

The Role and Implications of the United States of America in the Russia-Ukraine War (2014-2024)

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Abstract

The influence of the United States in the Russia-Ukraine conflict from 2014 to 2024 is examined in this study. The specific objectives include military assistance, economic sanctions, NATO defence expenditure, and the resulting effects on world oil prices. With around \$66.5 billion given since February 2022, U.S. military support to Ukraine increased dramatically, so improving Ukraine's defence capacity. Descriptive statistics and content analysis techniques were adopted to assess American engagement. Concurrently, the United States issued extensive sanctions aimed at Russia's energy sector, mostly impacting over 180 linked corporations like Gazprom Neft and SURGUTNEFTEGAS as well as big companies like with the energy price index peaked at 183.07 in February 2025, up from 100 in 2016, these penalties helped to drive a global energy price spike. From 1.43% of their combined GDP in 2014 to 2.02% in 2024, NATO defence spending also saw a significant jump as European members and Canada invest a combined total topping \$485 billion in 2024. Results revealed Std. Dev. = 14.7% in aid, indicates that a structured aid mechanism conditioned on performance and crisis thresholds would ensure consistent support (MEHA); moderate fluctuation in sanctions (Std. Dev. = 4.66%) indicates stable pressure (SRIC); the high variation in NATO spending (Std. Dev. = 12.64%) indicates inconsistent commitments (MSN); despite USGE's stability (Std. Dev. = 1.41%). Findings show that invasion tactics such as reflagged tankers and concealed routes weaken their impact (USGE). According to the study, U.S. military and financial support greatly enhanced Ukraine's defence capacity. The study recommends the creation of a multi-aid structure under open control to guarantee constant support for Ukraine's defence and humanitarian needs and apply coordinated secondary penalties aiming at companies supporting Russia's sanction avoidance.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine War, Military Aid, Sanctions, NATO, Theory of Realism

Introduction

Beginning with the takeover of Crimea in 2014, Russia's conflict with Ukraine has developed into the most important geopolitical crises of the twenty-first century. Particularly after Russia's complete invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the United States of America, a global superpower and major NATO member, has been essential in reacting to the on-going war. Rooted in more general concerns about European security, international order, and the containment of Russian aggression, the U.S. involvement characterized by military aid, economic sanctions, and diplomatic initiatives is reflected in the conflict.

The United States has given Ukraine billions of military aids since 2014, including air defence technologies and modern weapons including HIMARS systems. The goal has been to bolster Ukraine's defense capabilities and resist Russian incursions, while reaffirming the U.S. commitment to NATO and its European allies (Szöke & Kusica, 2023; Welt, 2023; Belkin, Bowen,

Nelson & Welt, 2024). In addition, Welt (2024) argues that the U.S. imposed some of the most stringent sanctions ever enacted against Russia, targeting key sectors such as finance, energy, and defence. Coordinated with the European Union and other allies, these sanctions seek to degrade Russia's war economy and challenge its capacity to maintain military operations (Belkin, Bowen, Nelson & Welt, 2024; Szöke & Kusica, 2023; Welt, 2023).

The American reaction to the Russia-Ukraine war captures more general issues of world security. Leading NATO, the United States has been essential in rejuvenating the alliance by guaranteeing increased defence expenditure and strategic preparedness among member states, especially those in Eastern Europe, therefore insuring stronger military capability. From just three nations in 2014 to over 20 members by 2024, this revitalization is clear in the notable rise in the number of NATO members satisfying the 2% GDP defence budget target. The admission of formerly neutral nations such as Finland and Sweden into NATO highlights even more the strategic changes the war brought about. Officially joining NATO on April 4, 2023, Finland, for example, made a significant action that doubled NATO's border with Russia and improved the strategic depth of the alliance in the region. These advancements underline the American will to improve collective defence systems and adjust to changing geopolitical environments (Psaedakis, & Hunnicutt, 2024; NATO, 2023; Landay, RAND Corporation, 2023; Shiffrinson, 2020).

From an international relations standpoint, “Realism which stresses the search of national interests, power, and security in an anarchic global system allows one to examine the U.S. participation through the prism of reality”. Acting to stop Russian territorial expansion, the United States directly challenges the U.S.-led international order and compromises European balance of power (Cox, 2024; Smith, & Dawson, 2022; Mearsheimer, 2014). By upholding Ukraine's sovereignty, the United States hopes to discourage future acts of aggression not just by Russia but also by other totalitarian governments that would be inspired by a supposed Western weakness (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2025; Atlantic Council, 2024; Austin, 2023).

Focusing on its military, diplomatic, and economic operations from 2014 to 2024, this paper explored American involvement in the “Russia-Ukraine war”. The study seeks to examine how American policies have shaped the course of the conflict, their effects on European and world security, and the more general opportunities for peace. Understanding the strategic goals driving U.S. engagement helps one to grasp the changing nature of world power dynamics and the difficulties to international security presented by protracted conflicts like the one in Ukraine.

Statement of the Problem

Beginning with the invasion of Crimea in 2014, the continuous Russia-Ukraine war is among the most significant geopolitical obstacle of recent years. Leading world power and main NATO member, the United States of America (U.S.A) has been extensively involved in reacting to Russian aggression in an effort to maintain European peace and sustain the post-World War II international order. The United States has imposed thorough sanctions on Russia and given significant military support to Ukraine. Although these penalties were meant to reduce Russia's ability to maintain its military operations, they have also contributed to global energy price volatility, so raising questions regarding their influence on inflation and economic stability globally. Several studies assessing how these policies have affected the conflict and world economic stability are few. Evaluating the wider consequences of U.S. involvement in the Russia-Ukraine war depends on an awareness of the efficacy of its operations, especially in military and

financial terms (Yushkov & Alexeev, 2024; Atlantic Council, 2024; Congressional Research Service, 2023; IMF, 2022).

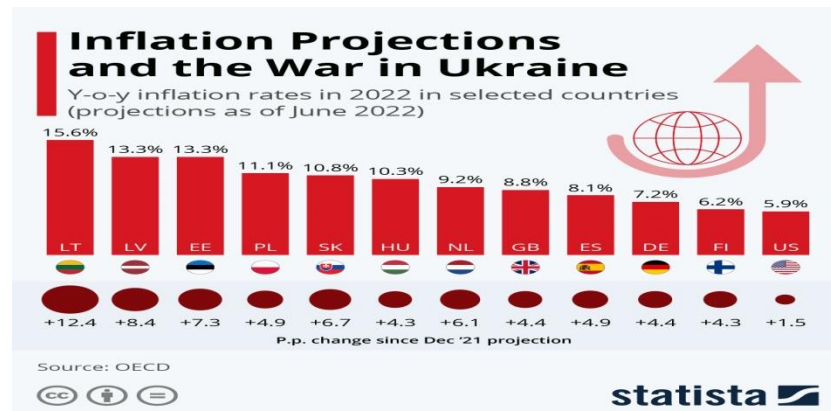


Fig. 1. Inflation Projections and the War in Ukraine

Figure 1 illustrates the estimated year-on-year inflation increases in 2022 across 13 OECD nations due to the Ukraine war, with Lithuania experiencing the highest rise at 15.6%. The data reflects inflation changes since December 2021

Understanding how U.S. engagement in the Russia-Ukraine war affects the conflict, European security (Belo & Rodríguez, 2023), and the larger global economic scene requires a thorough assessment of its participation. Examining U.S. contributions to military aid, sanctions, and NATO solidarity helps this study to solve this issue and offers understanding of the strategic goals of these interventions and their effectiveness in supporting stability and preventing Russian expansionism. By means of an analysis of the several effects of U.S. policies, this study aims to assess the outcomes and implications of U.S.-Russia relations as well as the stability of the larger international order and the course of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theory of Realism. According to Morgenthau (1948), realism assumes that in international politics states behave in their national interests, giving survival, security, and power top priority over ideological aspirations. From a realist standpoint, U.S. activities in the Russia-Ukraine conflict are motivated by its strategic goal to prevent Russian domination in Europe, preserve NATO's legitimacy, and discourage future challenges to the US security (Mearsheimer, 2014; Delfiner, 2008). With the U.S. and Russia vying for maximum influence over Eastern Europe, the conflict shows a classic fight for power in an anarchic world system. Realists see world affairs as a fight for dominance in which military might, economic might, and strategic alliances are the instruments governments employ to reach their objectives.

From 2014 until 2024, the “U.S. involvement in the Russia-Ukraine war is vital for comprehending more general global dynamics concerning the balance of power, regional security, and international law from realist point of view”. Through an analysis of this case, the paper offers understanding of the American policies used to mold world peace and security as well as the

difficulties presented by a rising Russia. This case study provides important insights for future conflict resolution, diplomacy, and the possibility of long-term peace even while tensions remain.

Reacting to Russia's activities in Ukraine from 2014 to 2024, the United States has used a multifarious approach to shape world peace and security. This strategy conforms to the Realist viewpoint, which stresses in international relations the primacy of national interest and power dynamics. Important elements of this approach are enforcing economic sanctions, supporting NATO's eastern flank, arming Ukraine militarily, and diplomatic outreach. Targeting key sectors of the Russian economy like finance, energy, and defence, economic sanctions sought to coerce Russia into stopping its belligerent activities in Ukraine. In reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, for example, the United States declared sanctions against Russia's central bank, therefore barring Americans from doing business with the bank and freezing of its assets. With the U.S. contributing around \$66.5 billion in military aid since the start of the invasion, military aid included providing modern weaponry and technology to improve Ukraine's defence capability. The U.S. also stepped up military presence in Eastern Europe to reassure friends and discourage more Russian action. Reflecting continuous attempts to solve the issue by discussion, diplomatic activities targeted at settling the related conflict involve high-level negotiations and peace talks.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, a rising Russia presented major obstacles for the United States. Which on-going military operations and strategic alliances with North Korea and Iran attempts to evade sanctions highlighted the difficulties in opposing Russian assertiveness? Iran, for instance, gave Russia drones and ballistic missiles, while North Korea sent weapons, therefore strengthening Russia's military capacity. Additional difficulties came from internal American discussions on the degree of participation in European security and possible changes in emphasis towards other areas, notably the Indo-Pacific. As the U.S. negotiates the balance of power, strategic objectives, and the search of stability in a complicated international environment, these dynamics underline the on-going relevance of realist ideas.

Conceptual Literature

Reacting to Russia's operations in Ukraine from 2014 to 2024, the United States has used a multifarious approach to shape world peace and security. This method fits the Realist viewpoint, which stresses the importance of national interest and power dynamics in international relations.

1. U.S. Aid to Ukraine: Military Support

From 2014 until 2024, the United States has been involved in the Russia-Ukraine war in a varied manner including diplomatic attempts, military support, and economic sanctions. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the United States has significantly increased its military assistance to Ukraine, aiming to bolster its defence capabilities against Russian aggression (Shiffrinson, 2020; Department of Defence, 2023). As of March 2025, the U.S. has allocated approximately \$182.8 billion in emergency funding for Ukraine and the surrounding region, with a substantial portion dedicated to military aid (US Department of State Defence, 2025; Nur, & Soesilo, 2022).

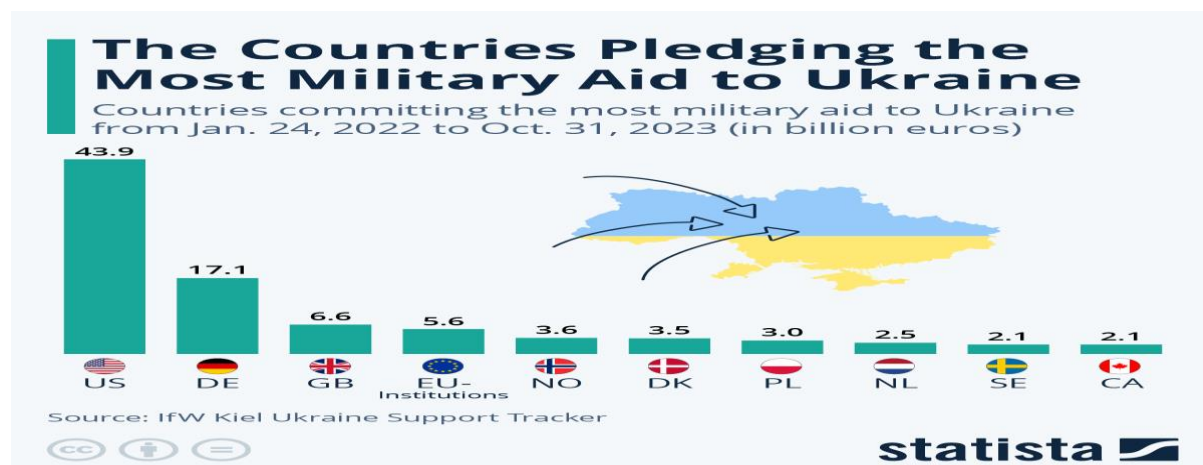


Figure 2. The Countries Pledging the most Military Aid to Ukraine

Military aid pledged to Ukraine from January 24, 2022, to October 31, 2023, demonstrates strong international support, with the U.S. (€43.9B) leading contributions. Germany (€17.1B) follows, underscoring NATO's unity and increasing European defence commitments amid geopolitical shifts.

Among the many tools and weapons this military support covers are modern missile systems, artillery, armoured vehicles, and unmanned aerial systems. For example, the U.S. declared in August 2022 a \$550 million security aid package targeted on providing High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and associated ammunition (U.S. Department of State, 2022). Ukraine's long-range strike capacity has been much improved by these systems, which enable more precise targeting of Russian sites (Masters & Merrow, 2024; Congressional Research Service, 2024).

The necessity to let Ukraine properly defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity justifies the acquisition of such sophisticated weapons. The U.S. wants to level the playing field by providing contemporary military equipment, therefore negating Russia's greater firepower and helping to prevent more aggression. More general strategic objectives are also served by this support, including the preservation of international conventions and the avoidance of unilateral national border alterations accomplished by force (USAFacts, 2025).

2. U.S. Aid to Ukraine: Economic and Humanitarian Support

Beyond military support, the United States has given Ukraine significant humanitarian and financial aid to help to lessen the socioeconomic effects of the conflict (Cohen & Radin, 2019). In May, 2024, the U.S., through its Agency for International Development (USAID), directly funded the Ukrainian Government with \$22.9 billion. This money mostly covers salaries for teachers, civil servants, and healthcare professionals, therefore guaranteeing the continuation of vital public services even during the conflict (Congressional Research Service, 2024).

Food aid, medical supplies, and support for internally displaced people have been among the immediate needs that humanitarian aid has concentrated on meeting out of the crisis. For instance, U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, following a catastrophic missile attack on an outdoor

market in Kostiantynivka that resulted in notable civilian casualties in September 2023, announced additional aid of about \$1 billion. The United States wants to avoid a humanitarian disaster by guaranteeing the operation of governmental institutions and meeting the fundamental needs of the population, therefore supporting Ukraine's long-term stability and growth (USAID Office of Inspector General, 2024; Nur & Soesilo, 2022).

3. Sanctions on Russia Led by the U.S. and the International Community

Reacting to Russia's activities in Ukraine, the United States, along with other allies, has imposed a set of sanctions aimed at major Russian economic sectors. Russia is the most sanctioned nation worldwide as of June 2024; over 16,000 restrictions have been placed on Russian people and companies (Van Bergeijk, 2022).

Targeting Russia's financial, military, and energy sectors, these sanctions have sought to limit the nation's capacity to fund and maintain military activities. For example, in June 2024 the American Department of Treasury issued over additional sanctions including steps increasing the possibility of secondary sanctions for foreign financial institutions aiding Russia's war economy (Fabbrini, 2023).

These sanctions clearly show their efficacy as seen by their effect on Russia's oil and gas income, which dropped 23.9% year over year in 2023 despite rebounding world oil prices. This drop emphasizes the part sanctions play in reducing Russia's financial resources, so restricting its capacity to maintain on-going military operations (Milov, 2024; Le Monde, 2024; U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2024).

4. U.S. Sanctions and Their Effect on Global Energy Prices

For world energy markets, Russia's sanctions especially those aimed at its energy sector have had major effects. Tightened U.S. sanctions in February 2025 caused trade of inexpensive Russian oil to important users such as China and India to be hampered, hence driving demand for Middle Eastern and African petroleum. This change underlined the connectivity of energy markets and helped to contribute to volatility in world oil prices (Ilman & Anam, 2023).

Although these penalties sought to lower Russia's income from exports of energy, they also had unanticipated effects like more global energy costs. For instance, worries over the growing U.S. global trade war and unanticipated OPEC oil output rise dropped U.S. oil prices to a four-year low in April 2025.

These penalties are justified by their strategic goal to undermine Russia's military capability and economic foundation as well as by its capacity to finance military activities. But the resulting swings in world energy prices draw attention to the requirement of careful calibration of such policies to minimize negative consequences on the world economy. This emphasizes how difficult it is to use economic sanctions as a tool of foreign policy and how much of a balance between reaching strategic goals and preserving world economic stability is needed.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, a rising Russia presented major obstacles for the United States. Russia's on-going military operations, strategic relationships with nations including Iran and North Korea, and attempts to evade sanctions underlined the difficulties of opposing Russian

assertiveness. For instance, Iran gave Russia drones and ballistic missiles, while North Korea sent weapons, so strengthening Russia's military capacity. Additional difficulties came from internal American discussions on the degree of participation in European security and possible changes in emphasis towards other areas, notably the Indo-Pacific. As the U.S. negotiated the balance of power, strategic interests, and the quest of stability in a complicated international environment, these dynamics underline the on-going relevance of realist concepts (Miller, Kumleben, & Nowak, 2023; Spiro, 2023; Chen, Jiang, Wang & Wang, 2023; Oatley, 2021).

Research Methodology

Research design is a methodical approach with the general framework to address certain research questions outlined by means of gathering and presenting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The structure of the investigation made the study to choose quasi-experimental design. The data collection method and sources were secondary data ranging from 2014 to 2024. The data analysis techniques used were the descriptive statistical technique analysis and content analysis approach which was used to assess the development of U.S.A engagement.

The data specification impact of the underlying MEHA, SRIC, MSN, and USGE on Russia – Ukraine war was captured using Descriptive Statistic analysis approaches.

$R_u = f(\text{MSN}, \text{USGE}, \text{MEHA}, \text{SRIC})$

Where?

R_U = Russia and Ukraine war

MEHA_t = Military, Economic, Humanitarian Aid

SRIC_t = Sanctions on Russia & international community

MSN_t = Military sanctions by NATO

USGE_t = USA sanction on global energy

Result of the Findings

Table 1. Descriptive statistic percentage breakdown

VARIABLE	Mean (%)	Std. Dev. (%)	Min (%)	Max (%)
MEHA	9.09	14.7	0.57	45.45
SRIC	9.09	4.66	4.63	18.52
MSN	9.09	12.64	0.32	48
USGE	9.09	1.41	7.43	11.57

Table 1 reveal that Military, Economic, and Humanitarian Aid “(MEHA)” with the Mean of 9.09%; Standard Deviation: 14.7%; Minimum: 0.57%; Maximum: 45.45%. This implies more consistent penalties from 2014–2024 since “MEHA” keeps a modest degree of volatility. Reflecting responsive international support to Ukraine's requirements, the implication shows the time of increasing aid along with phases of conflict.

The result reveal that SRIC Mean: 9.09%; Standard Deviation: 4.66%; Minimum: 4.63%; Maximum: 18.52%; “Sanctions on Russia by International Community (SRIC)”. This implies that SRIC keeps moderate fluctuation, thereby assuming more constant penalties over the years. On the other hand, slightly higher values in subsequent years, for example, 2022–2024 reflect a concerted tightening of international sanctions on Russia as the conflict got more intense.

3. MSN Mean: 9.09%; Standard Deviation: 12.64%; Minimum: 0.32%; Maximum: 34.42%; “Military Spending by NATO, (MSN)”. It implies that NATO's military expenditure shows great dispersion and that, with greatly high investments in 2014 and 2020. These spikes show higher readiness and deterrence strategies since they coincide with important phases of escalation in the fight.

4. “USA Sanctions on Global Energy Prices (USGE)” with a mean of “9.09%”; standard deviation of 1.41%; minimum of 7.43%; maximum of 11.17%”. This implies that USGE stays constant with the lowest variance among the factors. The minimal dispersion implies, notwithstanding geopolitical events, the influence of U.S. sanctions on world oil pricing was more stable year-over-year.

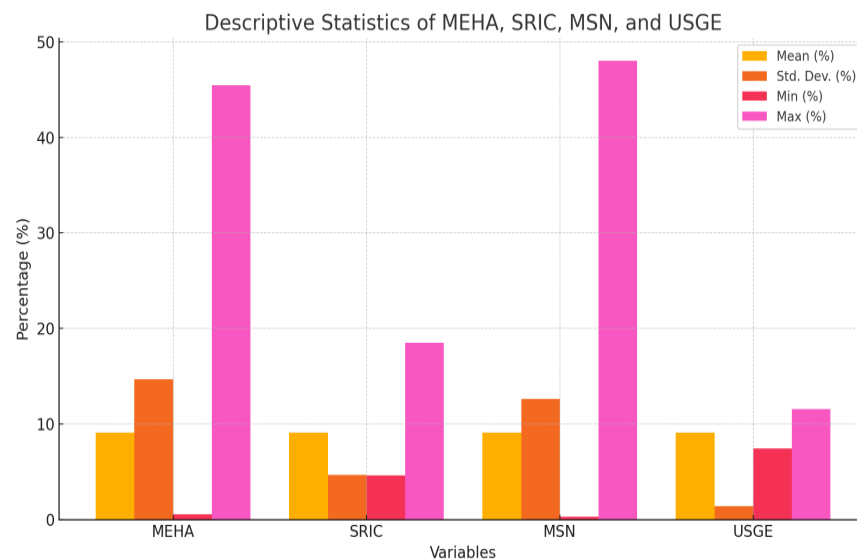


Figure 2. Descriptive Statistics of MEHA, SRIC, MSN and USGE.

1. Military, Economic, and Humanitarian Aid: MEHA has great fluctuation, ranging from 0.57% to 45.45%, therefore reflecting uneven patterns of aid. The swings threaten Ukraine's long-term development. Maintaining constant support, guaranteeing quick reactions during escalations, and improving resilience in both military and civilian sectors depend on a pre-approved, orderly multi-year aid program.

2. “SRIC, Sanctions on Russia by International Community”, stays rather steady with sanctions ranging from 4.63% to 18.52%. This captures consistent but occasionally reactive enforcement. Sanctions should be multilateral and flexible, aiming at circumvention channels, to increase impact. Sustaining economic pressure and advancing conflict de-escalation depend on coordinated secondary sanctions and real-time financial surveillance.

3. Military Spending by NATO Members: “MSN” shows notable variation, from as low as 0.32% to 48%, implying unequal NATO reactions. This inconsistency might reduce deterrent. NATO has to give coordinated military investments top priority, enhance fast deployment capabilities, and

standardize spending levels matching with threat assessments and indicators of regional instability if it is to guarantee collective security.

4. With hardly any variation between 7.43% and 11.57%, “USGE” (U.S. Sanctions on Global Energy Prices) shows steadiness. This demonstrates careful tuning to influence Russia's income and limit world energy shocks. Targeting evasion techniques like shadow fleets and illegal channelling will help sanctions to be more effective by guaranteeing continuous pressure without upsetting world oil markets.

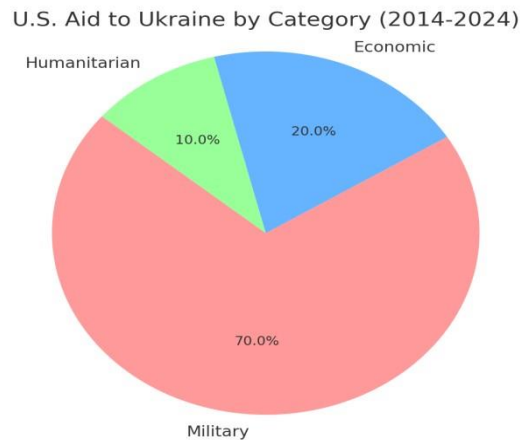


Figure 3. US Aid to Ukraine by Category (2014 - 2024)

Figure 3 illustrates U.S. aid to Ukraine, categorized as military, financial, and humanitarian. Military aid constitutes 70%, reflecting the U.S. strategic focus on bolstering Ukraine's defenses against Russian aggression. Financial aid accounts for 20%, aimed at stabilizing Ukraine's economy, while 10% is allocated to humanitarian relief addressing the war's social and humanitarian consequences. This allocation highlights the U.S. prioritization of military support to counter Russian influence and safeguard Ukrainian sovereignty.

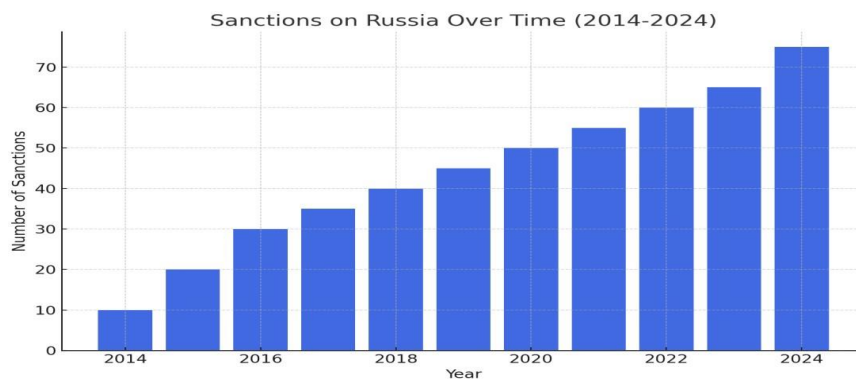


Figure 4. Sanctions on Russia over Time (2014 - 2024)

Driven mostly by the USA, the figure shows the consistent rise in sanctions applied on Russia by the international community in reaction to acts taken in Ukraine. As the war dragged on, the USA and its allies' growing efforts to apply economic pressure on Russia would show in this explosive spike. The steady increasing trend shows a strategic escalation by the United States to discourage Russian aggression, therefore supporting the importance of sanctions as a fundamental component of U.S. foreign policy in the conflict. Emphasizing the use of political and financial leverage to attain security and preserve the balance of power in the area, this conforms the Realist perspective.

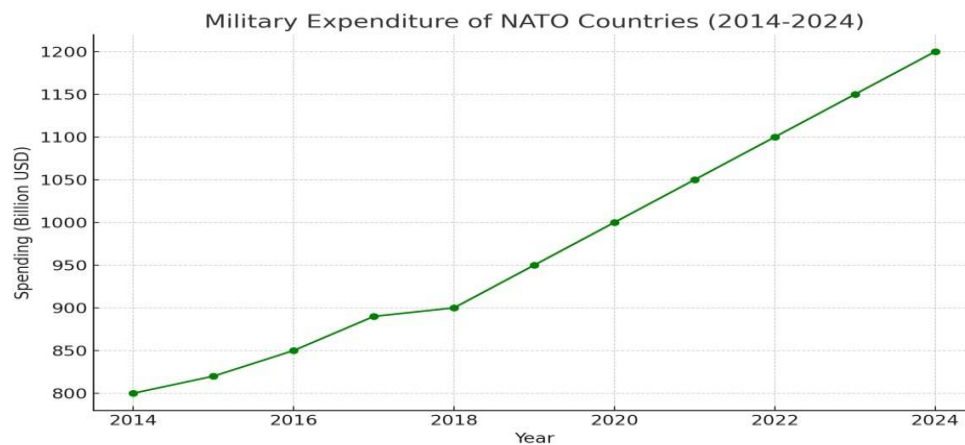


Figure 5. Military Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014 - 2024)

Figure 5 highlights the significant and steady increase in defense spending by NATO members over the decade. From approximately \$800 billion USD in 2014, military expenditures surged to over \$1.2 trillion USD by 2024. This consistent upward trend, particularly after 2014, aligns with heightened security concerns following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the on-going conflict in Ukraine. The sharp rise in military budgets reflects NATO, and particularly the USA's, strategic shift to counter Russian aggression, bolster collective defence, and support Ukraine through increased defence readiness and military investments. This demonstrates the broader geopolitical implications of the conflict for NATO, reinforcing the importance of military deterrence in response to the Russia-Ukraine war.

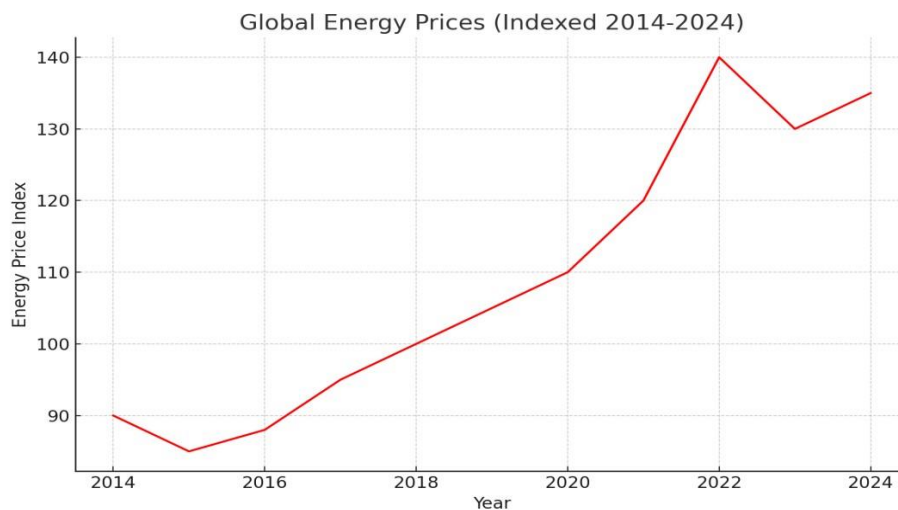


Figure 6. Global Prices (Indexed 2014 – 2024)

Figure 6 reveals that with a spike in 2022, the graph of Global Energy Prices (Indexed 2014-2024) shows a clear rise in energy prices from 2020 to 2022, then a minor decrease and stabilization. Particularly the sanctions placed on Russia, a major global energy supplier, this increase is intimately related with the geopolitical tensions and economic consequences coming from the Russia-Ukraine war. Price volatility was exacerbated by the USA's leadership of these sanctions and influence of global energy markets. While the minor recovery by 2024 points to market adjustments and changes in global energy supply chains, particularly the diversification of European energy imports, the 2022 peak fits increased conflict severity. This information emphasizes the major influence of the conflict on world energy markets economically.

Table 2: U.S. Military Aid to Ukraine (2014-2024)

Year	Amount of Aid (in Billion USD)	Types of Military Aid
2014	0.6	Non-lethal aid (medical supplies, training)
2015	0.8	Javelin anti-tank missiles, body armour
2016	1.0	Drones, radar systems
2017	1.5	Communications equipment, military training
2018	2.0	Javelin missiles, secure communications systems
2019	2.5	Counter-artillery radar systems
2020	3.0	HIMARS rocket systems
2021	4.5	Anti-tank, anti-air defense systems
2022	13.6	HIMARS, air defense systems, long-range missiles
2023	25.1	Advanced air defense (Patriot), artillery systems
2024	50.0	Expanded aid packages including modern tanks

Source: NATO Defense Expenditure Data (2014-2024)

Table 2 shows the U.S. military aid to Ukraine (2014–2024), therefore highlighting USA's growing engagement in the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Starting with \$0.6 billion in non-lethal aid in 2014, the support grew dramatically over the years to mirror Russia's rising aggressiveness and the growing intensity of the conflict. With HIMARS missile systems, aid had reached \$3 billion by 2020; then, with a dramatic increase to \$13.6 billion in 2022, concurrent with the full-scale Russian

invasion, it had reached More sophisticated and deadly systems, including air defence, long-range missiles, and by 2024, a startling \$50 billion are expected to be included alongside modern tanks and all-encompassing aid packages, so highlighting the USA's vital role in supporting Ukraine's military resistance against Russia.

Table 3: U.S. Sanctions Imposed on Russia (2014-2024)

Year	Number of New Sanctions Imposed	Sanction Focus
2014	10	Financial sanctions, travel bans, Crimea annexation
2015	10	Defense, financial, energy-related sanctions
2016	5	Limited economic sanctions on banking sector
2017	8	Sectoral sanctions, targeting energy companies
2018	5	Sanctions on Russian oligarchs, technology restrictions
2019	5	Sanctions on cyber-attacks, election interference
2020	5	Targeted sanctions on military procurement
2021	10	Sanctions on Russian officials, strategic industries
2022	20	Comprehensive energy sanctions, defense sector
2023	15	Broad financial and energy sanctions, oil exports
2024	15	Expansion of sanctions on key industries and exports

Source: NATO Defense Expenditure Data (2014-2024)

Table 3: American starting with 10 measures in 2014 following the invasion of Crimea, the USA has regularly escalated its sanctions on Russia, 2014–2024. The sanctions hit 15 annually by 2024, with more of an emphasis on financial constraints, thorough energy sanctions, and vital sectors. This fits the USA's strategic approach to gently undermine Russia's military and economic capacity. Along with military support, the U.S. has used economic sanctions—especially on Russia's energy sector and important businesses—to restrict Russia's capacity to maintain her military operations.

Table 4: NATO Defense Spending (Selected Countries, 2014-2024)

Country	2014 Defense Spending (Billion USD)	2024 Defense Spending (Billion USD)
United States	800	1200
Germany	45	75
United Kingdom	55	90
Poland	10	25
France	60	85
NATO Average	250	400

Source: NATO Defense Expenditure Data (2014-2024)

Driven by security issues pertaining to the Russia-Ukraine war, Table 4 Analysis of NATO defence spending among NATO countries observed a consistent increase during the 2014-2024 periods. As the biggest contributor to NATO, the United States has greatly raised its defence budget for Eastern European nations including Poland, greatly increasing expenditure because of their proximity to Russia and concern about spill-over from the war in Ukraine. From 2014 to 2024, NATO members' defence expenditure rose significantly; the United States leads the way. Spending rose most in Eastern European nations including Poland. The assumption is that increased security issues and NATO's attempts to stop more Russian aggression define the surge in defence expenditure. The American participation as the biggest contributor to NATO confirms its leadership in preserving European security.

Table 5: Impact of U.S. Sanctions on Global Energy Price

Year	Energy Price Index (2014 = 100)	Key Events Impacting Prices
2014	100	Initial Crimea annexation
2015	95	Stable energy prices after initial shock
2016	98	Oil production cuts by OPEC
2017	105	Russia-U.S. energy sanctions introduced
2018	110	Expanded sanctions on energy exports
2019	108	Minor fluctuations, U.S. oil production
2020	90	COVID-19 pandemic reduces global demand
2021	100	Global recovery, energy demand rebounds
2022	140	Sharp rise due to war, energy disruptions
2023	130	Stabilization with alternative suppliers
2024	135	Continued pressure due to sanctions

Source: NATO Defense Expenditure Data (2014-2024)

Table 5 examines world energy prices and reveals the main patterns in U.S. military aid, sanctions, and the worldwide influence on energy markets resulting from the Russia-Ukraine war. Military Aid: The United States significantly raised its military support in post-2022, therefore underscoring the strategic relevance of Ukraine. Focused on undermining Russia's economy, the U.S. sanctions grew more severe as the war grew. In reaction to security concerns from Russia, NATO members especially the United States and Eastern European countries raised their defence budgets. Russia's sanctions had a significant effect on world energy markets, which resulted in significant price hikes after 2022. The conflict revealed weaknesses in world energy security, which drove nations to look for substitute providers and energy sources. Following the adoption of this approach, global energy prices surged sharply in 2022.

U.S. and European sanctions on Russian energy export. Prices stayed high into 2024 as world markets reacted to interruptions in supply chains. The consequences of the sanctions caused major disturbances in world energy markets, therefore highlighting the interdependence of geopolitics events with world economic stability. While the U.S. sought to reduce Russia's energy exports, the consequences of worldwide ripple affected consumer prices, inflation, and European energy security.

Conclusion

This study covers the period of 2014 to 2024, and offers a thorough examination of American engagement in the Russia-Ukraine war. Combining military support, economic sanctions, and diplomatic efforts to fight Russian aggression, it emphasizes the multiple part the United States has performed. Particularly the significant rise in military aid and sanctions, the quantitative study captures the strategic goals of the United States: safeguarding European security, safeguarding Ukrainian sovereignty, and so strengthening the ideas of international law. The results revealed American participation has a major influence on the course of the conflict, so changing the balance of power in the area and revitalizing NATO's defence posture.

The wider ramifications of U.S. activities, particularly in terms of global economic stability, nevertheless expose a complicated interaction between the use of hard power and the unintentional economic effects, such as growing world oil prices. Emphasizing power dynamics and security issues, the study runs in line with "Realism" ideas. Simultaneously, it questions elements of

"Liberalism" as the U.S.'s reliance on military and economic policies has not entirely resulted in the cooperative, peaceful results that Liberalism ideally stress. Future research should look at how diplomatic initiatives may complement these policies to promote long-term peace and stability in the area, therefore reducing the negative economic consequences and preserving world security.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- i. Create a multi-year aid plan under open supervision to guarantee consistent assistance for Ukraine's humanitarian and defence requirements. With aid's great volatility (Std. Dev. = 14.7%), this organized strategy will strengthen Ukraine's resilience, discourage aggressiveness, and promote long-term stability, so complementing international pledges to respect sovereignty and peace.
- ii. Apply group secondary sanctions aimed at companies supporting Russia's sanction avoidance. Stable pressure is indicated by moderate variation in punishments (Std. Dev. = 4.66%). But Russia's avoidance using outside networks hinders efficacy. Targeting enablers especially financial middlemen and logistics companies coordinated secondary sanctions would eliminate these loopholes and reduce the cost of non-compliance globally.
- iii. Invest in cooperative training projects and boost NATO's fast deployment capacity to raise interoperability and readiness. The considerable variance in spending (Std. Dev. = 12.64%) points to conflicting commitments. This proactive approach guarantees quick response to developing hazards, shows joint defence commitment, and discouragement of aggressiveness, thereby strengthening regional security.
- iv. Strengthen monitoring and apply harsher penalties to expand energy sanctions addressing evasion strategies like "ghost fleets." Though USGE's stability (Std. Dev. = 1.41%) evasion strategies including reflagged tankers and hidden routes reduce its influence. This all-encompassing strategy limits Russia's income sources, therefore compromising its war funding and supporting the potency of international sanctions.

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Assessment of the Mode of Operation of Kidnapping in Nigeria

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Abstract

Cases of kidnapping have been reported around the world, which makes it a global crime. The degree of occurrence varies from region to region and country to country. This study is an assessment of the mode of operation of kidnapping in Nigeria. The study is anchored on the strain theory. Data collected for the paper were predominantly through secondary sources. The study's findings indicated that the menace of kidnapping is not new but had existed over time. Also, the findings revealed that the ever-increasing cases of kidnapping have negatively affected Nigerian citizens. Therefore, the study recommends that policies to eradicate poverty should be urgently initiated and successfully implemented to forestall resorting to kidnapping. Again, ungoverned spaces should be occupied through the use of ICT drone coverage manned by stakeholders of security for monitoring and domination of these spaces. Also, mass enlightenment against kidnapping should be intensified in communities, societies, states, and the nation as a whole. This is necessary to educate the northwest citizens on this crime and its attendant consequences as well as what to do when accosted by the perpetrators of the crime.

Keywords: Assessment, Kidnapping, Mode of Operation, Strain Theory, Nigeria

Introduction

The phenomenon of kidnapping is not a novel social problem in the World. The phenomenon manifests in different forms, dimensions, degrees and intensity in terms of its practice in different parts of the World. Kidnapping has been experienced in different countries irrespective of whether they are developed or not. For instance, the menace of kidnapping has been experienced in Mexico, the United States of America (USA), Iraq, Cameroon, and Nigeria among others. According to the U.S Department of State (2014), Mexico was reported to have suffered an estimated 105,682 kidnapping cases in 2012 alone. According to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, roughly 800,000 children are reported missing each year in the USA alone (Ene, 2018)

Kidnapping has become prevalent in Nigeria and there is this unrest and uncertainty about who the next victim will likely be. Kidnapping cannot be said to be historically new nor can it be said to be peculiar or a new case in Nigeria. It is a universal occurrence that can be said to be like the man himself. This phenomenon has existed since there was the establishment of a coordinated human society. Kidnapping constitutes a violation of people's right to freedom, as it involves perpetrators illegally detaining or holding their victims' captive until the captor's demands are met. Besides illegal detention, which infringes on the victims' right to freedom, they (the victims) are subjected to horrible experiences of captivity, financial loss, and on certain occasions, the victims are killed. Cases of kidnapping have been reported around the world, which makes it a global crime. The degree of occurrence varies from region to region and country to country (Sarkinnoma, 2023). According to a global report on the rate of kidnapping published by NYA International (2017), Asia, with 43% of total global incidents, was rated first in terms of the degree at which the crime occurs. The continent is followed by Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, and Europe, which ranked second, third, fourth, and fifth, respectively. Similarly, an international

organization specializing in the provision of security services, Constellis (2017), ranked 10 countries in the world in terms of the degree of severity of kidnapping. The report showed that Libya ranked first and Nigeria ranked second. Other countries in this ranking, in order of degree of occurrence, were Venezuela, Mexico, Yemen, Syria, the Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia.

The spate of kidnapping has been so alarming in recent years. The country's rate of kidnapping at National level was 0.001 per 100,000 populations in 2013; reports also indicated that the phenomenon escalated from 29th in 2016 to 40th in 2018, evolving at an average annual rate of 42.84%, even though the incidences fluctuated substantially, from 2017 to 3rd quarter of 2019 it tended to decline to 25 and changed at 78.57% (Knoema, 2019). The most unfortunate victims of the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria often die in the process while the luckier ones are released after severe torture and payment of huge ransom (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020). Most of the incidences of kidnapping in Nigeria in recent years take place on the road, where the security network is very poor; and reasons ranging from unemployment, idleness, vengeance, rituals, monetary gains and politics have been blamed for the prevalence of this security challenge (Onwuatuwegwu, 2020).

Kidnapping is an emerging security challenge in Nigeria. Kidnapping actually started on 25th February 2006 in Nigeria by the abduction of expatriate oil company employees in the Niger Delta region, which was displayed as an open message to the World for many years of marginalization, injustice, exploitation, and underdevelopment of the oil-rich region (Akpan, 2017). Since then, the phenomenon of kidnapping became openly commercialized in several parts of the country, including Taraba State. Today, virtually all states in each geo-political zone of Nigeria are riddled with the incidences of kidnapping. In the North-West geopolitical zone, for instance, states like Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina have become the epicenters of kidnapping. Anyone plying Abuja-Kaduna expressway is seen as being on a suicide mission given the rising cases of kidnapping on that road. Adebajo (2021) citing Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) revealed that about 8,661 people were kidnapped in the Nigeria between 2015 and the first half of 2021. Kidnapping has led to a high level of fear which threatens the economic prosperity, political climate, business and general climate of the country (Onwuatuwegwu, 2020). The phenomenon has since then become a big money spinning 'venture'. In the year 2008, Nigeria was placed sixth on the Global Kidnap Index (GKI) by an online tourism site (Inyang & Abraham, 2013). This rating puts the country among countries with serious kidnapping problems, such as the Philippines, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil, and Mexico (Ekpe, 2009; Ujumadu, 2008).

In contemporary Nigeria, the implications of kidnapping are not only on the foreigners; sadly, it now includes locals, such as; the poor and the rich, the aged, and children (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020). According to Ekpe (2009), Nigeria recorded 512 cases of kidnapping and 30 persons were reported to have died in their kidnappers' den that year as against 353 cases recorded throughout 2008. In couple of years, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of kidnapping. It is on this note that Chukwuma (2019) observed that kidnapping has remained the most virulent form of banditry in Nigeria. It has become the most pervasive and intractable violent crime in the country. Accordingly, Adeola (2023) disclosed that Nigeria accounted for a quarter of kidnap cases reported worldwide in the year 2022, and that the country had been designated as the global capital for kidnapping due to the huge record of kidnap cases reported in the country yearly.

Kidnappings for financial gain by various criminal groups, such as suspected armed bandits, herders, militants, pirates, and terrorist groups, among others, continue to be a severe security concern in the country. Successful career persons, including sport persons, journalists and top

public servants are afraid of being kidnapped, or of their family members being abducted (Ani & Nweke, 2014). Kidnapping no longer affects only foreigners but also affects locals, both adult girls and males, the rich and the poor, the elderly, and children (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020). A more recent trend is the issue of self-kidnap for ransom. It is a situation whereby a person arranges his/her kidnap or hides himself/herself from families and friends to demand ransom. Kidnapping has become a flourishing business venture, based on the perceived low risk and high profit (Tade, Ojedokun & Aderinto, 2020) such that the hallowed image of Nigeria and Nigerians have been dented (Odoma, 2019) and the implication of this is that it has reduced Nigeria's potentials to attract foreign direct investments (Ayuba, 2020). Sadly, in spite of the measures put in place by the government, kidnapping has prevailed. These efforts have failed because of weak sanctioning and deterrence mechanisms (Chukwuma, 2019). Therefore, the study assesses the mode of operation of kidnappers in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

For clarity and proper understanding of this study, kidnapping is conceptualized. The concept of kidnapping is constantly changing. Kidnapping has been conceptualized by different scholars, international, regional and sub-regional organizations who have defied uniformity of parlance. Traditionally, the concept of kidnapping derives from two English root words, namely, 'kid' (meaning infant) and, 'napping' (meaning to be caught sleeping). The practice of kidnapping dates back to 17th century Britain, when infants (kids) of wealthy families would be 'napped' (caught in the sleep) for ransom (Tnazelli, as cited in Okoli & Agada, 2014). Olofin (2020) views kidnapping as when a person is abducted and taken from one place to another against their will or confined to a controlled space without the confinement being from a legal authority. Thomas and Nta (2009) defined kidnapping as robbery of the highest rank. According to them, it is an organized and systematic robbery which is not as deadly as armed-robbery, but more profitable than the former. The profitability has encouraged those that indulged in it to carry on with the act although there is a law prohibiting it. In criminal law, kidnapping is defined as taking away of a person by force, threat or deceit with intent to cause him/her to be detained against his or her will (Asuquo, 2009). According to Ogabido (2009), "kidnapping" means to abduct, capture, carry off, remove or steal away a person(s). Kidnapping is a form of violent crime cum organized crime commonly identified with the illegal seizure of persons against their will for several criminal reasons (Chidi, 2014).

Mode of Operation of Kidnapping in Nigeria

In terms of patterns of kidnapping, different types of operations have emerged in recent times. These include routine model, invasion model, highway model, and insider model.

Routine Model

The routine model is the traditional type of kidnapping that involves well organized gangs carrying out regular abduction that follows the typical attack cycle of kidnapping. Security experts are of the view that kidnappings generally follow a process that involves six stages: target selection, planning, deployment, attack, escape, and exploitation. As noted by Stewart (2010), in the act of kidnapping, the group must identify a victim; plan for the abduction, captivity, and negotiation; conduct the abduction and secure the hostage; successfully leverage the life of the victim for financial or political gain; and then escape. Although other types of kidnapping may or may not follow some of these stages, the routine model usually follows this sequence of actions to optimize the success rate of their operations. This type of kidnapping is carried out by established gangs, that prowl the city or towns scouring for potential targets. The confessions of members of a kidnap

gang arrested in April 2017, who specialized in serial abduction of people in Abuja, Kaduna, and Nasarawa, vividly illustrate their routinized operations (Okolie, 2017). Victims of the routine model in Nigeria cut across people from all walks of life expatriates, movie actors, schoolchildren, journalists, priests, traditional rulers, politicians, doctors, academics, businessmen, and women, among others. Their main consideration is whether the individual is a highly attractive target (HAT). An individual or group is considered as HAT against two key indicators: (1) the target's worth or value and (2) the likelihood of his/her successful abduction. Once these indicators are promising, such individual/group becomes a target of serious interest for the professional kidnapping gangs. Typically, most victims are released unharmed after ransom is paid, though there have been cases where the victims were murdered or died in captivity.

Invasion Model

This type of kidnapping entails a well-planned attack by a kidnapping gang, involving the raiding of a community, estate, school, or any population centre to abduct sizeable number of persons considered high-value targets. In terms of mode of operation, the act involves extensive pre-attack surveillance and information gathering about those living or frequenting such places, estimation of security arrangement in place in such locations, mapping of possible escape routes with the abducted victims, and selection of likely date and timing of planned attack. Hence, some individuals are identified beforehand and included in the target list. This kind of kidnapping usually requires huge resources in terms of the number of gang members; logistics for movement, feeding, and accommodation; and volume of ammunition needed in the lifecycle of the operation. The invasion model is often conducted by well-organized, highly sophisticated, and operationally experienced kidnapping gangs. The outcome is usually mass abduction of targets, who will later be transported to the kidnappers' den. Such hideouts or camps are usually located in creeks, bushes, or forests that are largely inaccessible to security agents. Although statistics is certainly not exhaustive, they are indicative of this type of kidnapping in Nigeria. It shows that schools and residential estates were targeted by the heavily armed kidnappers to abduct sizeable numbers of victims between four and eight persons.

Highway Model

This type of kidnapping is highly opportunistic in the sense that the potential targets or victims are not known beforehand. The spot of attack is usually not locations within towns and cities, but expressways that connect states or major cities in Nigeria. The kidnapping gang usually combines such operations with robbing or raping of travelers. The mode of operation involves heavily armed members laying siege at the major highways. Sometimes the kidnappers disguise themselves by wearing army or police uniform to easily pass off as genuine state security forces. They will block the highway, force vehicles to stop, and proceed to rob travelers (Daily Trust 2016). Thereafter, persons suspected to be of high financial value will be seized and transported to their heavily guarded camps, usually thick bushes and forests. There, they will do preliminary estimation of the financial value of the victims and then initiate telephone conversation with the victims' families to negotiate ransom payments. Some lucky victims have been freed through rescue operations by security forces, while others regained their freedom after paying ransom. Those who are not so lucky have died during rescue operations or as a result of ill-health, or injuries sustained during attempt to whisk them away by the kidnappers.

Major highways such as Abuja-Lokoja expressway, Abuja-Kaduna road, Aba-Ikot Ekpene road, Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi road, and Akure-Ilesha expressway are the major hotspots of this type of

kidnapping in Nigeria. Others are Lagos-Sagamu-Ore-Benin road, Lagos-Ibadan expressway, and Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway. Although several cases of this type of kidnapping abound, one high-profile abduction that attracted wide publicity reveals a practice that is ubiquitous in Nigerian highways. On 30 June 2016, the Deputy High Commissioner of Sierra Leone to Nigeria, Major General Alfred Claude-Nelson and his driver were abducted by kidnappers while travelling along the Kaduna-Abuja road. Their abductors held them for four days before releasing them after ₦1.5 million ransom was paid (Ajaja, 2016). The intervention of both the police and Department of State Services (DSS) facilitated his negotiated safe release, although the culprits were later arrested. Also, on 19 October 2017, the Chaplain of African Church, Ondo Central Missionary Diocese, Reverend David Ayola was reported by the media to have been kidnapped along Imojo-Oye Ekiti road and later killed after it became clear to the kidnappers that the church could not raise the ₦100 million ransom they demanded.

Insider Model

Insider model is the type of kidnapping where someone who lives or is closely associated with the potential victim plays an active role by initiating, participating, directing, or enabling the kidnapping of such targets. Such insider could be the relative, driver, cook, gatekeeper, nanny, business associate, confidant, or any other person who is reasonably in close contact with the potential target. The individual is usually the one who provides the kidnapping gang with useful information that makes the individual an attractive target. Such information may include the victim's financial worth, residence, hobbies, movement, investment, or, indeed, any fact that could encourage or inspire his or her abduction. A typical example of this type was the kidnapping and eventual murder of Dr. Edith Chinedu Aliyu, proprietress of Chelson Group of Schools and Chief Executive Officer of Grant Microfinance Bank. Her abduction was orchestrated by her driver, Ali Angba. She was kidnapped in her house on 29 June, 2016 by the trio of Maxwell Ajukwu, Solomon Amodu, and Sunday Jacob. Two hours after her abduction, the kidnappers strangled her because she recognized one of her abductors as her driver's friend. They later buried her in a bush near Yangoji Village, along Kwali-Lokoja Expressway. Meanwhile, they had collected a ransom of ₦5 million from the family, supposedly to secure her release. Ali Angba confessed to the crimes connived with the three other suspects to kidnap the victim (Mutum 2014). The main challenge in the insider model, much as in other types of kidnapping for ransom, is that once the victim recognizes any of the member of the criminal gang, the chances of him or her being released alive are very slim.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the strain theory as its theoretical framework. According to the strain theory, society is structured in such a way that while some members of society have the opportunity to achieve a shared success goal, others do not. In other words, opportunities to attain success are not equally distributed. Merton (1938) traced crime to social structure, which places members of society in a condition that makes them turn to crime to meet their needs. Crime or deviance is the result of an unequal distribution of opportunities in life. Merton (1938) stated that "certain phases of social structure" generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a "normal" response. All societies, according to Merton, have institutionalized means of achieving success goals (Haralambos, Holbor & Heald, 2004). Ideally, society should ensure that people have the means to attain success. The failure of society to provide this increases the likelihood of people rejecting institutionalized means and adopting any available ones.

Merton explained five (5) ways members of society respond to the goal of achieving success. Below are these responses:

Conformity: This is a situation whereby people accept both societal goals and the institutionalized means of achieving them and act accordingly.

Innovation: This situation occurs when people accept the goals but reject the institutionalized means and subsequently adopt a deviant or criminal means to achieve the goal.

Ritualism: In this case, people no longer struggle to achieve cherished goals but strictly adhere to prescribed rules. They are deviants because they no longer seek success.

Retreatism: This refers to the abandonment of both the goals and the institutionalized means as a result of failure to achieve success. This category of people have given up on the quest to strive for success.

Rebellion: This is the rejection of both the goals and prescribed means of achieving them and subsequently replacing them with contrary goals and means. This category of people wish to alter the way society operates. The second response to goals, which is "innovation" as explained above, could be applied to kidnapping in Nigeria. Members of the Nigerian society want to achieve the goal of financial success in order to avoid the negative consequences of poverty. However, millions of Nigerians have been unable to achieve it. From the standpoint of strain theory, therefore, kidnapping in Nigeria is an "innovation" adopted by those who could not achieve financial success through legitimate means. According to Merton (1938), innovators accept society's goals but adopt criminal means of attaining them due to their failure to do so through socially approved means. Kidnappers accept the goal of financial success but adopt kidnapping as a means of attaining it. Kidnapping is solely motivated by the quest to obtain financial gain. Nigerian society was not typified by kidnapping until the people of the Niger Delta started making millions of naira from the crime (Inyang & Abraham, 2013). Arguably, kidnappers may not have adopted a violent approach to making money if the society had not failed to provide conducive atmosphere for its members to achieve financial success. The motive is to achieve financial success, which the perpetrators could not achieve through lawful means. In the first instance, poverty may prevent people from obtaining an education that would allow them to legitimately achieve financial success. This could later result in the adoption of criminal means (such as poverty) to break the shackles of poverty.

As stated above, there exists a connection between poverty and financial-related crimes. According to Papaioannou (2017), "hunger makes a thief of any man." With the country's alarming poverty rate as shown above, there is a high likelihood that people will commit economic crimes to meet their needs. Ransom kidnapping is one of these crimes. A situation whereby a large proportion of a population lives in poverty portends danger for those who are relatively rich or possess lucrative means of livelihood. This has been demonstrated by kidnappers targeting and kidnapping people based on an assessment of their economic worth. Therefore, the larger the number of poor people in a place, the higher the tendency for insecurity to beset the place. Hence, Nigeria is arguably paying the price of having a multitude of poor people living in the midst of a few rich individuals. The high rate of poverty in Nigeria is attributable to the failure of the government to provide an enabling environment for people to earn legitimate income and meet their needs. According to Ikharehon and Omoregie (2015), virtually all social problems in Nigeria are traceable to corruption. Kidnapping for ransom is one of the social ills in Nigeria that is attributable to corruption, as a result of which, public funds that should have been used to eradicate or alleviate poverty in the country have been embezzled by a few politicians, leaving the masses to suffer in poverty.

Kidnapping for ransom has the potential to degenerate in the future if the current trend continues. Presently, poverty, which is a precursor to kidnapping, is continually rising instead of abating. Although not all poor people will resort to crime, in the same vein, not all poor people will abstain from crime. In Nigeria, it is said that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Successive Nigerian governments have not been able to eradicate poverty, and there are no indications that it will be eradicated in the near future. As the rate of poverty surges, financial-related crimes will experience a corresponding increase. Owing to the lucrative nature of kidnapping for ransom, its rate of occurrence can escalate further in the future.

From the standpoint of strain theory, the implication of this is that the rate of kidnapping for ransom (and other financial crimes) will increase, as people who were not hitherto involved in such crimes may join existing criminal gangs or form new ones. This is because those who are unable to achieve financial success through legitimate means are more likely to resort to crimes such as kidnapping, as previously stated. Furthermore, it is worrisome that the rate of kidnapping is rising, yet there is no commensurate rate of prosecution of offenders. In other words, although there have been reported cases of apprehension of kidnappers, a lot of kidnapping incidents are committed "successfully" without apprehension and prosecution of the offenders. A situation whereby a large number of potential offenders perceive kidnapping as a crime that can be committed successfully with little risk of apprehension and prosecution portends a hazardous implication for the future. Therefore, if the current state of offender prosecution persists, kidnapping for ransom can assume an unprecedented upsurge in the future.

Conclusion

This study assesses the mode of operation of kidnapping in Nigeria. The study therefore concludes that kidnapping escalated in Nigeria because of certain factors. More especially, considering the present circumstances surrounding ransom kidnapping, such as the increasing poverty rate, rising unemployment rate, poor enforcement of anti-kidnapping laws, and the fact that poor members of society have learned that kidnapping is a lucrative crime, the rate of kidnapping can degenerate in the future unless urgent steps are taken to tackle the crime.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

- i. To discourage people from engaging in kidnapping, policies to eradicate poverty should be urgently initiated and successfully implemented by the government. This would forestall resorting to kidnapping. Therefore, the provision of jobs as well as conducive atmosphere for people to be self-employed are legitimate means of livelihood that can prevent the adoption of kidnapping as a means of livelihood.
- ii. There is need to occupy the ungoverned spaces through the use of ICT drone coverage manned by security officials
- iii. Capital punishment of death sentence should be made appropriate in law by state and federal legislatures concerning the crime of kidnapping and others associated with it. This will serve as deterrence as no right-thinking citizen would wish to face the shame of a death sentence either by hanging or firing squad as the case may be.
- iv. Mass enlightenment against kidnapping should be intensified in communities, societies, states, and the nation as a whole. This is necessary as it can educate allow this Nigerian citizens on this crime and its attendant consequences as well as what to do when accosted by the perpetrators of the crime.

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