BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE IN 2022

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Abstract

This paper examined the invasion of Ukraine by Russia from the biblical perspective. The research problem of the paper is the justifications for waging war against a sovereign nation. It is the aim of the paper to investigate the causes of the invasion and the objective is to know the direct effects of the invasion on Nigeria. To achieve our aim and objective, the paper used historical and contextual approaches to assess the position of the Bible on invasion; and also the basis of the Ukrainian invasion. Consequently, the paper discovered the actual reasons for the invasion of Ukraine and those behind it, the internal problem facing Ukraine before the invasion, the potential threat of the invasion to global peace, the actual nation to blame for the invasion and the effects of Russian/Ukrainian war on the Nigerian economy. As a result of these findings, the paper recommended that there must be an immediate demilitarization of Ukraine, NATO's equipment installations on the borders of Russia should be relocated; there must be a restoration of the natural status of Ukraine for the sake of peace, the continuous eastward expansion of NATO must be stopped; and Russian legitimate security interest must be unconditionally taken into consideration by the Western countries to avoid third world war.

Keywords: Bible, Invasion, NATO, Russia, and Ukraine

Introduction

The tension over Ukraine builds up gradually over 30 years because of their natural position in the global map. Russia and Ukraine were in a marriage and at a point Ukraine alleged that the marriage was becoming insipid. Ukraine's Western friends advised her to divorce and be independent. The Western friends did not advise Ukraine based on their love for Ukraine but

based on their hatred for Russia. Ukraine abandoned the marriage and was granted independence in December 1991. Ukraine was officially given the custody of their children: Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk. In 2014, Crimea joined his father, Russia; despite the objection of Ukraine and the condemnation of the Western friends. After a while, the other two children of the marriage who are in the domain of Ukraine started making move for independence. Ukraine objected but Russia supported the agitation of the two regions for independence; and Russia has eventually recognized the independence of these two selves- proclaimed republics, Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia has also signed agreement of friendship relation and mutual aid with the leaders of Donetsk and Luhansk. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia urged the Russian Parliament to assent the decision. One significant factor is that Donetsk and Luhansk are Russians speaking people of Ukraine and they are controlled by separatists under the influence of Russia.

The Historical Background of the invasion of Ukraine

The military tension in Ukraine started very long ago. In the 9th century there was a state called Kievan Rus, Slavic people lived there and it was ruled by Grand Prince Volodimir, (a Russian) between 980 and 1015. The city of Kyiv was the state capital. From the beginning Ukraine has been under Russia. In 1800, Ukraine language was banned and Russian native language was ordered to be taught in schools as official language. Ukraine was then a region in Russia. Though, Ukraine had been an ethnic Russia; Russia's claim over Ukraine on the ground of colonial history is inadequate, just like Britain cannot claim the ownership of Nigeria. Putin, still thinking of the past, is ambitious to revive the Russian's imperialism; he probably does not know that the past imperialism cannot justify the present day expansionism (Paiki Sharma).

During the Soviet war Ukraine was the strongest enemy of United States of America. In 1900, both Ukraine and Russia were Soviet Union and Ukraine was the second most powerful after Russia. In 1991, Ukraine became independent and Russia pledged to respect its sovereignty. Ukraine had a lot of nuclear weapons but surrendered it to Russia in 1994. In appreciation, Russia guaranteed Ukraine security and also promised to respect her status; and they signed a Budapest Memorandum to that effect (Paiki Sharma).

Ukraine occupies 603,550 sq. km with a population of 44 million people and a GDP of $155billion dollars with a per capital income of $3.727 dollars. Ukraine is divided geographically into East and West. While the East is close to Russia, the West is close to Europe. Those in the Western region of Ukraine speak Ukraine language but those in the Eastern region of Ukraine speak Russian native language (Paiki Sharma). Many Russians regretted the independence of Ukraine because they were one at the beginning. This is one of the reasons why Vladimir Putin would not allow Ukraine to be a member of NATO. But the reality of today has shown that Putin cannot forcefully Russianize Ukraine. Because the current situation is that 72% of Ukrainians consider Russia as hostile, 70% reject Putin's policy about Ukraine, 69.3% of Ukrainians are ready to fight Russia, 67% wanted to join NATO, 62% wanted to joint EU, 27.3% want civil resistance against Russia; (Paiki Sharma), and this is the reason why their president (Volodymyr Zelensky) is strongly supported in the war against Russia.

In 2013, a crisis started in Ukraine under their President, Viktor Yanukovych. Ukrainians accused Viktor of corruption and that he was too openly pro-Moscow in his administration. By February 2014 Ukrainians ousted Viktor Yanukovych in a riot. The cause of the riot was that Viktor rejected EU Trade Deal and instead accepted $15 billion dollars Bail Out from Russia. A protest broke out because Ukrainians felt that Viktor Yanukovych had sold them to Russia, this riot was called Euromaidan (Beddoes, 2022). The West supported the protesters but Russia supported Viktor. Russia was not happy for losing their puppet president, Viktor. Russia out of anger and to savage the situation granted Viktor asylum.

The Internal Aggression in Ukraine before Russian Invasion

Crimea had been a serious problem between Russia and Ukraine before the present invasion. Crimea region is a peninsula located in the black sea. In 1954, the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea from the Russia to Ukraine this was used to strengthen the brotherly ties between Russia and Ukraine. At a point in 1991, even when Crimea was part of Ukraine it was given special autonomy due to its strategic location in peninsula, being the home of many Russian military bases. Putin eventually annexed Crimea and they officially voted to

become part of Russia on 16th March 2014. For Putin this was Crimea's libration but for the West it was Crimea's annexation (Edward, 2022). Crimea is important to both Putin because the region is rich with coal, iron and fertile land.

Some other two regions in Ukraine, (Donetsk and Luhansk) are controlled by militias. In May 2014, the two regions declared independence as the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. The two regions regarded themselves as Novorossiya, i.e. New Russia (Michael, CNN). Ukraine forces mobilized to crush the separatist leaders and retake the territories being controlled by them. Unfortunately, Russian government supported the separatists; they brought in their military to repel the Ukrainian soldiers. Eventually, they signed a Peace Memorandum between Ukraine, Russia and the Separatists; this was known as Minsk I.

This agreement collapsed and by January 2015, a severe war broke out again. It was Angela Merkel of Germany and Francois Holland of France that broker peace with them and they were made to sign the second Peace Agreement called Minsk II. The Minsk Accords posit that Ukraine should reabsorb Donetsk and Luhansk with a Special Status. However, this Special Status was not clearly defined. Despite the intervention of Germany and France, the Ukraine's internal crisis has never been completely resolved and over 14,000 people have been killed in the conflict area since 2014, (Paiki Sharma). Also, on Monday 7th February 2022, Putin officially recognized Donetsk and Luhansk as independent States and ordered Russian troops in for a peacekeeping operation. His action was condemned as a pretense for war and despite the condemnation Luhansk and Donetsk are now being controlled by Russian backed separatists (Arkady, 2022).

Reasons for Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Russian President, (Vladimir Putin) gave justifications for the invasion of Ukraine, part of his justifications are:

i. **NATO's Eastward expansion:** Putin has expressed serious fear concerning the expansion of NATO, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization into Eastern Europe and

former Soviet Republic, especially Ukraine. NATO is a political alliance that started since 1949. Putin believes that despite the fall of Soviet Union in 1991, nations at the Russian borders must remain with Russia. Putin says deliberate enlisting of nations on Russian borders represents a provocation. Putin claimed that the invasion of Ukraine was deserving and it was an act of self-defence of Russia against NATO aggressive expansion, (Carson, 2022).

ii. **Genocide Accusation:** Putin alleged Ukraine of committing genocide against ethnic Russians in the eastern Ukraine; particularly in the Donbas region where Kremlin-backed rebels have been fighting with Ukraine since 1914.

iii. **The De-Nazification of Ukraine:** Again, on Thursday 26th 2022, Putin proclaimed the de-nazification of Ukraine and wanted to remove Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky as a Nazist; even though Zelensky is a Jewish. Nazi is a member of a Germany Fascist Party controlling Germany from 1933 to 1945 under Adolf Hitler. Nazism is a political ideology rooted in the nineteenth century German Racialist Movement. Nazism is an extremist and at times terrorist noted for murderous and violent genocidal activities. Vladimir Putin purposefully leveled Nazism accusation against Ukrainians and Zelensky to scandalize the nation as enemies of Russia. In Russian federation, no term is more debasing than Nazist or Facist because the two words manifest the sad loss of Soviet Union to Nazi of Germany in II world war, (James, 2022).

iv. **Ukraine's Statehood:** Vladimir Putin adamantly insisted that Ukraine has never had its own authentic statehood. Putin said Ukraine was created by their first Soviet Union's leader, Vladimir Lenin and therefore remains part of Ukraine. Despite overwhelming evidence of Ukrainian culture and distinct history that predates the Soviet Union; Putin said that "Ukraine is not just our neighboring country but it is an integral part of our own history, culture and spiritual space," (James, 2022).

v. **Desire of Putin to Restore Russian Empire:** Putin wants to rebuild the collapsed Russian empire and restore the control of Soviet Union over Europe and Asia before the end of the Cold War. The Old Russian Union included Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia,

Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, part of Poland and Turkey in 1919. The uncontroverted reason for Putin's invasion of Ukraine was because Russia could no longer feel safe, develop and exist in the modern Ukrainian romance with NATO, the West and European Union who are arch-enemies of Russian historic future as a nation, (Paul, BBC). Putin has an intension to break Ukraine into two if he could not dethrone President Zelensky. Therefore, Putin started to consider Donetsk and Luhansk as independent nations that should not be under Ukraine.

Who is to Blame for the 2022 Invasion of Ukraine, NATO and the West or Russia?

Over the past 25 years, Russia has been warning NATO about its creeping toward her borders but NATO dismissed Russia as "myopia and arrogance," (Paiki Sharma). NATO, on 4th April 1949, signed the North Atlantic Accord, this treaty was simply anti-Soviet accord aimed at fighting any future aggression from the USSR, to protect the democratic freedom of members, to promote common values and interest of members; and to ensure collective security of its members. Article 5 of NATO treaty says any armed attack on a member is an attack on all members. This allowed all members to pull and share their security resources together during war.

Russia in response to NATO operation also created the WARSAW PACT in 1955. The aim of the Warsaw Pact is the same with NATO i.e. an armed attack on any Warsaw Pact is an attack on all members. In Russian historical memory, there are five reasons why the Warsaw Pact is important because they had been betrayed in the past by NATO and the West; and these betrayals were too devastating to be forgotten by Russian, they include:

i. The 1610 to1612 invasion, i.e. Polish occupation of Kremlin;
ii. Swedish invasion of Russia in 1708 to 1709;
iii. Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812;
iv. the two Russian wars with Germany in 1914 to 1918; and,
v. Nazi invasion of Soviet Union in 1941.

In each of these wars, the very essence of Russia was threatened. Therefore, suspicion and fear of the West went deep with Russia; and Russia began to perceive NATO as instrument of imperialism, (Paiki Sharma). The Russian fear became more established because in 1989, the Berlin wall collapsed and in 1991 the Soviet Union became disintegrated. By these developments, the activities of NATO are making Russia to become weaker as a world power. Another disappointment to Russia was the issue of Germany. Russia wanted Germany to join Warsaw Pact; and at the same time NATO wanted Germany join their union. In 1990, US government made a proposal to Russia that if Germany became a NATO member, that NATO would stop expansion toward Russia and that no new members would be admitted to NATO again. Russia accepted the offer, and innocently disbanded the Warsaw Pact with a view that NATO would keep to its pledge. Unfortunately NATO refused to cease operations and kept on enrolling more members (Paul, BBC). Ever since 1949, NATO has expanded to include: Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, United States of America, United Kingdom, Luxemburg, Netherland, Portugal, Canada, Italy, and Norway. Between 1952 and 1982 many other nations were added to NATO; they include: Greece, Turkey, Germany, and Spain. By 1999, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic became members of NATO. In 2004 to 2009 more nations including Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Lithuania, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Albania joined. Between 2017 and 2020, more nations were admitted to NATO, these include Montenegro and North Macedonia. These two nations are at the edges of Russia. The recruitments of new members did not end here. By 2021 NATO officially put Ukraine, Bosnia and Georgia as new members on their waiting list. Even, nations that were part of Soviet Union are now NATO members. Russia considered this as a trap which must be destroyed before it cashes their nation. Hence, Putin raised a puzzling alarm to the whole world that:

> NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders. This expansion represents serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask whom this expansion is intended and what happened to the assurances our Western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, (Paiki Sharma).

Many world leaders from the West shared the opinion of Putin; and they have also unequivocally condemned NATO's expansion to Russian borders. For instance, in the opinion of

Georg Kennan, "NATO expansion is a tragic mistake with no reason whatsoever." Also, in June 1997, fifty Policy Making Experts in USA met and wrote to Bill Clinton that "NATO expansion to the border of Russia is a policy error of historic proportion." In 2008, Williams Burns warned that "Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of redlines to Russian elites and the entry is a direct challenge to Russians interest." Robert Gates also made a position that "trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine to NATO is truly overreaching." Strobe Talbot joined the world leaders to condemn the provocative expansion of NATO that, "NATO is a vestige of the cold war;" and on 22nd February 2022, Trump described Vladimir Putin's "justification to invade Ukraine as savvy and genius," (Beddoes). From the opinions of these leaders from the West, it is clear that Russian invasion of Ukraine is long expected and Russia should not be hurriedly condemned as a war whoop; given the fact that Russia is still smarting from the disintegration of Soviet Union which made them to lose much of their territory, half of their population and most of their military might to the West. Russia, therefore, considers the admission of Ukraine into NATO as a strategic loss and a national disaster which must be resisted. In our opinion, if the action of Russia is criminal, the attitude of NATO and its Western allies is evil and opprobrious.

The Implications of Sanctions of NATO and Western Allies against Russia

NATO and the Western world have imposed on Russia some sanctions to defend Ukraine. NATO member countries provided weapons and field hospitals to Ukraine. EU refused to send military personnel rather they sent arms and various equipment to Ukraine. The USA targeted the economy, financial institutions and wealthy individuals of Russia. For instance, Joe Biden said, "we will limit Russia's ability to be part of the global economy. We will stunt their ability to finance and grow Russia's military. We will impair their ability to compete in a high-tech 21st century economy," (Joe, 2022). The EU, US, Japan and Canada have cut off Russian banks from the International Swift Payment Network, which allows transfer of money across borders. These Western nations have equally shut off their airspaces to Russian airlines. Germany halted the approval of Nord Stream II Gas Pipeline to Russia, a major investment by both Russia and European companies. The Russian city of St. Petersburg has been withdrawn

from hosting the 2022 Champions league final and the Russian Grand Prix will not be allowed to take place in Sochi.

The International Paralympics Committee (IPC) has banned Russian and Belarusian athletes from competing and has expelled them from the games in Beiling. FIFA has also expelled Russia from all international games being coordinated by them. Many Western international companies have cut ties with Russia e.g. Meta (Facebook), Google, Tiktok, YouTube, Apple, Netflix, Spotify, Warner Media, DirecTV, Disney, Roku, Ford, Volkswagen, GM, Shell, Total, Nike, Adidas, MasterCard, Visa and Dell, etc; and they continue to enlarge the sanction to cripple Russia and demolish her as a world power. These sanctions will affect the whole world including USA itself.

The Economic Consequences of the Russian Ukraine Invasion on Nigeria

The economic Consequences of the Russian Ukraine Invasion started to manifest in the All Country World Index; a leading global equity gauge which has now fallen to its lowest level immediately the war began. The price of oil rose above $100 per barrel while European natural gas prices surged by about 70%, (Jason, 2022). The oil importing countries like Nigeria will experience a headwind from higher prices; the price surge will add to inflation in Nigeria. The cost of living in Nigeria will rise because the Nigerian importation of some consumable goods, unto-mobile and building materials from Ukraine between 2020 and 2021 was $156.08 million dollars, (United Nation C. Database). Some of these goods include:

i. Iron and Steel, machinery, electrical and electronic products.
ii. Medical products, agricultural materials like fertilizer, tools, and implements.
iii. Stones, cements, asbestos and textile articles
iv. Perfumes, cosmetics, toiletries, clocks/watches, cutlery, soaps, lubricants and waxes.
v. Meat, fish and sea foods and essential oils.
vi. Cereal, flour, milk and starch.

vii. Dairy products, sugar and confectionary.

viii. Printed books, newspapers and footwear etc.

The fact is that Russian invasion of Ukraine will heighten food insecurity in Nigeria because Nigerian importation of wheat, which is the major part of the recipe used for the production of numerous consumable items like bread, noodles, pasta, cakes etc. are imported from Russia and Ukraine. The sanctions imposed on Russia will also block the Nigerian trade relationship with Russia. For instance, Nigerian total importation from Russia in 2020 to 2021 was $1.24 billion dollars; while Nigerian Export materials to Russia were $2.36 million. This will cause a serious setback for Nigeria because Russia is among the Nigerian highest import trade partner. "The value of Russia's imports to Nigeria over 12 months period up to February 2022 is estimated at N993.38 billion, this will lead to another economic recession in Nigeria if the war continues (Amarachi, 2022); and Nigerian workers will surfer as government will not be able to pay salaries any more. The ban on oil and gas from Russia will make many small scale factories, entrepreneurial, artisans and private companies to fold up because there is no stable electricity in Nigeria; the survival of these factories depend on oil and gas, therefore hundreds of people will lose their jobs in Nigeria.

Critical Examination of the World Views on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Since the start of the Russia's war against Ukraine, Americans and its allies have seen Russia as an enemy to be destroyed economically, structurally and territorially. Presently, "70 percent of Americans now consider Russia as enemy of the United States, up from 41 percent in January 2022 the Democrats and Republicans largely agreed on the issue; with 72 percent of Democrats and 69 percent of Republicans describing Russia as an enemy" (Richard and Janell, 2022). Besides, the war has created internal crises for Russian government, majority of the Russian elites have started advocating the removal of Putin because the Western sanctions have crippled the economy of Russia.

Also, many nations have condemned Russia for invading Ukraine. Biden condemned the war as unprovoked, unjustified and that Putin is a butcher. The leaders of the Group of Seven

Industrialized Nations (G7) strongly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine describing it as a "serious threat to the European continent. The United Nations' Secretary General, Antonio Guterres condemned Russia's action, and asked Putin to withdraw his troops from Ukraine immediately. The United Kingdom's Prime Minister, Boris Johnson Condemned Putin that he has chosen a path of bloodshed and destruction with a reckless war on Ukraine (Twitter, 2022). The European Union said the Bloc will hold Moscow accountable for the unjustified attack on Ukraine.

The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has equally denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine as "a heavy blow to regional peace." While Czech Republic foreign minister, Jan Lipavsky described Russian action as barbaric act of aggression (Twitter, 2022). China rejected the invasion and called on the two parties in dispute to sheath their swords. Reacting to the invasion, the Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, called for a fiercest possible sanctions against Russia (Twitter, 2022). The German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, condemned Russian's invasion of Ukraine as a "blatant breach of international law that cannot be justified by anything." Emmanuel Macron of France said France would stand by Ukraine because Russian war is a wicked act. Both Italy and Spain condemned Russian war as "unjustified and unjustifiable." Greece considered Russia's attack on Ukraine as "revisionist." Canada, Sweden and Finland condemned the war on Ukraine as a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In our opinion, these world leaders who are members of NATO collaborated to cut the ground from under the feet of Ukraine and now it is difficult for Ukraine to stand peace.

Biblical Position on Invasion

In the Old Testament, invasion was either holy or evil depending on the origin of that invasion. Any invasion initiated or approved by God was holy and righteous (Exo.17:16, Num 31:1-3, 1Sam.15:1-3). The Bible in some cases considers invasion as the judgment of God against the disobedience of a people or a nation (Hab1:5-11, Jere.21: 3-7), (Jacob, 2010). In the biblical view there must be just reasons for every invasion. Revenge, revolt, a desire to harm, or

exploit are not justified reasons for invasion in the Bible. The biblical concept is that war must not cause greater evil than the evil to be eliminated; and the Bible does not permit non-combatants to be deliberately harmed. Also, the prisoners of war must be treated fairly (Isaiah 2: 4, Gen. 9:5-6), (David, 2022). In the biblical generation, the Jews could not go to war unless they received divine authorization. Any nation that went to war without the consent of God would incur the wrath of God and would suffer irredeemable defeat. But those who consulted God would be favoured with victory (Jer. 46:16, Jer. 51:20, Micah 7:8, Isaiah 19:2, Zechariah 10:5, Ps.144). The Old Testament Hebrew words used in synonym with invasion are:

i. *Hamas* meaning violence (Gen.6:11, Gen. 4:9, Judges 9:24). This refers to physical violence associated with human wickedness, (Crouch, 2009).
ii. *Haram* is another word which refers to extirpation or annihilation on the ground of sin, (Deut.7:2, 26, Lev.27:28-29).
iii. *Samat*, means extermination, a total destruction as a national retaliation and self defense against a particular aggression from a foreign land, (Bill, 2009).
iv. *Nakah* and *Zeker* refer to human action of killing a large number of people to dispossess a nation of her sovereignty, (John, 1980).

The invasion of Canaan by the Israelites is an example of *Nakah* and *Zeker*. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan (Gen. 12); and during Exodus, after Joshua succeeded Moses; the assignment of Joshua was to lead Israelites in war to secure the Promised Land from the Canaanites. God wanted the Canaanites to be dislodged from the land so that they would not influence Israelites with their wickedness and idolatry, (Deut. 9: 5). The invasion of Canaan was simply to end the Canaanites ungodly religion and immoral practices that would affect the Israelites, (Williams, 1972). This could be compared to the contemporary invasion of Ukraine by Russia to end NATO provocative eastward expansion to the Russian borders. The nature of invasion of Canaan was to dispossess the inhabitants to take over their land, (Exo.23: 27-30, Deut. 9:1). It was not a total extirpation of humans, animals and properties of people in the land. "The Canaanites invasion was not a massacre, it was a dismantling of a dark cultural regime; and only Jericho, Ai and Hazor were destroyed (Joshua 6:24, 8:28, 11:13)," (Copan, 2011). This is

where the Russian Putin must be careful because even if a nation is to be invaded, its inhabitants are not to be extirpated, For example there were cities (Hebron and Debar) that were not extirpated when Joshua sacked Canaanites, (Joshua 10:36-39). Joshua settled the Israelites in the land with the remnants of the Canaanites, (Joshua 15:13-15), (Butlerryan, 2017). The historical reality of the invasion of Canaan was that Joshua did not make a clean sweep of the land; there remains yet very much land to be possessed, (Joshua 13:1-7). In his farewell address Joshua exhorted the Israelites not to join "the remnant of these nations left here among you" or else Yahweh your God will not continue to drive out these nations before you" (Joshua 23:12-13), (Bernhard, 1985). As we have seen, Israel's invasion of Canaan did not involve the wholesale extermination of the Canaanites' population, (Bernhard, 1985).

The conflict issue of Ukraine's alliance with NATO was experienced in the Bible between Judah and Samaria. The two Kingdoms were originally one nation under the leadership of Saul, David and Solomon. But the nation split into two; and Rehoboam ruled Judah in the South while Samaria in the north was ruled by Jeroboam. It was the dispute over taxation and slave labour that broke the Jewish united nation. Immediately after the split, Judah entered an alliance with Assyria, Samaria the northern kingdom allied with Aram. The kingdom of Samaria was invaded by Assyrian empire in 723BC. Sargon II of Assyria did not annihilate the Samaritans but Sargon II deported about 27,290 people of the kingdom to Mesopotamia. Therefore, it is ungodly to destroy innocent lives in war and Putin must learn from Sargon II.

At another period, Babylonia invaded Judah in the South. Babylonian King did not wipe out the inhabitants of Judah, but Babylonian King wisely deported majority of people of Judah to some other locations within the Babylonian empire. From these biblical experiences, killing civilians to capture a territory is a war crime which must always be avoided in the contemporary invasion of Ukraine. Today, Judah and Samarian kingdoms have become one united Israel. Hence, it is possible for Russia and Ukraine to regain their affinity as allies and sovereign neighbors. The utmost purpose of all wars is to achieve peace. Hence, all acts of racism, imperialism, and international politics going on over the Russian invasion of Ukraine are unacceptable reasons for war biblically. "All aggression is highly condemnable but defensive

war is legitimate, (Ashley, 2022). A just war must respect the human rights of the civilian citizens. God does not quickly invoke war or rush to destroy sinners; and in every situation God adopts the principle of reconciliation which is always initiated by him. On this, NATO, the West, Russia and Ukraine must know that "wisdom and reconciliation is better than weapons of war." (Eccl. 9:18). In this case, NATO and the West must use dialogue to resolve the present Ukrainian invasion by Russia.

Military Operations that Constitute War Crimes in the Bible

War and conflicts characterize human existence and relationship in the Bible and war escalates with civilization. However, there are some military operations that are war crimes in the Bible, some of which include:

i. **Betrayal of Alliance:** Alliances are considered sacrosanct and any nation that failed to protect their ally in war received divine wrath of God, (Psalm 7, Lam. 1:2), (Jacob, 2010). **Treatment of the Civilians:** God detests the killing of women, children and noncombatant men. These people are considered as innocent and they represent the future of any nation after war, (Joel 3:19, Amos 1:13, II kings 8:12,15:16).

ii. **Treatment of War Prisoners:** Those captured or who surrendered in war are not to be molested. They can be used to negotiate the conditions of ending the war, (Nahum2:7, 3:10, Joe 3:6-8, Amos 1:6-9). Prophet Amos accused Philistia and Phoenicia of war crimes for selling their captives as slaves (Amos 1:1-10). Amos prophesied that the two nations will receive fire of God as punishment for their cruelties, (Bernard, 1989).

iii. **Restriction on total Destruction: A** total elimination of lives and infrastructural facilities of a nation are ungodly, it is a genocidal crime against humanity. Those who failed to demonstrate restraint are often punished with the same crimes they inflicted on others, (Jer. 50:29, Isaiah 10:24-26), (Crouch, 2009).

Conclusion

Now that we have examined the historical background of invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the reasons for the invasion; and now that this paper has shown the economic consequences on Nigeria and the sanctions the Western countries have imposed on Russia; and who should be blamed for Russian invasion of Ukraine. We share the opinion of Vigano Carlo that Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent war is part of globalist agenda to establish the tyranny of the new world order by the USA. We must know that the USA, UK, NATO, World Economic Forum and the European Union are all behind the circumstances that pushed Russia and Ukraine to war. The Western nations have openly condemned Russia for war crimes against Ukraine but they are silent about the use of civilians as human shield by the Ukrainian army which placed anti-aircraft positions inside population centers, hospitals, schools and kindergartens, which invariably led to civilian bombardment, (Lara, 2022).

Russian-Ukrainian war is being used by the globalist to expand the global empire, of which the United States is a major actor. As we have pointed out in this paper that since the collapse of Birlin wall, the United States has extended the grip of his political and military influence to almost all the satellite states of the former Soviet Union; and recently NATO is intending to annex Ukraine. Sincerely and without bias, Russian nation is under military threat from weapons and missile installations very close to her borders by NATO. While Russia has no military bases in similar proximity to the United States. To conceive the enrollment of Ukraine into NATO without minding that it will arouse Russian legitimate protests is ridiculously implausible. As we have seen in this paper, that NATO and USA have failed to keep their commitments to Russia, they must end all their entangling alliances; and never again sacrifice national sovereignty of another nation to seek global power.

Having concluded this research, we put forward the following recommendations; which in our opinion, will help to bring peace and also prevent the escalation of Russian invasion of Ukraine from degenerating to world war III:

i. That there must be an immediate demilitarization of Ukraine whereby NATO equipment installations on borders of the Russia are relocated;

ii. There must be a restoration of the natural status of Ukraine by maintaining neutrality from NATO. Honestly, Russia legitimate security interest must be unconditionally taken into consideration by the Western countries;

iii. we must accept the reality that historically and strategically, Ukraine is very important for the protection of Russian sovereignty from external aggression; therefore, to allow it fall completely into a union with USA, UK and NATO allies is calamitous to Russia;

iv. NATO and its allies must not take advantage of the present crisis to destroy Russian economy because if Russian economy is impaired it will affect Nigeria and other African countries, and;

v. finally, we submit that NATO must be disbanded just like the Warsaw Pact of Russian Federation.

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