them in the conduct of economics, politics, sociology, business and so on in international relations; sometimes even in domestic politics. Historically, the rational actor or choice was developed to help explain voting behaviour by the RAND Corporation, a think tank formed in the USA at Santa Monica, California, in 1951. According to McCumber, (2011), the rational choice has its roots in the uniquely individualistic American culture. Over time, RAND expanded rational choice into an all-encompassing philosophy, applying its rationales to explain everything from voting behaviour to economics, politics, culture and social work; and even beyond. "Today, governments and businesses across the globe simply assume that social reality is merely a set of individuals freely making rational choices."

The rational actor theoretical approach has become very useful to understanding the goals and intentions behind Russia's foreign policy action against NATO through Ukraine. However, critics of this model believe that, it does not account for instances when complete information may not be available, as well as the relatively subjective concept of rationality or factors that might inhibit rational decision making. The rational actor model of decision making assumes that the primary decision-maker acts rationally within four key concepts goals attainment, alternatives, consequences, choices and drawbacks in decision-making.

The Philosophy of the Rational Actor Model and Decision-Making amongst Competing States

Sometimes readers usually peruse newspapers and come across decisions made by a leader of one state makes a decision on an issue concerning another state, but very seldom do readers ever wonder why a country's leader makes one decision and not another. Do readers ever ask: What were they thinking, which led to taking that character of decision rather than the other character? Political Scientists, Public Administrators, and Historians often use a special tool when analysing past political decisions, attempting to replicate the rationale behind particular choices. This tool is known as the rational actor model. The main assumption of it is reflected in its name: the primary decision-maker is believed to be a rational person, making an optimal choice based on calculated expected benefits and guided by consistent personal values.

The knowledge about their preferences is then used to explain the choices they make. In producing certain behaviours, where the choices decided upon are consistent with the original goals, this is referred to as instrumental rationality. While the main concepts of the model can be applied successfully when making a new decision, it is most often used when analysing historical decisions, such as decision taken in the past, particularly in the field of foreign policy. The rational actor model of decision-making is also sometimes referred to as a rational choice model (Ekpwele 1989, Osborne 2000, Cohen 2002). Yet there are other models which are useful in understanding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Some Criticisms against the Rational Actor or Choice Theory

While it is plausible opining that, the individual action of a rational actor or choice drives large social structures, some rational choice theory critics argue the theory is too limited in its explanation of social problems encountered in the domestic or international arenas. In this direction, another weakness of rational choice theory is that it does not account for intuitive reasoning or instinct of the actor, especially in circumstances of contingency. As McCumber (2011) argues that, as a philosophy, rational choice fails because it is not ethically neutral, especially when one witnesses the colossal squandering of human and material resources in a situation occasioned by a rational actor decision. McCumber (2011:23) believes that, the rational choice theory encourages people to maximise preferences by acquiring wealth and power even if through corruptible means. Although, not all choices are economically driven, and preferences can be maximised based on determination of other values, such as human and material security.

McCumber's Criticisms of Rational Choice Theory

As McCumber (2011:24) posits, when applied to economics, rational choice theory is presumed to be ethically neutral, because it "does not question people's preferences; it simply studies how they seek to maximise them." However, McCumber argues that rational choice theory is not ethically neutral, because its parent philosophy is not ethically neutral too. "Whatever my preferences are, I have a better chance of realising them if I possess wealth and power. Rational choice philosophy thus promulgates a clear and compelling amoral imperative: Increase your wealth and power, no matter at what ends and whose cost". Ethical neutrality is lost because the philosophy has stopped studying how individuals maximise preferences and has instead encouraged them that the best way to do so is by acquiring wealth and power. According to McCumber, if rational choice fails as a philosophy because it is no longer ethically neutral, then its auxiliary theories fail as well. If rational choice philosophy promulgates an imperative to

increase wealth and power, then rational choice theory in economics operates to the same end. When faced with two choices, it is more rational to increase wealth/power. As a result, corporate leaders stretch resources and ignore regulations to acquire more wealth and realize their own goals. While it may not be ethical, it is rational. Rational choice theory in economics was criticized in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, but for McCumber the inherent guiding philosophy must be questioned as well.

The Problems with McCumber's Criticisms against the Rational Choice Model

As an abstract philosophical theory, rational choice makes sense. Surely all individuals are guided by an internal desires to increase personal pleasures. Even the altruistic volunteer must derive some self-interested form of happiness from devoting his or her time and energy to helping others. But are we all driven by the "clear and compelling moral imperative to increase wealth and power in everything that we do? Probably, we are not. The mismanagement of large corporations seemingly fuels a cynical belief that rational choice theory in economics has been perverted to mean greed is good even in politics. Similarly, the decision to go to war as it is the case with the Russian invasion of Ukraine appears to fuel the international cynical belief that rational choice theory in politics has been perverted to mean greed on the part of President Putin, this position could be regarded as true or false, depending on the subjective or objective relations that have existed between Russia, Ukraine and the rest of the international community (Molem, 2022, Kester, 2022). Nevertheless, the altruistic volunteer donating his or her time and energy receives no wealth or power for his or her donation. He or she may receive personal pleasures, and it would seem rational for him or her to pursue this, but there is no clear monetary or political benefits involved.

Said otherwise, people are not individual atoms bumping into each other on every occasion. People are social beings, social animals as Aristotle says, which means that our identity is shaped by and shapes our communities, our societies, and our traditions. Certainly, when someone makes a rational decision (as he or she hope he or she does) but even his or her rationality is shaped by his or her culture. Thus, if someone finds more or less rational choices, what modes of reasoning are available to him or her, to what extent would such a person be trained to think reasonably, what forms of discourses would be introduced and so on. This fact does not make him or her any the less rational. On contrary, it is the very conditions for being rational at all.

In any case, McCumber's description of the failures of rational choice philosophy oversimplifies rationality and extrapolates the failures of economic rational theory too far. For him, rationality is predicated on economically driven decisions, perhaps not on political decisions, such as increasing the acquisition of wealth and political power so a person has more tools to maximise his or her ultimate preferences and social influences amongst his or her peers. It makes sense that decisions in economics and politics are guided by this clear and compelling imperative to increase wealth and power, because these values are usually sought and encouraged in many economic and political systems. Nonetheless, the same conclusion is hard to apply as a far-reaching philosophy, because not all individuals are economically or politically driven in everything they do.

Some Public Policies and Foreign Policies Solutions

The economic and financial failures that occurred in 2008, clearly demonstrate the ethical failures of rational choice theory in economics, which might or might not be extrapolated into politics. In this direction, McCumber suggests a policy solution for rational choice theory, which as he thinks, “might look quite a bit like Hegel in its view that individual freedom is of value only when communally guided.” The idea is to replace the ultimate desire of the individual with that of the community. If the goal is changed, the guiding philosophy will change, and the paradigm will shift from an imperative to increase personal wealth to that of bettering the community at large. Consequently, the rational choice philosophy would still not be ethically neutral, but ideally it would be morally (and ultimately, financially or politically) beneficial for the greater majority (Kester 2022:43).

Again, this solution is oversimplified, because it presents two major problems. The first problem is the definition of “communal.” What are the “communal” characteristics that will be the guiding principles of this new philosophy? For instance, the US lays as a global state system is an aggregate of countries, cultures, provinces, towns, cities, each with their own seemingly respective needs and desires. Which community or country will provide the guiding values in a metamorphosed society such as the United States? In the case of Europe and the US, which have been incarnated by capitalism, Russia has been dominated by opposing political and economic thought, incarnated by socialism. Invariably, thus, Russia might not act in the thinking of a pure capitalist, even if there are stains of capitalism in its current politico-economic system. The second problem is how to supplant a “communally guided” philosophy into a society founded upon individualism. These questions are difficult to answer, but should be considered in the ongoing search for an ethically and practically viable economic theory, less than in a politically guided theory, such as the rational choice model (Yesinia, 2013, Ergo 2015, Walsh 2018).

BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS MODEL

The next model, which might be related to our topic, although it is not central to the narrative of this paper, is the bureaucratic politics model, which is essentially concerned with domestic politics, although its premises can be stretched to international politics, as well. Unlike the rational actor model, which looks at the state as a unitary actor, the bureaucratic politics model, analyses decisions on the premise that, actions taken within a national bureaucratic setting are taken by a number of independent, competing entities within a particular state. Each of these separate entities brings values to the decision-making process, as well as its own view of what is best for personal, organisational and national interests. Each party attempts to satisfy its goals, meaning any collective action is contingent upon successful negotiations and the arrival at an ultimate consensus between all entities.

Consequently, a number of factors might invariably influence each party’s decision making and how it achieves its goals, such as the relative power and degree of influence of each other actor in the group. Each party has opposing viewpoints and desired outcomes related to an array of issues, and success in achieving certain goals may require other parties to make certain concessions, resulting in decisions that are often seen as more beneficial to one side than the others. Additional factors that impact decision making include the degrees of importance of certain goals and the political values each party represents. The increasingly partisan nature of U.S. politics provides an excellent example of this model in action. The bureaucratic politics approach is often touted as an explanation as to why states sometimes act irrationally.

However, some argue that, the model does not account enough for highly concentrated power held by certain entities, such as the executive branch in the governing process. It is also seen as very democratic-centric and difficult to apply in the context of other styles of government.

ORGANISATIONAL PROCESS MODEL

In contrast to the two foregoing approaches, the organisational process model views government as a mixture of powerful organisations working in concert rather than as individual or a group of partisan entities. This model examines foreign policy decisions as made within the rigid strictures of bureaucracy, where actions may only be taken with proper authorisation and adherence to the chain of command, respecting established processes and standard operating procedures. Here, government leaders do not tackle the broader scope of a crisis but instead delegate smaller facets of the issue to committees, departments and other bureaucratic entities which support the government.

Critics often bemoan the fact that this model limits individuals' ability to act, which results in reduced insightfulness of thought and action on the part of members of the government or its supporting entities, causing as it does, possible lack of alternative perspectives. The organisational process model can also decrease the overall flexibility of an organisation. However, applying this model has the potential to streamline decision-making with the establishment of standard protocol for certain circumstances with predictable, measurable outcomes. In other words, the organisational process model anticipates the measured pace of bureaucratic practices and seeks to create protocol that can be readily applied in the event of a crisis.

INTER-BRANCH POLITICS MODEL

The inter-branch politics model of foreign policy analysis is similar to the organisational and bureaucratic process models in that it involves separately defined groups or entities. However, rather than focusing on singular goals and outcomes, the inter-branch politics model evaluates actions and their outcomes based on the combined efforts and cohesiveness of different groups and their progress toward achieving collective goals. According to Tan Qingshan, a political science professor and Director of Asian Studies at Cleveland State University who first introduced the model, the bureaucratic and organizational entities within and outside states do not operate in complete independence, but rather interact and influence each other. If there are cliques residing inside the Russian Federation, who are opposed to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it is because, the ruling class failed to accommodate their opinion before going to war against Ukraine.

POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

The political process model of foreign policy analysis was developed by Roger Hilsman in his book, *The Politics of Policy-making in Defense and Foreign Affairs*. According to Hilsman, there are a large number of actors involved in the foreign policy decision-making process, mainly concentrated in the office of the President and Congress, but across all levels of government as well. Similar to the bureaucratic politics model, the political process model emphasizes bargaining and the presence of various power centers seeking to achieve their respective goals these goals can either be in conflict or consensus with those of others. However, this model differs from the bureaucratic politics model as it focuses more on the individual participants and their personal goals and mindsets about international politics rather than organizations

and groups as a whole. According to Hilsman, the individual ideology of each political actor is one of the most important factors in determining and explaining decision-making. Critics of the model, however, maintain that it is too similar to the bureaucratic politics to make a substantive contribution to the field of foreign policy analysis. Foreign policy analysis is necessary to improve our overall understanding of the government and the political decision-making processes that play out on the world stage. Each approach to diplomacy offers a unique set of potential drawbacks and benefits, and emphasizes the importance of the political actors and structures involved and how they work to attain their foreign policy goals.

THUCYDIDES, WARS, ETHICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Thucydides, an ancient Greek philosopher and historian from the 5th century BCE, lived in the Greek city-state of Athens, the indisputable centre of philosophy and education in the ancient world. Many Athenian philosophers are remembered as the founders of specific areas of study, and Thucydides is no exception, as he is believed to be one of the first to devote serious attention to the political theory of international relations and established important philosophical precedents in this field (Kokaz 2001, Nathan 1967, Weiss 2020).

In order to fully understand Thucydides' ideas about politics and international relations, we first need to understand his stance on ethics, the philosophy of morality. Now, when we think of morality, we tend to think of philosophies that strictly define right and wrong. But Thucydides had a slightly different take or narrative on morality. Throughout his writings, he meticulously examined the cause and effect of actions, but only as they could be observed. This means that unlike most ancient Greeks, he really did not blame the gods for anything. Rather, his focus was on observable data, which actually makes him a very early precursor of the scientific method, although he never would have used that term. So, instead of seeing morals as some universal, natural force, Thucydides saw them as the effect caused by a person's physical and social environment.

To Thucydides, ethics was a study of how various factors in a person's life influences their morality. For instance, for Russia's Putin to go to war against Ukraine, his socialist environment invaded by capitalist mentalities, could among other factors, explain his war action against Ukraine. So, Thucydides actually had a fairly skeptical viewpoint on morals. Right and wrong were therefore not simply universal truths, but something slightly different to each person, depending on your experiences and economic, financial, political and social, including psychological dispositions at the time of taking a decision. Other factors, such as social influences and basic needs like hunger, also influence each person's beliefs about right and wrong.

Now, Thucydides does not specifically say that there are no universal truths in terms of morals, but again, he is much more skeptical than other philosophers about this concept of morality. This rather serious take on ethics sets the tone for Thucydides' views on international relations and the issues of morality in politics. Thucydides' main focus as a philosopher and historian was the politics of international relations. And he lived at a great time during which Athens had become so powerful that it started conquering the other Greek city-states, resulting in the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta during his lifetime. From his observations and research, Thucydides came to the conclusion that political behaviours are mostly driven by fear and self-interest. Modern intellectuals call this idea political realism, and Thucydides is

considered one of the founders of this school of thought. As Kokaz (2001) opines, "...the primary message Thucydides gives, to theorists and practitioners alike, is to deplore human suffering and to struggle towards moderation and practical wisdom in politics, making the best use of tendencies in human nature as well as available institutions to that end." Thucydides, thus, develops a distinctively normative theory of world politics by placing proper use and moral judgment at the centre of his account.

The Russian-Ukrainian War, Political Realism, and Public Opinion: An Overview

Political realism is a significant theory in the field of international relations that seeks to explain states' behaviours under a set of specific and rigid assumptions such as creating a no fly-zone over Ukraine by the United States of America and NATO over Ukraine. Of-course, the idea to declare a No Fly-Zone, over Ukraine, would be directly and easy way for inviting Russia to deploy its nuclear capabilities in its war against Ukraine. Russia, a world power with massive nuclear capabilities, like the United States of America itself would not sit idle in the face of a NATO and US direct confront through Ukraine. At its core and at such a scenario, political realism would be guided by three S's: statism, survival, and self-help. Statism asserts that states are the only entity on the international stage that matter and that they are unitary (acting alone) and rational (acting in its best interests) actors. Survival holds that, the state's primary goal is to survive in an international system characterised by anarchy. This framework, amply explains Russia's trepidations of NATO's expansionism and its eventual invasion of Ukraine. The final S, self-help, conveys the assumption that states cannot trust others in their pursuit of survival and must secure their own national security. Consequently, political realism is further delineated into sub-theoretical frameworks, including:

- Classical realism
- Liberal realism
- Neo-realism
- Neo-classical realism

While each of the sub-frameworks has its own nuance within the broader political realist theory, all forms of political realism fundamentally believe that, world politics is a field of conflict among states pursuing power (Mongenthau 1948:56, Buzan 1996:49, Jackson 1996:88). Certainly, the formal discipline and academic study of international relations using political realism were formed during and shortly after the Second World War. However, the primary assumptions underpinning this theory can be glimpsed in much earlier writings.

Structural Realism

Structural realism also referred to as neo-realism in the academic community, is a major branch of political realism derived from classical realism. While the latter incorporates analysis of human behavior within state decision-making, structural realism focuses predominantly on the anarchic structure of the international system. In other words, structural realists see global conflict as inevitable because there is no supranational body that could prevent or mediate conflict between individual states. Therefore, structural realists assume that states must always be preparing for conflict because war could break out at any time. Structural realists believe that understanding the international system is guided by the three S's of political realism. However, they do incorporate analysis of inter-relationships between distinct state entities, particularly regarding power relationships. A key concept in structural realism is polarity, the

balance of power within the international system. Today, international theorists often describe the world as unipolar, with the United States acting as the sole superpower endowed with the ability to dominate international relations via their economic, political, and military supremacy. However, polarity changed, especially during the Cold War, as the interns (acting as a global hegemony), with the rest being mid- and low-power states.

How Realism has affected other Approaches in the Conduct of International Relations

Since realism is a model that believes in protecting the interests of a country, it has influenced the feminism model via identifying the roles of women in the politics of international relations. Specific emphasis has been placed on roles such as diplomatic wives, plantation industry workers, military services, etc. The feminism approach utilized theories stipulated in realism to understand international politics. The approach further uses the realism to analyze how these politics affect or/ and how it is affected by both men and women in each nation.

Through analyzing how key concepts are enacted within the discipline of international relations, the approach has developed methodologies and hypothesis concerning traditional focus on international relations as associated with diplomacy, states, security, wars, and so on (Tickner, 2001). Although social constructivism is a term that is relatively recent as opposed to epistemology, its component has been used over the years to unambiguously explain concepts of reality. It is observed that realism in a way has acted as an autonomous agent that makes decisions on behalf of the users. Naturally, this has triggered UCD issues such as transparency, trust, empowerment and privacy as well as control. Similarly, by definition constructivism also provides a resource for human actions. It also holds account for the action of people in social situations (Oulasrvita et al, 2006; Campbell, 1995).

Moreover, the key incentive of developing the social constructivism approach is so as to prove that most aspects of international relations are socially constructed. Realism influenced this approach in its entirety as it provided groundwork for its development. Theorists of social constructivism in this case used realism to demonstrate how concepts such as 'politics of power' are socially constructed. While realism believes that act protect individual interests is human nature, theorists in the social constructivism model hold that those practices are formulated by social networks existing among people. The theorists' further state that these social structures can be altered by the changes of people's practices (Wendt, (1992, Fennimore, 1996).

In addition, realism has influenced the English School approach that holds that there is a 'society of nations' in the communities at the international arena. This approach mainly capitalizes on concept that ideas shape how international politics is conducted. This is as opposed to resources capabilities. The approach of realism also provides groundwork for the English School where its approach is founded upon. In this case, the English School holds that international relation system is formed once a number of countries develop a sufficient amount of interaction (alliances) (Linklater & Suganami 2006, Buzan 2004, Heddle 2019).

The English School approach recognizes the mutual sovereignty of nations as stipulated by realism to develop its foundational claim it is this state that make a society. The approach also recognizes that these 'societies' developed by 'balance of power', war, international law and/or diplomacy are anarchy in nature i.e. they do not succumb to the will any form of higher power.

Since nations have been able to develop a society with sovereign equals for the English school, this concept is such a fascinating dimension of international relations. English school also recognizes the phenomenal of violence explained within the theories of realism as an endemic aspect of the 'anarchical society.'

According to the approach, this state is controlled to a stated extent by the morality and international law in a bid to regulate the atmosphere of international relations (Linklater, 2002). In the neo-liberalism institutionalism, realism has played a significant role in providing groundwork upon which it can base its theory. Here, realism looked at the actions and interaction between nations in the system of international relations as it attempted to explain international politics. Neo liberalists have used the diverse aspects of realism to develop its theories. For instance, the approach places greater emphasis on economic and environmental issues. The interdependence of the neo liberalism to realism is demonstrated as economic interdependence has over the years become an important feature in the international politics. In addition to this, countries are major actors in international relations described by both models. Trends such as globalization describe the increase in the interconnectedness and linkages amongst nations (Whyte 2012, Keohane & Martin 1995).

Public Opinion, Human Security, IR and its Challenges and Prospects: The Call for a No-Fly Zone over Ukraine

Despite the risk of a nuclear war, calls are intensifying for the US and NATO to impose a No-Fly Zone over Ukraine. But as Fidel Castro once noted, against the ugly even of a nuclear war, collateral damages would be the aftermath of all humanity. In fact, in major polls, when asked whether or not they support the formation of a no-fly zone in Ukraine, most Americans have answered "yes." But a curious fact has been revealed in a more recent survey by YouGov: most people just do not seem to know what a no-fly zone means in practice. In its survey, *YouGov* agents asked people two questions. In the first, they simply asked, "Would you support or oppose the U.S. enforcing a no-fly zone over Ukraine?" And in the second, they asked more broadly: "Would you support or oppose the U.S. enforcing a no-fly zone over Ukraine, which would mean the U.S. military would shoot down Russian military planes flying over Ukraine, possibly triggering a war between the U.S. and Russia?"

For anyone who knows what a no-fly zone means, these questions mean absolutely the same thing. But, surprisingly, there was a discrepancy in results. For the first question, 40% of respondents stated that they would support a US-enforced no-fly zone, while only 25% opposed it and another 35% responded that they were unsure about the topic. On the other hand, for the second question, 23% of respondents said they would support such a zone. 43% percent opposed it, with 34% unsure. The result brings us a series of interesting reflections. First of all, it is possible to conclude that popular support for the creation of the no-fly zone is a big farce. What happens is that public opinion, influenced by Western media's discourse, tends to support the existence of anti-Russian measures. And from the moment that the media agencies say that it is necessary to create a no-fly zone, people tend to automatically agree. But, in the opposite direction, American citizens fear the emergence of a new conflict, which is natural for a people as accustomed to wars as the American, who have been suffering the consequences of US's interventionist policy in several decades. When they become aware that a no-fly zone would be the trigger for a new conflict, Americans would certainly stop supporting the measure, because

nothing can seem worse to an American than war, especially to nuclear keeping country such as Russia, China, North Korea and so on.

Therefore, when Western media outfits claim that there is popular support for the creation of the no-fly zone, over Ukraine, they are simply lying irresponsibly, trying to pressure the government to implement a bellicose measure, which will possibly generate a World War III, based on fallacious arguments that have been confirmed by biased and flawed surveys. Indeed, there is no real support from the American people for any step that could culminate in a war because is disastrous both in conception and execution (Elias & Sutch (2007)). It is necessary that the entire population of western countries be aware that a “no-fly zone” means an air space of prohibited or restricted flights by the local state, with the rights – and sometimes the obligations for local forces to shoot down any aircraft that fly over such a restricted airspace.

Creating such a situation in a scenario of conflict in Russia’s strategic environment – such as Ukraine, means making NATO shoot down Russia’s military aircrafts, which will certainly not be passively accepted. Obviously, this would be the rational actor policy choice that would be generating a war between Russia, the US and NATO. Certainly, with people - Americans or not, knowing all the consequences of such a zone, there will be no remote or immediate support for this type of immoral foreign policy measure. Of-course, this might be a project which certainly pleases the Ukrainian government itself and other states with a high degree of anti-Russian nationalism – such as Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia, which are officially supporting the creation of such a zone. There is no room to defend this kind of idea in the US and Western democracies.

Ending the Russian-Ukrainian War: A Mutual Agreement as a Panacea

Certainly, only a mutual agreement between the warring parties would represent the panacea for ending the Russian-Ukrainian war, and not an outright defeat of Ukraine by Russia, even if an outright defeat is Russia’s Putin’s strategic goal. Without a quick mutual agreement, “...a direct conflict between the US and NATO versus Russia would mean the eruption of World War III,” opines, the US President Biden, who has been inundated with growing calls for the US to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine, which would bring the US into direct fighting with Russia. By imposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine, the US and NATO forces would need to shoot down Russian planes and take out surface-to-air missiles that are inside Russia. But, despite the risk of war with Russia, which could quickly turn nuclear, some members of Congress are warming to the idea (Enrick 2022, Joffred 2022). In this direction, a House of Representative’s Republican Adam Kinzinger from Illinois, was one of the first members of Congress to out rightly call for the US to impose a no-fly zone. However, as Enrick (2022) narrates, “...a Democratic Party Senator Joe Manchin, who is even a known critic of Biden, has warmed against the idea of creating such a no-fly zone, while, Republic Party Representative Maria Elvira Salazar vehemently favours the creation of a no-fly zone over Ukraine.”

But, it appears, the call for the creation of a no-fly-zone is a political gimmick to lure the Democratic Biden Administration into a rubbish foreign policy pitfall, so that, such a nasty pitfall would be maliciously dangled to the American people during the 2022 mid-term and 2024 presidential elections campaigns by the Republic Party (Enrick 2022:21, Joffred 2022:15, Achey 2022). As empirical evidence of the Western media insinuations towards a World War III, Politico, one of such very influential Western media outlets, in March 2022, published an

open letter signed by some so-called foreign policy experts, twenty-seven in number in which they urged the Biden administration to impose a “limited” no-fly zone over Ukraine. But since Russian air defense missiles can shoot down planes across Ukraine, the prospect of a “limited” no-fly zone too does not appeal to the good conscience of the Biden Administration and thus, its application is difficult.

Actually, the idea of creating a no-fly zone over Ukraine is getting extensive and favourable media coverage, with some outlets with most of these media outlets publishing op-eds, which argue in favour of endorsing such a no-fly zone. Certainly, one of the no-fly zone’s biggest proponents is Ukrainian Zelensky the Ukrainian President, who uses every opportunity he gets to call on the West to close the sky against the Russian invaders. But, so far, the Biden administration is holding firm on not fighting Russia directly in Ukraine through a no-fly zone or boots on the ground. As Biden reiterates, “We will not fight a war against Russia in Ukraine. Direct conflict between NATO and Russia is World War III, something we must strive to prevent.”

In the same vein, and speaking the MSNBC, one as of those Western media outlets, the Pentagon spokesman John Kirby explained why the US could not impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine. As Kirby opines, “It is combat, thus, there is no way you could do that without being willing to shoot and be shot at. It is combat, and I do not think it is in anybody’s best interest, certainly not even Ukraine’s interest, for the United States and Russia to be getting in a war in their airspace.” However, while standing firm on the no-fly zone, the Biden administration appears to be risking an open confrontation with Russia by flooding Ukraine with weapons and sharing military and civil intelligence with Ukraine against Russia, (Ishediri, 2022, Winchell 2022).

Notwithstanding, Russia’s bombers raining down destruction on Ukrainian cities, the call for establishing a “no-fly zone” over Ukraine might at a glance seem like the perfect response to avert Russia’s use of its military might against Ukraine. But, if Russia’s Putin’s air force can be kept out of the skies over Ukraine, then Ukrainians might be spared the terror of death from above their skies. Thus, the proposal for a no-fly zone dangled by the Ukrainian President Zelensky is making the pitch for one every time he has the attention of Western politicians. Many anti-war demonstrations around the world feature posters and signs demanding it. Reporters constantly pepper the White House with questions about why it’s not moving to close Ukraine’s skies.

Opinion polls conducted in the US show that, 72 per cent of people, although certainly outraged by the number civilian, soldiers and material casualties in places like Kherson and Mariupol as broadcast on Western media outlets – televisions, radio and newspapers, every day, are in total favour of grounding Russian planes; but certainly not with the foreign tool of creating a no-fly zone. While it might sound like a noble thing to do in the abstract, a US and NATO-enforced no-fly zone over Ukraine would obviously represent very outrageous and retrogressive foreign policy thinking, as it would certainly usher and guarantee the start of World War III and nuclear annihilation of lives and material wellbeing on humanity in this planet (O’Neil 2022, Inkles 2022).

Brief Theoretical and Empirical Definition and Explanation of a No Fly Zone

As Long (2012) explains, "...a no-fly zone, also known as a no-flight zone (NFZ), or airspace exclusion zone (AEZ), is a territory constituting an airspace established by a military power over which certain aircrafts are not permitted to fly. A no-fly zone is essentially a predetermined section of airspace in which military forces revoke access to all other aircraft. Put simply, a no-fly zone is established when one or more parties prohibit either all or certain types of aircraft from flying through a designated airspace, over a country or region. And, such a zone requires that the parties concerned be willing to enforce it. Such zones are usually set up in an enemy power's territory during a conflict, similar in concept to an aerial demilitarised zone, and usually intended to prohibit the enemy's military aircrafts from operating in the region." Thus, military actions are employed by the enforcing state and, depending on the terms of the NFZ, which may include preemptive attacks to prevent potential violations, reactive force targeted at violating aircraft, or surveillance with no use of force. Air exclusion zones and anti-aircraft defenses are sometimes set up in a civilian context, for example to protect sensitive locations, or events such as the 2012 London Olympics Games, against terrorist air attacks.

Actually, as Prentiss (2021) opines, "...no-fly zones are a modern phenomenon established in the 1990s, and they can be distinguished from traditional air power missions by their coercive appropriation of another nation's airspace only, to achieve aims on the ground within the target nation." For instance, while the Royal Air Force, (RAF) conducted prototypical air control operations over various contentious colonies between the two World Wars, no-fly zones did not assume their modern form until the end of the Gulf Wars in 1991.

As Depetula (2000) observes, "...during the Cold War, the risk of local conflict escalating into nuclear showdown made military intervention as a tool of United States statecraft unappealing. Furthermore, air power was a relatively blunt instrument until the operational maturation of stealth and precision-strike technologies." However, before the Gulf War of 1991, it had not been possible to perform nuanced attacks against transitory, difficult-to-reach targets, and air power thus lacked the ability to produce decisive political effects short of total war. However, the demise of the Soviet Union and technological advances in aerospace capabilities made no-fly zones viable in both political and military contexts.

Brief History of the Application of No Fly Zones

Iraq, 1991 – 2003

As a Staff Writer, broadcasting in the B. B. C. News on 29th December, 1998, reported, "During the 1991 Gulf War, the United States along with other coalition countries established two no-fly zones in Iraq. The US and its coalition officials stated that the northern no-fly zone was intended to prevent attacks against the Kurdish people by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, and that the southern no-fly-zone was intended to protect Iraqi's Shia population. On March 16, 1988, the Iraqi Air Force deployed chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians in what is known as the Halabja Chemical Attack, killing over 5,000 people. This air-to-ground event served as part of the motivation used by coalition forces in order to extend and expand the NFZs, as well as citing parts of Chapter 42 within the UN Charter. The southern no-fly zone originally extended to the 32nd parallel but was extended to the 33rd parallel in 1996."

Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1993–1995 – Operation Deny Flight

In 1992, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 781, prohibiting unauthorised military flights in Bosnian airspace. This led to what they called 'Operation Sky Monitor,' where NATO monitored violations of the no-fly zone but did not take action against violators of the resolution. In response to 500 documented violations by 1993, including one combat violation, the Security Council passed Resolution 816, which prohibited all unauthorised flights and allowed all UN member states to "take all necessary measures to ensure compliance with the no-fly zone restrictions. This led to what again was called, Operation Deny Flight. NATO later launched air strikes during Operation Deny Flight and during Operation Deliberate Force (Boudon, 1998) Alito, 2019).

No Fly Zone in Libya, 2011

As part of the 2011 military intervention in Libya, the United Nations Security Council, the approved a no-fly zone on 17 March 2011. The resolution includes provisions for further actions to prevent attacks on civilian targets. NATO seized the opportunity to take the offensive, bombing Libyan government positions during the civil war. The NATO no fly zone was terminated on 27 October after a unanimous vote by the United Nations Security Council.

Libya, 2018 and 2019

A no-fly zone was declared by the Libyan National Army (LNA) in the southern part of the country, during the LNA's offensive in the region in 2018. It was later re-implemented for 10 days in 2019 as the LNA established control over oil fields in the region. The LNA declared another no-fly zone in the country's west, during the 2019 Western Libya offensive.

The 2022 Discussions and Calls of a No Fly Zone over Ukraine

Shortly after the start of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Ukrainian leadership repeatedly urged NATO to enforce a no-fly zone over Ukraine, but the alliance rejected the request on account of risking further escalation and direct military confrontation with Russia as well as questioning its value in protecting the Ukrainian settlements amid indiscriminate attacks from the Russian ground-based artillery.

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Analysis and Findings

Essentially, this paper examined the inherent challenges and prospects for international relations and its application of one of its several foreign policymaking strands - the Rational Actor Model, (RAM), particularly in instituting a No-Fly Zone over Ukraine as a foreign policy action by the US and its NATO allies. The paper's main research trust is to alert, caution and dissuade the US and its NATO allies from embarking on a reckless foreign policy action, which would jeopardise global human and material security, which appears intrinsic in the Russian-Ukraine War. Accordingly, it advocates for a foreign policy of appeasement in order not to precipitate a 3rd World War, which is in the making, given the incessant calls for the creation of a No Fly Zone by the US and its NATO allies over Ukraine.

This paper discerns from previous works, which, aptly vindicates its research trust. Accordingly, a 2004 Stanford University paper published in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, echoed lessons obtained from Iraq and Bosnia on the Theory and Practice of No-fly Zones in the modern world. The paper, like this one, find out that, nowadays, several countries, including

Russia, own nuclear weapons, which could be released upon humanity with reckless abandon, by irresponsible and unresponsive states' leaderships, in the event of a No Fly Zone, especially against Russia. The Stanford University paper, like this present one, reviewed the effectiveness of the air-based campaigns in achieving military objectives, and hereby present these findings: (i) Make a clear, unified command structure to effectively monitor violations of a No Fly Zone. For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during "Operation Deny Flight," a confusing dual-key coordination structure provided inadequate authority and resulted in air forces not being given authority to assist in key situations; (ii) avoid a perpetual patrol problem, states must know in advance their foreign policy objectives and the exit strategy for no-fly zones, (iii) the effectiveness of no-fly zones is highly dependent on regional support. For example, the lack of support from Turkey for the 1996 Iraq no-fly zone ultimately constrained the US and its coalition's ability to effectively enforce it.

Recommendations

Herein, I divulge the wreckful facts that, many foreign policy commentators and Ukrainian government spokespeople are talking about a no-fly zone, like it's something that can just be declared, as though it is an administrative fiat to be decided upon by the NATO over a glass of wine. For instance, President Zelensky has been direct in his appeals for the U.S. government to step in. Bizarrely, Zelensky invoked the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, as he told the US Congress that he dreamed of a no-fly zone; but, fortunately, his was a mere retrogressive dream – an hallucination, which calls for human and material destruction, as opposed to Luther's dream which called for the preservation of human and material lives and dignity. (i) Such insinuations must be refrained in order to give global peace a chance and save human and material destruction through nuclear weapons. (ii) Foreign policies must wear human face, rather than brute use of power. (iii) The Rational Actor Model in foreign policy making is not necessarily designed to ferment gratuitous the use of state power. (iv) Realism must be re-defined to inculcate the application of national interest geared towards the preservation of lives more than the destruction of such lives.

Conclusion

Even if Zelensky is prey in the armpits of NATO, as the world must appreciate his will to preserve lives of people and property in Ukraine against Russia's brutal aggression, this must not be achieved through further and even massive human and material destruction via a No Fly Zone against Russia. As Zelensky retorted, "Is it a lot to ask for, to create a no-fly zone over Ukraine to save people? Is this too much to ask, a humanitarian no-fly zone, so that Russia would not be able to terrorise our free cities?" Certainly, these are questions actually evoke sympathy, but it is a miscalculated sympathy off-course. The day before, he spoke to Canadian lawmakers, Zelensky pleaded: "Please close the sky, close the airspace, and please stop the bombing. How many more cruise missiles have to fall on our cities until you make this happen?" Zelensky had virtually every member of Congress on their feet applauding, with Speaker Nancy Pelosi cheerfully cheering right-wing battle cry, *Slava Ukraini*. But only a handful of U.S. politicians appeared to be won over to the idea of a No-Fly-Zone.

In this direction, Florida Republican Party Senator Rick Scott was one, who said, "President Joe Biden is heartless and ignorant, if he does not close Ukrainian skies to Russian attacks, meaning insinuating that, the Biden's Democratic Party Administration should declare a No-Fly-Zone over Ukraine, ostensibly to stop the Russian carnage in Ukraine. Nonetheless, this Republican

Senator failed to understand either due to his partisan character of his insinuations or his ignorance about the dangers of a No-Fly Zone against Russia. He lost sight of the fact that, the inherent global human insecurity arising from a No-Fly Zone would be far more disastrous than the Russian human and material carnage which is limited in Ukraine. Zelensky would have us believe that Washington or Ottawa can simply issue a statement saying Ukraine's skies are closed, and then, like magic, the Russian military will halt its air assault. Sen. Scott says anyone who opposes it is ignorant. However, it is rather the advocates of a no-fly zone who are actually the ignorant ones, who are unable to decipher between morality and immorality in politics and especially in international relations, as a taught and practice human academic discipline.

The Urgent Need for Bilateral Negotiations To Avert a Global Nuclear Annihilation for Humanity

Certainly, the people of Ukraine have been caught up in the middle of a conflict between great powers. They are paying the most immediate cost in this fight, with thousands losing their lives. The rest of the globe is also subjected to the risk of a new World War. Historically, the U.S.'s imperialism, determined to encircle Russia and cement its dominance in Europe, helped overthrow the government of Ukraine in a coup in 2014 and dangled the prospects of the country that would be brought into the anti-Russia NATO military alliance. Obviously, the coup empowered the extreme right wing in Ukraine and helped set off a civil war in the east that has raged for over eight years. The ruling clique around Putin was certainly provoked by these many years of escalating U.S. threats to Russian security.

However, this clique also has its own agenda. This agenda is to resuscitate and realise the dreams of a new Russian Empire that will bring back old subjects back under Moscow's rule and overturn Soviet-era openings for national self-determinations. This has remained key motivation, judging by the Russian Putin's own speech on the eve of the Ukraine invasion. After all said and done, the declaration of a No-Fly-Zone over Ukraine will preempt the eruption of a the 3rd World War, thus, this remains the challenge of pundits in international relations to dissuade its occurrence, and to rather offer glooming prospects of a better world adorned by human security, even if this would be relative. Nearly four months - February – May 2022, into the Russia-Ukraine war, all of the sides involved are taking ever greater risks. The hitherto unthinkable, a nuclear exchange in Europe, is being openly considered and built up as a threat. Voices of caution, restraint and appeals to reason have largely fallen silent. Despite the looming catastrophe, NATO appears not prepared to compromise. Indeed, in a televised speech the day before the invasion of Ukraine, the Russia's Vladimir Putin issued this threat:

"Whoever tries to get in our way and create further threats to our country and our people must know that Russia's response will come immediately and will lead to consequences without precedent in history. All the necessary decisions have been taken. I hope you hear my words."

This was a clear reference to Russia's using its nuclear arsenal in the event Western direct intervention. According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Russia's nuclear arsenal consists of more than 6,000 warheads, 900 of which are immediately operational. Instead of de-escalating the situation, however, NATO has poured oil onto the fire, it categorically rejected Putin's request for security guarantees, which the latter—following decades of NATO eastward expansion, extensive NATO manoeuvres along the Russian border and direct NATO interference in Ukraine and Georgia, must have taken as an existential threat. Since the beginning of the war, NATO has done everything in its power to cut off any chance of retreat for Putin, ranging from draconian economic sanctions to the threat of dragging him before an

international tribunal. NATO is flooding Ukraine with high-tech weapons, concentrating its own troops on the border and threatening to intervene even directly in the war.

Nonetheless, the alliance has shied away from open military action against Russia. On March 11, US President Joe Biden insisted on Twitter that “we will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full might of a united and galvanized NATO.” He rejected direct military intervention in Ukraine, however, writing: “A direct confrontation between NATO and Russia is World War III. And something we must strive to prevent.” But even this hurdle is disappearing rapidly, as Ukraine’s Zelensky, several Eastern European heads of government, as well as other political figures in Europe and the US, including the bulk of Western media organs are emphatically calling for the establishment of a No-Fly Zone, which would be tantamount to NATO officially entering the war. Thomas Enders, CEO of Airbus until 2019 and since then president of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), is particularly aggressive in this respect.

“Establishing such a no-fly zone over western Ukraine is not just feasible; it is necessary,” he wrote in an article for Politico. “It is time for the West to expose Putin’s nuclear threats for what they really are—a bluff to deter Western governments from military intervention.”

Nevertheless, as MacFarlane (2022:11) opines, “Ukrainian, Finnish, Swedish, and American troops are already among those which will take part in Estonia's "Siil". This means "Hedgehog", a military drill which begins next week (22nd to 29th May, 2022), which will bring together more than 15,000 troops from 10 countries as Russia’s Vladimir Putin grapples with a resolute Ukraine and NATO’s expansionism. Consequently, tensions between Russia and its Western adversaries spiked again in the week (15th to 20th May, 2022), with Finland's public commitment to gaining NATO membership, as Sweden gears towards the same ambition. Both nations prompted to shed their historical policy of neutrality by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.”

But, what, if Putin’s nuclear threats are not a bluff? What if he makes good on them because his back is against the wall? Kaliningrad is only 530 kilometres from Berlin. The nuclear-capable medium-range missiles stationed there would take just four-and-a-half minutes to reach the German capital with its almost four million inhabitants. In between lays Warsaw and many other European cities. Enders is playing Russian roulette with nuclear weapons. He risks the nuclear destruction of Europe and large parts of the globe. It would certainly be absurd to think the aim is to simply allow bitterly poor Ukraine to become a member of the European Union and NATO! Enders speaks for a ruling class that has lost its moorings and, faced with the insoluble contradictions of the capitalist system, is once again striving for conquest and dictatorship; that regards the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to realise the biggest rearmament programme in Germany since Hitler. He speaks for a ruling class which, in Germany alone, sacrifices 250 lives every day to a pandemic which as China has shown that, it can be controlled; despite record infections. He is lifting all Corona protections, driving social inequality to unprecedented extremes and can only maintain its over-indebted financial system by declaring war on the working class. Three years ago, Enders as a onetime Head of Europe’s largest arms company, Airbus, spoke out in favour of “an open, non-ideological, strategic debate” on a military and great power policy for Germany, which he likened to a vegetarian in a “world full of carnivores” (Tardos 2022, Wess 2022, Quinn 2022).

Two years ago, in *Die Zeit*, he declared: "We need to talk about nuclear weapons." The time was "ripe for a bold step towards new European security architecture," he wrote. This would include "our own nuclear umbrella." If Europe were to learn "the language of power" again, "so as not to be crushed between the old and new great powers," it would have to "become a military power again." The "construction of a powerful European Defense Union" is "absolutely inconceivable without nuclear backing." The war in Ukraine serves to realise these militaristic goals. The Ukrainian population, which is bearing the brunt of the war, is merely a pawn on the chessboard of the imperialist powers. They will suffer the same fate as the Iraqis, Afghans and Libyans, all of whose countries sank into chaos and misery after being "liberated" by the US and its NATO allies. The disastrous consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union thirty years ago are now becoming fully apparent. Former Stalinist secret service agent Putin was among those who fully supported the plundering of the economy by oligarchs, dreamed of their wealth to come and derided the term "imperialism" as an invention of Lenin—or even worse, Leon Trotsky.

In 1917, the Bolshevik leaders had insisted that wars were inevitable as long as capitalism as mode of producing wealth in society was not overthrown by the working class (Nikita 2002, Yetsini 2002). Imperialist's wars, Trotsky wrote in 1940, derives "their origins inexorably from the inherent contradictions of international capitalist interests. Contrary to the official fables designed to drug the people, in what Marx called 'the opium of the masses' the chief cause of war as of all other social evils, are unemployment, nepotism, ethnicity, high cost of living, fascism, poverty, human negation and development disoriented public and foreign policies, colonial oppression" Others include "...the inordinate and widespread proclivity for private property ownership, confiscation and monopolisation of political power; the corresponding confiscation of means of production; together with their bourgeois state capture and police state syndromes; the entrenchment of politics of the belly," (Bayart 1993); all of which rest on the capitalist foundations of societies."

Now, the imperialist powers are using Putin's reactionary foreign policymaking, which creates war against Ukraine to strangle Russia economically, even at the risk of wiping out humanity. Imperialist powers are even confiscating the yachts of Russian oligarchs, whose unrestrained enrichment they had once hailed as a "victory of freedom, simply translated as the eminent spread of global capitalism." The oligarchs will of course one day, get their yachts back, if they turn against Putin's communist tendencies. The Ukrainian oligarchs are allowed to keep their boats; after all, Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Elon Musk do also cruise the world's oceans on \$500 million yachts. Thus, the threats of war can only be stopped by the means of class struggle; where the working class, which usually bear the costs of wars, sanctions, pandemics and financial crises and is inevitably thrown into conflict with the bankrupt capitalist system, must unite internationally and fight for a non-antagonist and development friendly socialist programme.

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