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## THE EFFECT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT ON THE POTENTIAL USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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**Abstraction :** This research aims to analyze the potential use of nuclear weapons in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022. Based on a literature study, google trend analysis, and media review approach, there are four findings from this study. First, the goal of Ukraine joining NATO is to increase military strength and to obtain support as well as security guarantees from alliance countries is considered. As a result, Russia responded by increasing its military capability to invade Ukraine to maintain its national security. This situation represents the concept of the security dilemma. Second, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia as a deterrence strategy against NATO intervention. This intentions have yielded little results, because NATO continues to provide military support to Ukraine. Third, NATO's weapons assistance to Ukraine has disrupted the balance of power in the international system. The increase in Russian military weapons and nuclear threats as the implementation of the power struggle aims to prevent the NATO alliance from becoming stronger which threatens Russia's national interests. Finally, the media trend analysis indicates that the potential use of nuclear weapons for war is still relatively small and become weaken.

**Keywords:** *National Interest and Security, NATO, Russia and Ukraine, Nuclear Weapons, Balance of Power, Deterrence*

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### INTRODUCTION

Russia's annexation of Ukraine which has taken place since February 24, 2022, is still happening today. This conflict has been going on for a long time because of the indirect intervention of the European Union and the United States through

NATO agencies. This intervention took the form of military weapons assistance (from portable drones to long-range missile systems) and was followed by economic sanctions imposed by the West on Russia (Bimo, 2022). This raises Russia's doubts "against the victory of conventional forces" in the war against Ukraine in Eastern Ukraine. As a result, Russia has begun to increase its nuclear alert and there is a threat to use nuclear weapons in case of urgency (Leatemala, 2022).

According to A Lieven (1999) in his work "Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry" historically Russia and Ukraine have closeness that is too complex to be separated. Lieven believes that the future of Ukraine is as an independent country with close cooperative relations with Russia. On the other hand, Yaroslav Bilinsky (1999) in his work "Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: The Baltic States and Ukraine" argues that accelerating the process of expansion of the NATO alliance by forging alliances with four countries from Russia's western borders, namely, Latvia, Livonia, Estonia, and Ukraine) arguing that such measures can create a safe environment and strengthen stability in Eastern and Central Europe (Korostelina, 2003: 142).

Since disintegration of United Soviet Socialist Republic, relations between Russia and Ukraine have deteriorated and culminated in the Ukraine revolution in 2014. This was followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and the separatist support of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic of Russia (Mankoff, 2022). This condition strengthens Ukraine alliances with western countries, especially the desire to establish security cooperation with NATO. Ukraine's desire to join NATO became Russia's geopolitical and geostrategic threat in Eastern Europe and made it an excuse for a military invasion of Ukraine (Mankoff, 2022). Some of Russia's wishes in the Ukraine conflict summarized by BBC News include; (1) Ukraine is neutral (concerning the desire to expand the alliance with the Western/NATO military), (2) Demilitarized by the Ukraine side without the intervention of NATO and its allies, (3) De-Nazification, (4) the Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimean regions over Russia, (5) Use of the Russian Language in Ukraine (Kirby, 2022). These are the reasons for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn criticism from many countries (Kompas, 2022), but that didn't stop Russia from retreating, on the contrary, it continued to invade Ukraine. Indirect intervention by western countries is considered by Russia as an imbalance of security power. This imbalance of power poses a threat to Russia and makes Russia's potential use of nuclear weapons to protect its national interests. (Gustav Gressel, 2022)

However, behind Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons, it has increased the number and role of nuclear weapons in nuclear weapon states. According to

Wilfred Wan, Director of the Program for Weapons of Mass Destruction at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (2022), Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Western support for Ukraine have created tensions among nuclear-armed countries in the world. As a result, countries holding nuclear weapons renew and upgrade their nuclear arsenals, and even some countries sharpen nuclear rhetoric and the function of nuclear weapons in their security/military strategies (Ahmad, 2022). Some observers argue that this raises concerns about the potential prospect of a nuclear confrontation with the West.

Based on this background, this paper focuses on the potential use of nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 which is based on national interests and geographical factors. The time limit for this research is February - June 2022 because this has triggered an international crisis, especially the potential use of nuclear weapons. This study aims to explain and identify the factors and conditions that can encourage the use of nuclear weapons in conflict. Likewise, an analysis of western intervention in Ukraine against Russia's use of nuclear weapons will be provided. In addition, this research offers a solution so that nuclear war can be avoided.

This paper departs from the preposition that an increase in one country's military power can threaten another country's security. Western intervention that raises concerns Russia poses the threat of using nuclear weapons in the Ukraine conflict. The increase in power is intended to realize the national interest of a country and create security at home and abroad. This is what causes disruption of the concept of balance of power in the international system. The author examines the concept of balance of power from the perspective of Realism in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The main question in this research is "How the US and NATO intervention could lead to the potential use of nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine War." In the study, it can be explained that the Russian-Ukraine conflict sparked fears of Russia's defeat in the war. Two indications are behind Russia's use of nuclear weapons. First, the national interests of Russia and Ukraine which are influence foreign policy. Second, Western intervention, the assistance of Western conventional weapons against Ukraine, provided the power of conventional weapons that allowed Russia to experience defeat in conventional wars. These reasons are Russia's concern about the potential defeat in the Ukraine conflict. This study aims to identify Ukraine's interests in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, analyze the influence of NATO intervention in the Russia-Ukraine War and analyze the correlation between NATO intervention and the potential use of Russian nuclear weapons.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The author uses three conceptions to analyze the potential use of nuclear weapons in the war between Russia and Ukraine, namely: deterrence, security dilemma, and realism. The concept of Deterrence analyzes the strategy of using nuclear weapons. The main purpose of the concept of deterrence is to prevent the occurrence or increase of a country with strong potential to become a superpower country with a strategy of deterrence or prevention in an international conflict. The concept of deterrence is used to analyze the correlation between NATO intervention and the use of Russian nuclear weapons. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the concept of deterrence is used to analyze Russia's behavior in the threat of using nuclear weapons due to NATO intervention and NATO's response after Russia's deterrence.

The security dilemma concept analyzes the increase in power and the formation of an alliance as a threat to other countries. Increasing security and the formation of an alliance as a national security requirement of a country brings threats to other countries. The concept of the Security Dilemma is used to analyze NATO's intervention in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Security Dilemma Concept analyzes Ukraine's desire to join NATO for increased strength and security protection of the alliance countries. This threatens Russia's security because NATO is considered to have been expanding in the Eastern European Region. To that end, Russia invaded Ukraine in response to Ukraine's desire to join NATO.

Realism theory analyzes power in the international system. Increasing the power of a country can interfere with the national interests of other countries and the international system. Realism theory emphasizes the balance of power in the international system. Realism theory is used to analyze the national interests of Russia and Ukraine. NATO arms aid to Ukraine is considered by Russia to interfere with its national interests. Russia is increasing its military arsenal and nuclear threats by Russia intending to create a balance of power in the Eastern European Region. The linkage of the three conceptions is to analyze how the correlation between NATO intervention and the use of nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. These national interests carry Russia and Ukraine in their foreign policy actions in the Eastern European Region. Ukraine's national interest is to get security protection from NATO to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia has an interest in controlling Ukraine and maintaining its influence in the Eastern European Region. However, Ukraine's desire to join NATO and NATO's military assistance to Ukraine poses a threat to Russia and creates a security dilemma in the Eastern European Region. In response to this, Russia increased its military arsenal and issued a threat to the

use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent by Russia.

### ***Deterrence Concept***

The concept of deterrence in general is a defensive strategy developed after World War I and used during the Cold War. This is especially relevant to the use of nuclear weapons and is also related to the War on Terrorism (Baylis, 2002). According to Robert Jervis, deterrence theory is a theory that emerged during the Cold War because of how things happened during the war. In this theory, there are countries whose efforts can increase national capabilities and strength to fend off attacks from other countries or their opponents or can also make opponents think twice if they want to attack.

Griggiths and O'Callaghan's concept of deterrence, interpreted it by saying "Don't attack me, or something bad will happen to you." Deterrence has the main goal, namely, to prevent the occurrence or increase of countries that have strong potential to become the newest superpower countries. This concept will be declared successful if the opposing country that wants to attack believes that the costs to be incurred later are more or greater than the benefits obtained if they attack.

Deterrence describes that many requirements are owned by a country that has nuclear power to then be able to apply deterrence (Art, 2009). Several requirements are then appointed as variables which can then be used as a reference to see the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons in the Russian-Ukraine conflict. Here are some of the variables: (1) The concept of deterrence sees the Rational State as a condition applied by the state to carry out deterrence. This is used to avoid abuse of authority related to the nuclear launch command system. (2) Each actor is required to have the capability of Second Strike, namely the power of three dimensions, namely land, sea, and air, all of which can launch nuclear weapons. (3) Historically, each country is obliged to show that there is no direct involvement in armed conflict as a factor that explains the lack of decision on the conflict (Nation State, 2018).

The concept of deterrence has been used by Triantama (2021) entitled Nuclear Proliferation as the Creator of Contemporary World Peace Vol.4 No.1. This type of research is descriptive, using a qualitative approach. In this research, the theory used is Deterrence and Cost of War. Then the result that can be concluded from this research is the argument that Nuclear Proliferation can create and maintain stability in the international system. The argument that nuclear proliferation can create and maintain stability in the international system. Triatama refers to Kenneth Waltz with his article published in The Adelphi Papers entitled "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better" which supports

nuclear proliferation. Waltz stated that when there is a slow proliferation of nuclear weapons in various countries, what will happen is stability, not nuclear war as previously proclaimed. Nuclear war, as non-proliferation groups predict, will occur if nuclear weapons are owned by many countries, will not occur or at least the probability will decrease.

Triatama also stated that the decrease in the probability of conflict between countries and nuclear war caused by nuclear proliferation was based on several things. First, nuclear weapons with very massive destructive power will provide excellent deterrence. Deterrence of nuclear weapons is even said to be functional or useful even though the possession of nuclear weapons by a country is very little or not in balance with that of the enemy country. Second, still related to deterrence from nuclear weapons, the presence of nuclear weapons causes a very large cost of war that must be borne by a country when deciding to go to war, even when the country wins the war. This is because there is no guarantee that the first strike will destroy the enemy's nuclear weapons and shadow retaliations. This very high cost of war will also prevent revisionist countries from carrying out nuclear attacks.

Triatama argues that pro-proliferation is still in accordance with the current international context. This is based on nuclear proliferation which is defined by the spread of possession of nuclear weapons empirically. The predictions of proponents of nuclear non-proliferation are not proven. Currently, nuclear weapons are not only owned by countries that have been regulated in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Countries like Israel, India, North Korea, Pakistan have proven to have nuclear weapons (Origin & Beardsley, 2007). Based on empirical data, until now there has never been a nuclear war. Based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2020), after the end of the cold war, international conflicts are no longer in the form of interstate wars but are dominated by intrastate wars (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2020). This is in accordance with the arguments of nuclear pro-proliferation thinkers that the possession of nuclear weapons by many countries will not lead to nuclear war and can even create international stability.

The Determination Theory and Cost of War that are used correlate with examples of conflict cases that are the object of research, namely the conflict between India and Pakistan where nuclear weapons owned by the two countries can minimize or even eliminate the probability of war. The author explains this happens by referring to Waltz who states that through possession of nuclear weapons will eliminate the problem of "credibility of deterrence". If in conventional weapons the success of deterrence still depends on whether the deterrence has credibility or not, then this does not apply to nuclear weapons. Deterrence presented by

nuclear weapons is certainly felt by other countries. In other words, the deterrence caused by nuclear weapons will appear immediately when the weapon is present. Every country in the world will realize the impact of the massive destruction caused by a nuclear attack even in small numbers. Therefore, possession of nuclear weapons can also reduce the potential for war. (Triatama, 2021)

### ***Security Dilemma Concept***

In the study of International Relations (IR), the security dilemma is one of the major concepts that can analyze the actual international situation in which a country cannot be guaranteed its security and peace. State security is an important thing to maintain because if the security of the country is easy to collapse, then the peace of the country is not guaranteed. Therefore, this security dilemma provides improvements such as the existence of a military defense system or as a form of alliance with other countries. According to John H. Herz, a security dilemma in IR is "a structural idea in which the efforts taken by a country to safeguard its own security needs, regardless of its intentions, tend to trigger anxiety for other countries, especially countries that around him, because each country (which took the action) considered that the actions it took were only defensive in nature and the actions taken by other countries were threatening" (Herz, 1950: 157).

Security dilemmas can occur in various countries, especially in countries that have a superpower. Like the conflict Russia vis a vis Ukraine. The conflict caused tension between the two countries, each country felt threatened and began to increase its military strength to increase the security of its national defense. This security dilemma can also encourage countries to form new alliances or can also give power to alliances that have already been formed. If the action of the offensive is considered unprofitable, then the formation of an alliance can be a profitable alternative (Jarvis, 1978: 186-214).

In his study, Sinaga (2009) used the theory of National Security. From the results of his research, Sinaga said that Iran's nuclear possession is one of the country's efforts to survive and get a better bargaining position in interacting with other countries, especially in the face of the hegemonic domination of the United States. Furthermore, all the political pressure that Iran received from the international community did not change the country's stance to develop its nuclear development. According to Spiegel (2004) which was included in the journal, national security is something that cannot be defined, which means that anyone can use this term to share their interests.

### ***Realism Theory***

In realism, the behavior of states to interact concerning international relations is carried out rationally for their national interests, especially for the interests of defense and national security. The main goal of the state to maintain its national security must use the power of the state itself. This power will determine the fate of the country. Realism can grow well in the study of IR because of the attitude of realism that has considerations between politics and state power both distinctly and autonomously, so it can be said that realism is a perspective that has power in the study of international politics.

The philosopher who contributed to the thought of Realism, namely Thucydides, provided a basic understanding of Realism's view of International Politics. Thucydides in his *The History of Peloponnesian War* (1972) describes the war that took place in the 5th century BC in Greece between Athens and Sparta. Thucydides argues that an increase in the power of one country will create insecurity in other countries, it triggers a war. Realism's basic thinking emphasizes more on explaining politics that 'possibility' is more important than truth (Dugis, 2016:38).

Spykman in his work *America's Strategy in World Politics* (1942) explains that the struggle for power means that there is a struggle for defense (survival) and the improvement of the position of power is relatively the primary goal of a country's domestic and foreign policy (Dugis, 2016: 43). Then, Hans Morgenthau in his book entitled *Politics Among Nations* (1948), also provides several assumptions and arguments based on several things, namely: basically, human nature is essentially unchanging and thirsty for power, that international politics as an arena for fighting for power and the state in defining national interests are based on power boundaries, and politics is a district and autonomous area of action (Dugis, 2016:44-47).

In realism, the national interest has a quite special meaning, namely a strategic force that gives rational thinking to the state as a policy maker to act. According to Machiavelli, the highest political value is national freedom, namely independence (Jackson, R & Sorensen, G. 1999:94). There are four assumptions and ideas from the point of view of realism, namely, pessimistic thinking based on human thinking, belief in international relations based on conflictual and ultimately the conflict is resolved by war, firmly adhering to the value of national security and the continuation of life. state, as well as basic skepticism, namely progress in international politics as has happened in domestic political life (Jackson, R & Sorensen, G. 1999:88). From some assumptions of realism thinkers, it can be concluded that the realism perspective in looking at international politics explains that the main actor is a state which is basically selfish and

individualistic, actions taken by the state based on its own interests with rational considerations for the national interest and looking at the anarchic international system, namely states interact in the context of anarchy in international politics. The conflicts between Russia and Ukraine; the assumption can be seen from the security crisis that has occurred in Russia-Ukraine. According to Machiavelli, as a ruler, we must have the power to maintain something we have and want to achieve and must be able to become a fox who has ingenuity, intelligence, and agility in seeing opportunities and opportunities (Jackson, R & Sorensen, G. 1999: 94). In the international world, Russian President Vladimir Putin is a person who is very feared because he has courage, strength and can take high risks in making decisions. The balance of power that has occurred with Russia-Ukraine can put both in a situation called by Hobbes, namely the 'security dilemma' which is defined in world politics as the achievement of personal security and domestic security through the creation of a state that is always accompanied by conditions of national and international insecurity. rooted in the anarchy of the state system (Jackson, R & Sorensen, G. 1999:96). This is done so that both countries can create security and sovereignty of their respective countries.

In his study, Yuniasih (2020) uses Realist Perception and the concept of Deterrence Strategy. In this study, it can be concluded that security tensions in the region occur due to increased military capabilities by regional countries such as North Korea, Japan, South Korea, and China. The strategic location of East Asia has led to many regional conflicts after the cold war so that each country increases its military capabilities to maintain its national stability. Furthermore, North Korea showed its capabilities in the existing defense system after seeing the increasing regional security situation, the improvement made by North Korea was the development and testing of nuclear weapons which were used as a tool for deterrence. Based on the concept of deterrence strategy, states generally take steps to prevent a state from being threatened by the power of big state domination. Thus, North Korea is indicated to be very strong in implementing a deterrence strategy in the East Asia region through developed nuclear tests.

## **METHOD**

The author uses a qualitative-descriptive research method. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), a qualitative approach is research that produces findings that cannot be achieved by using statistical procedures or by other means of quantification. Meanwhile, the qualitative research method according to Lexy J. Moleong (2000) is based on the research foundation, research paradigm, problem formulation, research stages, research techniques, criteria, and techniques for examining data and analyzing and interpreting data. Sources of data used in this

study used secondary data. Secondary data sources are data obtained indirectly (Sugiyono, 2010:116), the data obtained by researchers from books, articles, and data contained in the news on the internet that provides information about conflicts that occur between Russia with Ukraine. One example is also observing and reading international news to date. The secondary data that the researcher uses is from BBC News, Russia in Global Affairs, Koran Tempo, Kompas, Al Jazeera, Russia Beyond, Google Trends, Reuters, and others.

With the data collection techniques carried out in this study use library research techniques, and data collection using written document sources related to research problems, namely document sources, books, journals, and international media as a reference in analyzing research data. The presentation and analysis of data are carried out by explaining or describing the actions in the implementation of the foreign policies of Russia, Ukraine, and NATO in dealing with the issue of the potential use of nuclear weapons in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In the author's systematic analysis using qualitative-descriptive methods, the author combines aspects of the interests of Russia and Ukraine, and coordinated NATO intervention, by explaining and inferring whether these aspects are related to the potential use of the threat of using nuclear weapons

**Table 1 Aspects, Dimensions and Indicators**

ASPECTS	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
<b>Ukrainian interests</b>	Ukraine's foreign policy	Ukraine's attempt to join NATO
		Human security, the safety of civilians to live freely with the departure of Russian troops
	National Interest	Ukraine's attempt to escape Russia's shadow.
		Ukraine's efforts to gain military protection
<b>Russian interests</b>	Russia's foreign policy	Russia's efforts to make Ukraine a buffer zone with NATO and EU countries
		Prevent NATO from expanding into Eastern Europe

	National Interest	Political Image of the former “Soviet Union”; Russia's attempt to keep Ukraine part of the Soviet Union
		The threat of Russian sovereignty, avoiding other regions that want to be independent.
<b>Western Intervention (NATO)</b>	Distribution of military weapons to Ukraine by NATO and the US	NATO efforts to expand into Eastern Europe
		Energy security
	Global political interests	US hegemony
		Prevent Russian domination
<b>Potential Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons</b>	Deterrence	Russia's nuclear forces are on high alert via Vladimir Putin's instructions
		Statements from Russian officials regarding the threat of nuclear use if Russia is cornered
		When NATO and the US were still intervening in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict
	Putin's Interests	Desire to be re-elected
		Putin's military campaign over Crimea

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first part discusses the interests of Russia and Ukraine. Differences in interests between Russia and Ukraine brought them into a conflict situation. Russia's national interest is to strengthen its influence in the Region and Ukraine's alignment with Russia through its foreign policy by controlling Crimea and invading Ukraine. This has led to Ukraine's desire to join NATO to guarantee the security of the alliance countries from Russian attacks. The second part discusses NATO's intervention in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the use of nuclear weapons. NATO intervention in the form of providing military weapons assistance to Ukraine and the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia. The third part discusses the correlation of NATO interventions with Russia's potential nuclear uses. The intervention by NATO poses a military threat to Russia. As a result of these military threats, Russia issued a threat to use nuclear weapons which NATO hoped would not intervene in the Russia-

Ukraine conflict.

### ***Russia and Ukraine Interests***

Russia's interest in Ukraine is to control Ukraine and maintain its influence in the Eastern European Region. On the other hand, Ukraine chose to join NATO as the implementation of its foreign policy for a reason, namely Russia. The Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014 which led to the annexation of the Crimea region by Russia, raised the urgency for Ukraine to join NATO. If Ukraine joins NATO, it will get military support in the face of external threats.

However, Russia has a close cultural, economic, and political affinity with Ukraine. Ukraine is also part of Russia's existence in the Eastern European Region, in many ways Ukraine is the center of Russia's identity and vision internationally. Geographically, Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe that has an area of 603,550 km<sup>2</sup> which is directly adjacent to Russia in the east (CIA, 2016). Ukraine is often mentioned as a country that has two sides because in that position Ukraine is often in a position of tug of war.



**Figure 1 Ukraine's political and cultural split**  
Source: Global Student Square

In Figure 1, the western part of Ukraine is more inclined towards the European Union, while the eastern part of Ukraine is more pro-Russian. Most Ukrainians speak Russian, they associate themselves with Russia and identify themselves as Russian. Meanwhile, in the West, he identifies himself as a Ukrainian who leans toward the West (Beatrice in Global Student Square). The different views of the two camps involved them in a political dilemma. The geographical location of Ukraine also affects the political conditions of Ukraine, one of which is in strategic policies and presidential elections. In 2013, people in Ukraine experienced divisions because the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich canceled a trade cooperation agreement with the European Union and chose to strengthen cooperative relations with Russia (McDougal, 2015: 1848).

Yanukovich's policy received protests from the opposition which led to demonstrations in Ukraine. At the same time, Ukraine was trying to overthrow Yanukovich and repulse the Russian military that entered Ukrainian territory (McDougal, 2015: 1848). Demonstrations in Ukraine in 2014, gave a shift in the political conditions of Ukraine. Yanukovich was successfully ousted, and Ukrainian citizens were divided into two camps (pro-Russia and pro-European Union) until the annexation of the Crimea region by Russia (Gunawan et al, 2020: 212). The conflict continues despite the efforts of a ceasefire from both sides.

The Crimean conflict (2014) increases the urgency for Ukraine to join NATO. According to Professor of History, Clarkson University, Alastair Kocho-Williams, the aim of Ukraine joining NATO is to increase international military support and security guarantees from alliance countries. Military guarantees here are intended to prevent Russian attacks (Williams, 2022). Russia has big ambitions to build the Eurasian Union state. The development goal of the Eurasian Union is to balance the power of the European Union. The term "Eurasian Integration" was described by Russian President Vladimir Putin as: "We are proposing a powerful supernatural association capable of becoming one of the poles of the modern world and serving as an effective bridge between Europe and the dynamic Asia-Pacific region" (Dutkiewicz, 2015: 88). Putin also published the article "A new integration project for Eurasia: The future in the making" (Putin, 2011). In the article, Putin emphasized the Eurasian Integration as an aspiration to reintegrate the countries of the former Soviet Union based on new values through a new economic, political, and international structure foundation. The international structure is expected to be an "effective link" between the European and Asia Pacific Regions (Hutabarat, 2013). One of Putin's big agendas is to build Eurasian integration from all sides. from Ukraine and Kazakhstan to Japan and China and maintain stable political and economic relations with countries adjacent to Russia.

The Crimean conflict factor shows the potential for conflict between Russia and Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukraine is an important region for Russia. The port of Sevastopol on the Black Sea is the base for the Russian Navy fleet (Arbar, 2022). On the other hand, the gas pipeline connecting Russia to Europe passes through Ukraine. According to Vladimir Putin, modern Ukraine is the creation of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin which includes "the historical lands of Russia" (Kim, 2022). In 2021 there will be the largest demonstrations in decades in Russia. The demonstration was based on "anti-Putin" held by the opposition. Putin himself at the beginning of his political career allegedly wanted to improve the international view of his country after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is the second largest country after Russia in Eastern Europe with a population of 44 million, which previously joined the Soviet Union and shares a 1,900-kilometer-long border with Russia. Putin is also suspected of trying to increase nationalist support at home amid the raging pandemic and poor economic conditions.

Ukraine itself has become a power struggle point between Russia and NATO. Russia's efforts to maintain its influence in the region are seen by Russia's efforts to continue to strengthen its military fleet and weaponry. Russia's massive military directing to the Ukraine border is part of Russia's existence in its "backyard" which

is in danger of being withdrawn from its influence by NATO. Ukraine's desire to join NATO heated Russia's foreign policy which was manifested in the form of an invasion that took place in February 2022. Ukraine's desire to join NATO also became a geopolitical threat to Russia in Eastern Europe and made it an excuse for an invasion of Ukraine (Kim, 2022). Some of Russia's wishes in the Ukraine Conflict summarized by BBC News include (1) Ukraine is neutral (concerning the desire to expand the alliance with the Western/NATO military), (2) Demilitarized by the Ukrainian side without the intervention of NATO and its allies, (3) De-nazification, (4) the Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimean regions over Russia, (5) Use of the Russian Language in Ukraine (Kirby, 2022).

According to the author, Russia's desire for Ukraine to be neutral is difficult to achieve. Neutral in the international system here is defined as impartiality to the West and the East. For example, Indonesia, in implementing its neutral foreign policy, is reflected in the 1945 Constitution. Based on historical data, Ukraine's neutral attitude is not Russia's real goal, but Ukraine does not side with the West and continues to cooperate with Russia.

Furthermore, NATO's demilitarization in Ukraine is NATO's effort to support Ukraine in the War by supplying Ukraine with conventional weapons (Kirby, 2022). The support provided by the alliance of Western countries that are members of NATO and the US to Ukraine includes military weapons assistance (from portable drones to long-range missile systems) and followed by economic sanctions given by the West to Russia (Bimo, 2022). This raises Russia's doubts "against the victory of conventional forces" in the war against Ukraine in Eastern Ukraine.

This is where Russia's policy arises to increase nuclear alert and the threat to use nuclear weapons if in a state of urgency (Leatemala, 2022). The author's view on this matter is that there is an imbalance of power that occurs between Ukraine and its allies versus Russia. The increase in Ukraine's power due to NATO weapons assistance is a threat for Russia to be defeated in a conventional war. For this reason, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons is a struggle for Russian power in balancing power in the Eastern European Region. The purpose of the threat of nuclear weapons by Russia is for NATO to stop providing military weapons assistance to Ukraine.

Denazification, of the Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea Regions of Russia, as well as the use of the Russian language in Ukraine, are the reasons for Russia to expand the Russian Territory in Ukraine. This is since Crimea has officially become a Russian Region with a Referendum that had received a rejection from outside parties. As a result of Crimea being part of the Russian territory, the Donetsk Region, Luhansk managed to gain independence through Russian support. Then Russia's reason for denazification of Russian-speaking people in Ukraine is an excuse to dominate other Regions, as was the case with Crimea. This is inseparable from the pro-Russian Ukrainian society. They will support Russia's action and prefer to secede from Ukraine.

From the point of view of Realism, Russia is an actor who is rationally consistent in maximizing the goals of its national interests. Russia's national interest is to strengthen its influence in the Region and Ukraine's alignment with Russia through

its foreign policy by controlling Crimea and invading Ukraine. In addition, the threat of the use of Russian nuclear weapons on a country that hinders its efforts is a form of competition for its political power and influence.

As the concept of balance of power by Morgenthau, specifically focuses more on the military and the role of alliances in aggregating power against threats from outsiders. NATO arms assistance in Ukraine is considered by Russia as an increase in power in the Eastern European Region. Ukraine's increasing arsenal is a threat that Russia will lose in a conventional war. In the perspective of Realism, the state is rational to defend its national interests. To maintain its influence and national security, Russia issued a declaration on the use of nuclear weapons. The declaration of the use of nuclear weapons was carried out as a threat that could stop NATO weapons assistance in Ukraine.

### ***NATO Intervention in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict***

According to BBC News Indonesia, NATO did not intervene directly in Ukraine but responded by placing its troops in several countries in Eastern Europe. NATO has four battalion-scale multinational combat units in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, and a multinational force in Romania. The alliance expanded its air patrols in the Baltic states and Eastern Europe, intercepting Russian aircraft suspected of violating borders with NATO members. Since 1997, NATO has indeed expanded into Eastern Europe and several ex-Soviet Union countries. These countries include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rep. Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria (BBC, 2022). Summarized from BBC News Indonesia news, Ukraine itself was not a member of NATO at that time but had the opportunity to join as a member because NATO was open to Ukraine becoming a member. The Ukraine government under Yanukovich, which tends to be pro-western and has an indirect interest in NATO, took advantage of this opportunity. The discourse on Ukraine's entry into NATO began to emerge, even President Zelensky implicitly said that Ukraine would seek NATO membership. The discourse received support from the leaders of countries in Europe considering that geopolitically, Ukraine's geographical location is very strategic and could make it an advantage if Ukraine joins NATO (BBC, 2022).

On the other hand, Russia considers the discourse a threat to its sovereignty and national security. Russia's anxiety is the embodiment of the concept of a security dilemma, in which Russia, which is one of the superpower countries, feels threatened due to the policy of its neighbouring countries to join a military alliance consisting of other superpower countries and has a history of rivalry with it. Initially, Russia responded to the discourse of Ukraine's entry into NATO by only increasing the number of its military forces at the border, but this was deemed to have no effect, so Russia decided to take military action into Ukraine territory at the end last February. Russia considers it an effort to maintain its national security as well as a defensive effort from the expansion carried out by NATO.

However, NATO and its allies have a different view and accuse Russia of threatening Ukraine's sovereignty. In response, NATO sent to aid in the form of weapons to the Ukraine military to defend its territory from Russian invasion. The assistance

included 11 Mi-17 helicopters, 18 155 mm Howitzers, 100 armored vehicles, and 10,000 anti-tank missiles (CNN, 2022). Russia through its president Vladimir Putin responded to this with his statement in a speech. Putin said that anyone who interferes in the affairs of his country and even threatens the country, and its people will receive a response as soon as possible from Russia and consequences like never before (CNN, 2022).

*Putin's statement explicitly refers to the use of missiles, both conventional and nuclear-powered. However, this statement did not make the west flinch and continued to help Ukraine by carrying out an embargo and economic sanctions imposed on Russia. In response to Putin's remarks, President Joe Biden made a policy of stopping normal trade with Russia to put pressure on Russia. The policy was followed by the United States' allies who agreed to impose sanctions on Russia, ranging from the confiscation of Russian oligarchs' assets in allied countries of the United States, the prohibition of Russian aircraft from crossing their airspace, to the expulsion of Russia from the SWIFT international banking system.*

Putin also responded to these sanctions by stating that the sanctions were the same as a declaration of war (CNBC, 2022). Furthermore, Sergey Lavrov, who is the Russian Foreign Minister, said that Russia would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if the United States and its allies continued to interfere in the Russia-Ukraine conflict [source?]. The threat is certainly a serious matter, even William Burns as the Director of the CIA reminded all parties not to rule out the possibility of this happening, even though there is not much evidence pointing to it.

When viewed from deterrence theory, Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a form of diplomatic coercion through statements to make its opponents in this case NATO change their behavior by telling them the risks they will face and making them think twice about striking back. Putin did so as a form of counterattack against Western policies that imposed various economic sanctions on Russia. Putin's efforts seem to be bearing little fruit, as evidenced by the continued retreat of NATO to join the Ukrainian military directly in the battle (Djumala, 2022). On the other hand, the success of the Russian threat shows that the use of nuclear weapons in combat is not impossible if the Russian threat is not responded to by NATO.

The long duration of the conflict could also encourage Russia to use nuclear weapons to end the conflict. Prolonged conflict will certainly make a country experience large financial losses and expenses. According to data from the Russian Ministry of Finance reported by Newsweek, the cost that Russia has to pay for its invasion of Ukraine in May every hour is approximately 1 billion rubles or 288.25 billion when converted into Rupiah [source?]. According to Anton Siluanov who serves as Minister of Finance of Russia, the high costs incurred due to the conflict as well as the sanctions and economic embargos received made the state budget in April 2022 change from a surplus to a deficit (Puspaningrum, 2022). If this conflict goes on for a long time it will make Russia even more cornered and will not hesitate to use nuclear weapons. Reflecting on history when the United States used nuclear bombs

to end the Pacific war with Japan, the Russia-Ukraine conflict also does not rule out the possibility of repeating that history.

Meanwhile, according to Dr. Intan I. Soeparna (2022), a UNAIR Nuclear Law Expert said that the potential for the Russia-Ukraine conflict to develop into a nuclear war will always exist (CNN, 2022). Furthermore, Intan said Russia could use nuclear weapons in the conflict in Ukraine. This is because the country has not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW) and is therefore not bound by the norms of the treaty. Russian President Vladimir Putin also said the use of nuclear weapons would be a "last option" if negotiations to end the war in Belarus were not reached (Afifah, 2022). Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said that Russia would only use nuclear weapons if there was an existential threat from other countries (Reuters, 2022).

### ***Correlation of NATO Interventions with Russia's Potential Nuclear Use***

The intervention by the West in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine brought the conflict situation to a crucial level. Ukraine's interest in increasing military power by joining the NATO alliance as well as US and NATO support for Ukraine which is implemented by sending conventional weapons to the Ukraine army brings Russia fear of losing the conventional war against Ukraine. In response to this problem, Russia issued statements regarding the threat and use of nuclear weapons in the Ukraine conflict, this raised international concerns about the potential for nuclear war to occur, given the damage that would be received was massive.

The interests of the three parties are contradictory to the security and stability of peace, especially in the Eastern European region. Russia wants to maintain its influence in Eastern Europe. The West and its allies want to expand their alliance and influence in the Eastern European Region. On the other hand, Ukraine wants to get the security protection of its country. International concern about the potential threat and use of nuclear weapons by Russia in Ukraine is great. The author presents data in the form of statistics on the popularity of nuclear weapons through Google Trends in several countries, namely, Russia, Ukraine, and several countries that are members of the NATO alliance (United States, Britain, France, and Germany).

Figure 2. "Nuclear Weapons" in Russian Territory

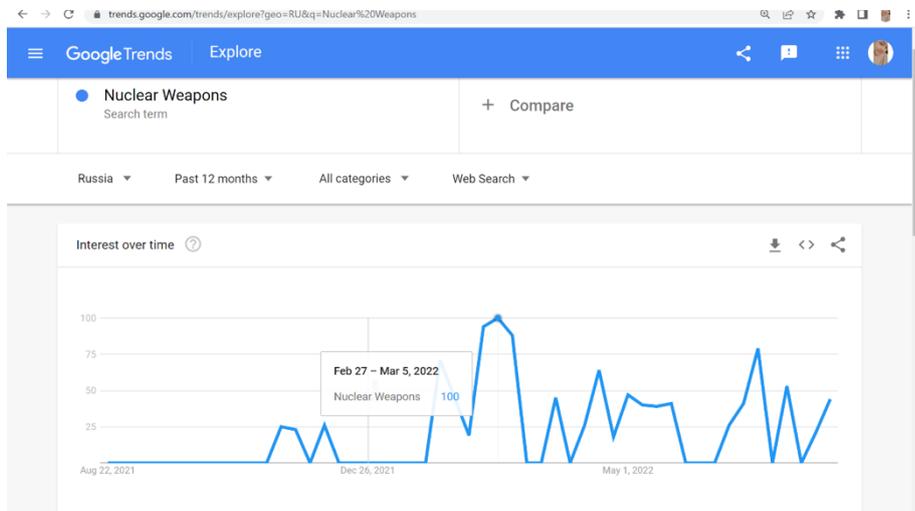


Figure 3. "Nuclear Weapons" in Ukraine Territory

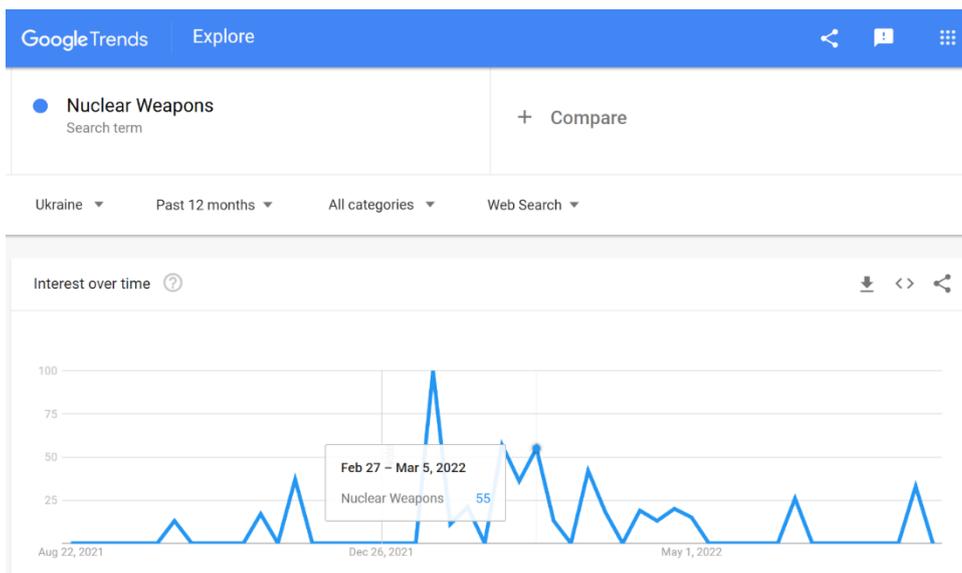


Figure 4. "Nuclear Weapons" in United States Territory

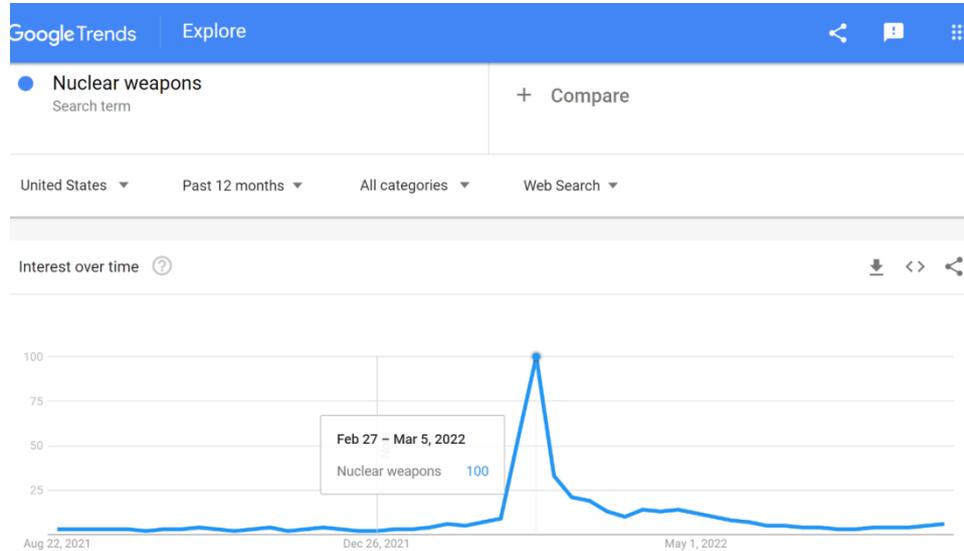
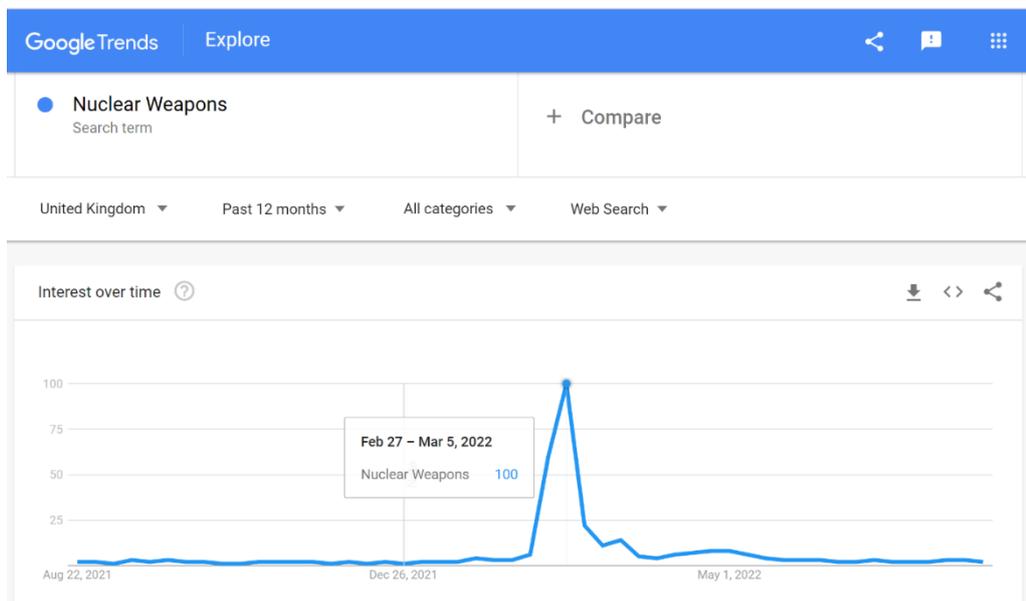
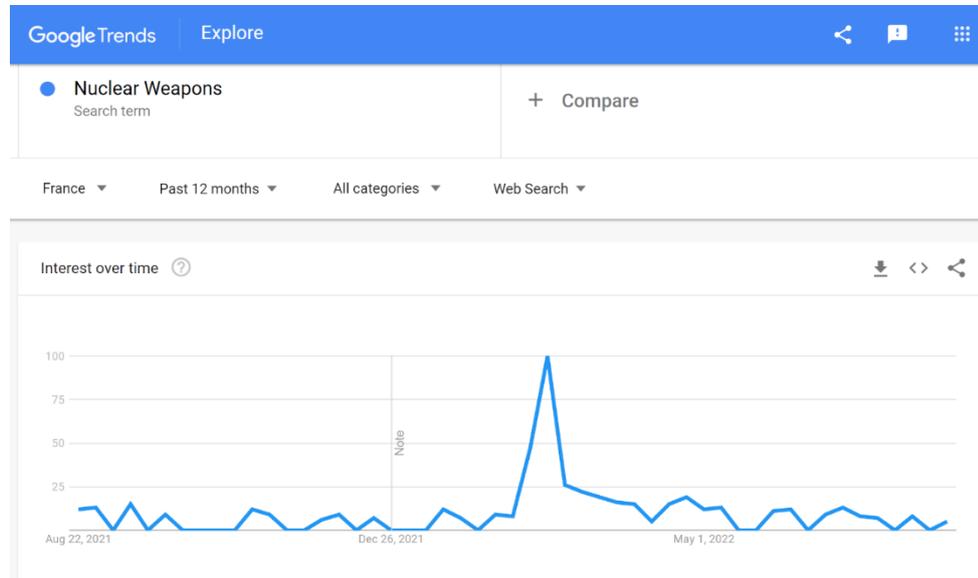
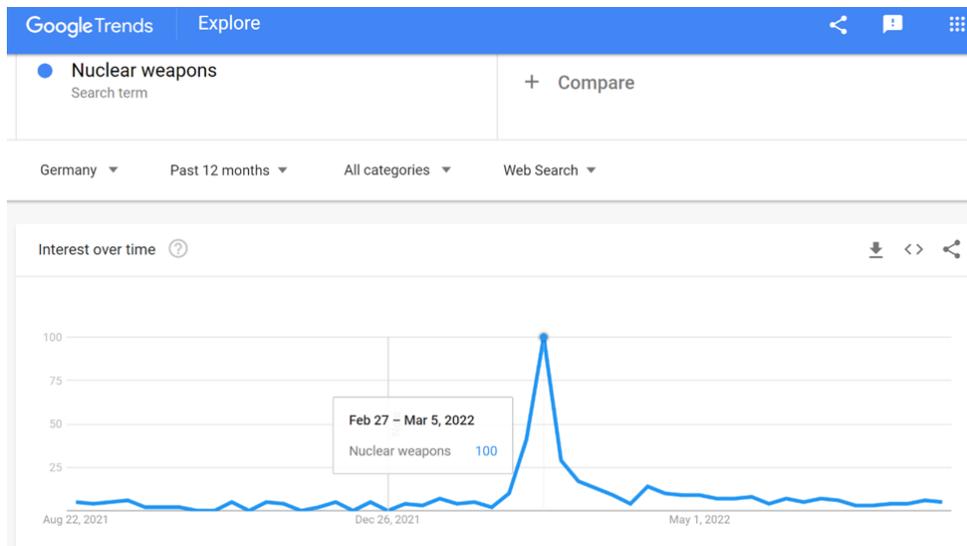


Figure 5. "Nuclear Weapons" in United Kingdom Territory



**Figure 6. “Nuclear Weapons” in French Territory****Figure 7. “Nuclear Weapons” in German Territory**

Based on figures 2 – 7, the popularity of “nuclear weapons” in Google Trends is increasing and decreasing for the countries above. A highly substantial similarity is found in the increase in popularity in all the above countries from February to March 2022 which reached almost 100. Uniquely, the peak of the increase in popularity

occurred in the period 27 February – 5 March 2022, right with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the aid of Western weapons to Ukraine, and the emergence of statements by Russian President, Vladimir Putin regarding the use of nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The increase and decrease in popularity above vary greatly by country. Statistics in the regions of Russia, and Ukraine are very volatile. Meanwhile, in the United States, Britain, France, and Germany, after the increase in popularity in February-March, there was no significant increase or decrease in popularity. This shows that the trend of nuclear weapons in Russia and Ukraine is still an important problem and raises public concern about it. Meanwhile, the trend of nuclear weapons in the US, UK, and France after the vulnerable time of February - March 2022 is no longer a high point of concern for nuclear weapons in the region.

In connection with the simultaneous statistical increase in the period of February 24 - March 5, 2022, the author tries to make a comparison with the international mass media regarding the actions taken by the parties related to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict that could lead to an increase in the popularity of nuclear weapons. In Reuters news, "Russia's Putin authorizes 'special military operation' against Ukraine" by Andrew Osborn and Polina Nikolskaya published 24 February 2022 (Reuters, 2022). Russia has allowed its military to conduct "special operations" against Ukraine to eliminate what it calls the serious problem of the demilitarization of Ukraine, or what the West calls an invasion. The scope of the operation by Russia is not very clear, but it appears to be helping pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. In his speech, Putin stated the purpose of carrying out "special military operations": "Its goal is to protect people who have been subjected to bullying and genocide... for the last eight years. And for this, we will strive for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine (Reuters, 2022).

Putin added that "Russia cannot feel safe, develop, and exist with a constant threat emanating from the territory of modern Ukraine." unprecedented in history. Putin's remarks came after the United States stationed about 150,000 Russian troops on the Ukraine border. The operation by Putin revolutionized the history of the failure of NATO and the United States to meet Russia's security demands. Boris Yeltsin served as President of Russia in 2000 (Tribun News, 2022). In 2018 Putin was re-elected as President of Russia with a term ending in 2024. He received 76.6 percent of the vote (BBC News Indonesia, 2018), and the vote acquisition in 2018 was 13 million more votes compared to the 2012 election (Kompas, 2018). In 2021, Putin officially signed a law that allowed him to remain president for the next 14 years or until 2036 (DW, 2021). But in 2021, Russia was hit by the largest "Anti-Putin" demonstrations in years by the opposition. However, with the law regarding the term of office of the Russian president passed by Putin, it will not prevent him from stepping down from the presidency and will remain in power until 2036.

However, regarding Putin's position as President of Russia for the next 14 years, what does this have to do with Ukraine? Carrying out foreign policy, does not only involve external elements but also internal elements of a country (Rosenau, 1976:15). The state is an actor to carry out foreign policy, although there are non-state actors who are increasingly playing an important role in international

relations. To carry out a foreign policy, external and internal elements are needed that influence a country's foreign policy and are defined by a decision-making official in a conversion process or the formulation of a country's foreign policy. The foreign policy formulation refers to the situation in the internal and external environment by considering the objectives to be achieved (outputs) through the means and capabilities of a country (Rosenau, 1980:173). That means that decision-making officials have an important role in a country's foreign policy. Putin's reason for passing the law on the extension of the term of office is inseparable from his foreign policy of controlling Ukraine. In carrying out this policy, it takes a long time at the end of his term of office. This of course has consequences for every action of Putin.

Before the invasion of Ukraine, the European Union had imposed sanctions on Russia by adopting a six-pack of sanctions in response to the recognition of the non-governmental controlled territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked military attack on Ukraine (ECCEU, 2022). The six sanctions are in the form of blacklisting Russians, especially members of parliament who recognize the Donetsk and Luhansk regions separating from Ukraine, Financial and Economic sanctions in the form of energy, transportation, and technology sectors, and prohibition of transactions with Russian banks. In addition, sanctions are in the form of a ban on providing credit services, a ban on exports and imports, and a ban on imports of Russian oil into the European Union. The sanctions are aimed at cutting off Russia's financial, energy and transport sectors. The US and NATO also assisted in the form of conventional weapons to Ukraine after the Russian invasion of Ukraine was carried out.

**Table 2. Western Military Armament Assistance to Ukraine (2022)**

Country	Military Aid
<b>United States</b>	350 million USD in lethal aid
<b>European Union</b>	502 million USD in lethal aid
<b>England</b>	lethal defense weapon
<b>Perancis</b>	anti-aircraft defense and digital weapons
<b>Netherlands</b>	250 air defense rockets and 50 anti-tank guns
<b>Germany</b>	1,000 anti-tank guns and 500 surface-to-air missiles
<b>Canada</b>	394 million USD for weapons
<b>Sweden</b>	5,000 anti-tank guns
<b>Norway</b>	2,700 anti-tank guns
<b>Denmark</b>	body armor and up to 2,000 anti-tank weapons
<b>Finland</b>	1,500 rocket launchers, 2,500 assault rifles, ammunition, and rations
<b>Belgium</b>	automatic assault rifles, anti-tank guns, and fuel

<b>Portugal</b>	night vision goggles, helmet, bulletproof vest, grenades, ammunition, and rifles
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**Source: Statista.com. "Additional military aid sent to Ukraine during the Russia-Ukraine War 2022, by country and type of military aid"**

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293614/military-aid-to-ukraine/>

Table 1, in Statista.com published June 10, 2022, presents data on military assistance sent to Ukraine during the Russia-Ukraine War 2022, by country and type of military assistance. Based on the data, it appears that countries have sent weapons assistance in very large numbers. The aid is dominated by the United States and countries in the NATO alliance.

Armaments were sent in support of Ukraine in the insistence of Russia's ongoing attacks. That means Ukraine has a relatively sufficient level of security because of the availability of advanced weapons equipment that is provided itself. However, it is unfortunate because Ukraine is not a member of NATO, so assistance in the form of military services to Ukraine cannot be provided under the principles stated in Article 5 of the NATO Charter on Collective Defense Clauses (NATO, 2022).

Based on data from Global Fire Power, Russia has large military power. Russia has about 1.35 million active military personnel by 2022, compared to 500,000 in Ukraine. The number of aircraft owned by the Russian army is close to 4.2 thousand, while the Ukraine armed forces have almost 320 aircraft. Russia is the second most powerful country militarily, while Ukraine is ranked 22 out of 140 countries. In terms of active personnel, Russia has almost 850,000 active personnel and Ukraine has only 250,000. Russian air power is also stronger than Ukraine. Russia has more than 4,100 aircraft, with 772 fighters, while Ukraine has only 318 aircraft, with only 69 fighters. In terms of ground military strength, Russia has around 12,500 tanks and Ukraine only has about 2,600 tanks and 12,000 armored vehicles. Meanwhile, Russia has more than 30,000 armored vehicles. In terms of fighter aircraft, Russia has 772 fighter jets, while Ukraine only has 69. This contrasts with Putin's statement regarding concerns about the defeat of conventional war against Ukraine because Russia's military strength is far superior to Ukraine.

**Table 3. Military Capacity Comparison of NATO and Russia in 2022**

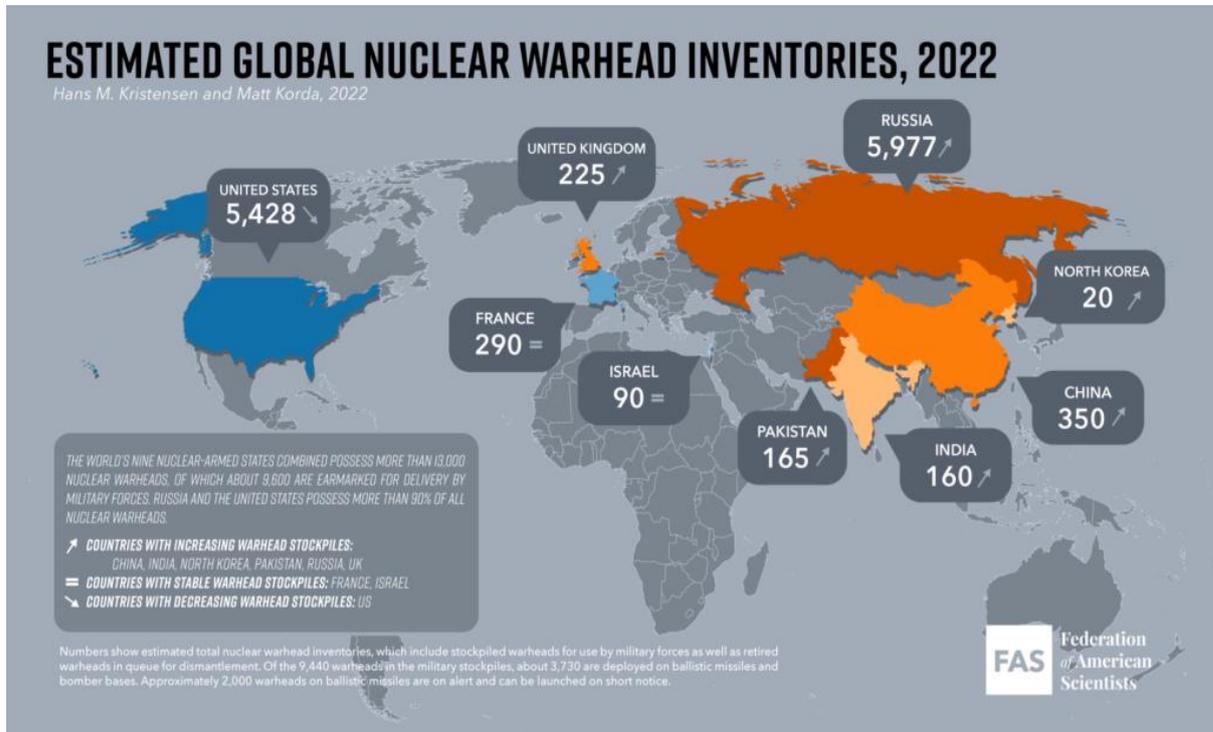
Characteristics	NATO	Russia
<b>Personnel</b>		
<b>Total military personnel</b>	5,405,700	1,350,000
<b>Active Troop</b>	3,366,000	850
<b>Reserve squad</b>	1,301,000	250
<b>Paramilitary Units</b>	738,7	250
<b>Air Force</b>	-	-

<b>Total planes</b>	20,723	4,173
<b>Fighter/interceptor aircraft</b>	3,527	772
<b>Ground attack aircraft</b>	1,048	739
<b>Transport plane</b>	1,543	445
<b>Special aircraft (for example, for reconnaissance)</b>	1,014	132
<b>Tanker Plane</b>	678	20
<b>Number of helicopters</b>		
<b>Combat helicopter</b>	1,359	544
<b>Western Combat Vehicle</b>	-	-
<b>Main battle tank</b>	14,682	12,42
<b>Armored Vehicle</b>	115,855	30,122
<b>Automatic Artillery</b>	5,04	6,574
<b>Artillery tower</b>	5,495	7,571
<b>Automatic rocket launcher</b>	2,803	3,391
<b>Naval Weapons</b>	-	-
<b>Total military ships</b>	2,049	605
<b>Destroyer</b>	112	15
<b>Fregat</b>	135	11
<b>Corvette</b>	56	86
<b>Aircraft carrier</b>	17	1
<b>Submarine</b>	144	70
<b>Patrol boat</b>	298	59
<b>Minesweeper</b>	153	49
<b>Nuclear Weapons</b>	-	-
<b>Nuclear warhead</b>	6,065	6,255

Source: Statista.com. *“Comparison of the military capabilities of NATO and Russia as of 2022”*

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293174/nato-russia-military-comparison/>

In Table 2, a comparison of NATO's and Russia's militaries in 2022. NATO's military and armaments are superior to Russia's. Although the capability of NATO weapons assistance to Ukraine is still lacking when compared to the Russian military and weaponry. However, what is worrying is that if NATO participates in a conventional (non-nuclear) war in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, then Russia's failure is already in sight. Then what about the comparison of nuclear weapons between Russia and NATO?



**Figure 8. 2022 Global Nuclear Warhead Stockpiles**  
Source: Federation of American Scientists

Figure 8 presents data in the form of an estimated global stockpile of nuclear warheads in 2022. Russia occupies the first position in the stockpile of 5,977 nuclear warheads, America with 5,428 warheads, China with 350 warheads, France with 290 warheads, Britain with 225 warheads, followed by Pakistan, India, Israel, and North Korea with 165, 160, 90 and 20 warheads respectively. Russia is superior in nuclear arsenal by 549 warheads to the United States. This shows that Russia has won one step in its arsenal against America as a fellow superpower. For this reason, Russia is trying to make the most of external threats by relying heavily on nuclear weapons. Since the impact of nukes is so pervasive on the life of the "Target", the nuclear threat is used as a very confident doctrine to repulse the opposing side. Some analysts think the Russian strike will rely on long-range weaponry such as cruise missiles to target key Ukraine sites remotely. Since Russia invaded Ukraine, NATO countries have supplied Ukraine with additional "lethal aid," such as Britain's supply of 2,000 anti-tank weapons.

After the assistance of advanced weapons from NATO, quoted from Al Jazeera news entitled "Putin says Sarmat ballistic missile to be deployed by end of 2022" which was published June 21, 2022, Vladimir Putin stated that he would further strengthen and modernize his armed forces, including deploying missiles. Sarmat's 50 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) will be tested by the end of 2022. According to Putin, this is aimed at issuing a nuclear threat to the West. The Sarmat missile is one of several new strategic weapons systems created by Russia's military

design bureau since the landmark 2002 US decision to violate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which established a ban on manufacturing advanced missile defenses to ensure that nuclear superpowers enjoy strategic parity. thereby reducing the risk of nuclear war or a sophisticated missile arms race.

Russia's development of a new generation of strategic strike weapons is also partly tied to Pentagon planners on a concept known as the "Prompt Global Strike" the US idea of destroying Russia's leadership and nuclear potential using mass precision-guided conventional missile strikes and shooting down any Russian nuclear missiles that strike it. successfully launched using a new generation missile defense system (Tirpak, 2021). The creation of a weapon like the Sarmat is meant to ensure that no matter what missile defense system the enemy creates, a few nukes will repel it, making it less likely to lose in initiating a "Prompt Global Strike" strike against Russia in the first strike. Russia's nuclear doctrine prohibits the use of nuclear weapons for aggressive purposes, with those weapons permitted to be used only in the event of an enemy nuclear attack, or conventional act of aggression that could threaten the very existence of the Russian state.

This is a big question regarding the threat of nuclear weapons by Russia even though in terms of military strength and conventional weapons Russia is far superior to Ukraine. This is because of Russia's ambition to maintain its influence in Ukraine. As with the principle of Realism, Russia will also fight for power without considering the consequences for other parties and in any way, whether it's an invasion or carrying out threats and use of nuclear weapons when it feels its country is not safe. Assistance from Western countries to Ukraine creates measures taken by Ukraine to safeguard its security needs. This creates a "security dilemma" namely anxiety about Russia. Ukraine considers the attempt to join NATO as defensive, while Russia views Ukraine's attempt as a threat to itself. The threat and use of nuclear weapons emerged after Ukraine received military assistance in the form of conventional weapons, efforts to increase more powerful nuclear weapons such as Sarmat, are a form of Russian deterrence against NATO to prevent a form of NATO expansion against Ukraine which has strong potential to defeat Russia physically and its influence.

Based on the international treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on July 1, 1968, which aims to limit the possession of nuclear weapons and the peaceful use of nuclear weapons, in Article 10 of the NPT Treaty, it is explained that it allows a country to break away from the treaty in the event of an emergency related to with the subject of the agreement, if it threatens the national interest of the country concerned (the UN Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)). NATO states that if one of its members is in a state of war, then the treaty is no longer valid. This means that the country can get out of the agreement. The argument reflects the actions of NATO's "joint nuclear weapons" agreement in contrast to the NPT treaty. However, if viewed, NATO can't participate in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine to defend Ukraine, considering that Ukraine is not a member of NATO.

Griggiths and O'Callaghan's concept of deterrence said that "Don't attack me because if you do, something unacceptably horrible will happen to you", is also

reflected in Russia's domestic policy and Putin's statement regarding the threat of nuclear weapons, that nuclear weapons will be deployed if Russia faces a serious threat. substantially in the hope that the US and NATO can think twice about carrying out an attack. It is very rational if Russia threatens NATO not to interfere in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, because if NATO intervenes deeply, Russia has the potential to lose the "ex-Soviet territory" as a strategic power and influence in Eastern Europe. In addition to excelling in the field of military strength, Russia in Second Strike capability, namely the ability to respond to an initial attack (nuclear first strike) if it receives the first attack from the West. Second Strike Capability is prepared by Russia in the form of a Sarmat ballistic missile which has a very strong explosive power (Low Institute Asia Power Index).

Then, whether the use of nuclear weapons will occur? Would a Russian nuclear strike trigger a change in NATO from simply supplying weapons to Ukraine to being directly involved in the fighting itself? When NATO faces the threat of the use of Russian nuclear weapons, in the period after Putin's statement regarding the threat of using nuclear weapons, the level of popularity on Google Trends for NATO countries is relatively declining and stable. In other words, Russia's rationale for the use of tactical nuclear weapons is to scare NATO from crossing that line and force Ukraine to surrender. If the threat of using Russian nuclear weapons does not provoke the US and NATO into direct combat, Russia will have the green light to use nuclear weapons and destroy Ukraine quickly.

The threat of Russia's nuclear use is a warning to the US and NATO. If the use of nuclear weapons does occur, Western policy makers are making a way out by condemning Russia's treatment, imposing economic sanctions but doing nothing militarily. It means giving a warning to Russia. has complete freedom to act militarily, including the further use of nuclear weapons to destroy Ukraine's defenses, essentially recognizing Russia's victory. If the West doesn't want to back down or, more importantly, if it wants to prevent Putin from taking the first steps towards using nuclear weapons, the West needs to demonstrate the impact of Russia's nuclear use will provoke NATO, not ignore it.

According to the authors, the potential use of nuclear weapons is very limited and relatively small possibilities. Meanwhile, if NATO decides to strike back at Russia on behalf of Ukraine, it is nearly impossible because Ukraine is not a member of the NATO alliance. If Russia is faced with the prospect of fighting with NATO, the non-nuclear forces (conventional weapons) and NATO's nuclear retaliation tactics are substantially superior to Russia's, it means that Russia is less likely to direct its nuclear weapons to the West. On the other hand, if Russia aimed its nuclear weapons at Ukraine, it would mean destroying its backyard. Ukraine will be destroyed by nuclear, and Russia's efforts will be in vain due to its actions only for reasons that are not rational and not quite clear, namely the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.

## CONCLUSION

NATO's intervention in the conflict and Ukraine's attempts to join NATO has triggered Russia's to use of nuclear weapons. However, based on the data, although the potential use of nuclear weapons is relatively small, it is of particular concern to NATO. Ukraine's national interest wants to join NATO to increase military strength and protection from Russian attacks on Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia has interests that are opposite to those of Ukraine, namely controlling territory and its influence in Ukraine. NATO as a defense alliance with a strong military force seeks to expand into Ukraine for its political interests. Indeed, NATO's explicit goal is to help Ukraine on a humanitarian basis, however, the national interests of NATO members cannot be separated from NATO's "influence" considering that Ukraine is not a member of NATO. NATO weapons assistance to Ukraine is considered by Russia as a threat because of the weakness of Russia's military strength when compared to NATO's military strength. The superiority of Russia's nuclear arsenal over NATO has become Russia's new strategy in stopping NATO's intervention in Ukraine, this is reflected in Vladimir Putin's statements to strengthen and modernize his armed forces such as the Sarmat missile.

Three important points from this research are first, the purpose of Ukraine joining NATO is to increase international military strength and support as well as security guarantees from alliance countries are considered a threat by Russia both in the military, geopolitical and other fields. others in the Eastern European Region. Under these circumstances, Russia will certainly respond by further enhancing its military capabilities to invade Ukraine to defend its national security from the West, which is also a representation of the concept of the Security Dilemma. Second, is the retaliation strategy of a country that has received international threats and sanctions. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia as a Detention strategy for the attitude of NATO intervention and the imposition of international sanctions. These efforts have yielded little results, as evidenced by the continued retreat of NATO to join the Ukraine military directly in the battle.

Third, the author confirms the concept of balance of power from Hans J Morgenthau. The increase in NATO's conventional military assistance to Ukraine broke the equilibrium in the international system. The Realism perspective views international politics as a struggle for power and countries implement their national interests within the limits of power politics is an autonomous region, for that the importance of the balance of power to create balance in the international system. Equilibrium refers to states or coalitions to prevent the existence of one more powerful entity or an imbalance of power. With the creation of balance (equilibrium), a country cannot impose its will or interfere with the national interests of other countries (Dugis, 2016: 44-48). NATO military armament

assistance to Ukraine is considered by Russia as an increase in power (preponderance power) that can disrupt the balance of the international system. This NATO action is considered by Russia to interfere with its national interests in the Eastern European Region and can lead to war. For this reason, the increase in military weapons and nuclear threats by Russia is an implementation of the power struggle in the Eastern European Region to create a balance in the international system. The increase in military weapons in Russia prevents the existence of a stronger NATO alliance that can disrupt Russia's national interests and the balance of power in the Eastern European Region.

Assistance from Western countries to Ukraine creates measures taken by Ukraine to safeguard its security needs. This creates discomfort for Russia. Ukraine considers efforts to join NATO as defensive, while Russia considers Ukraine's efforts as a threat to Russia. Although the potential use of nuclear weapons is still relatively small, based on Second Strike Capability, in deterrence theory, Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a form of diplomatic coercion through statements to make NATO change its behavior by informing the risks that will be faced and making them think twice to strike back. and the position of Ukraine as a battlefield which is an area that will be controlled by Russia, if the Ukraine region is destroyed, it is the same as Russia destroying its yard.

There are at least two approaches that can be implemented to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including the realism approach and the persuasive approach (Hampson, Crocker, & Aall, 2007). The realism approach itself is an approach that generally displays a method of calculating or calculating power. While the persuasive approach is an approach that is persuasive without any coercion, one of the efforts that can be done is by way of negotiation. In this regard, Russia and Ukraine can be viewed as countries with limited powers. If both countries simultaneously reach these limitations, there will be saturation in war. When the two countries have reached that point, conflict resolution by peaceful means or negotiations will slowly begin to open. The path that is usually used by disputing countries is negotiation. This is because negotiation is a method with minimal intervention from outside or it can be said that it can bring together the interests of the two conflicting countries towards regional reconciliation and peace.

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