A Geopolitical War in Europe: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and its Implications

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Abstract

The security-insecurity paradox in a geopolitical struggle between Russia and its ex-territory; Ukraine along with the politics of the influences between great powers has made the Russian invasion a reality. Russian intervention in its periphery in February 2022 has sent shockwaves to the European Union and NATO members, and posed various challenges to the Eurasian states. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is a protracted one, but this new phase is more complex and multi-layered. Russia's annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol in 2014, and support to the militant separatists in Donbas, undermined Ukrainian sovereignty. A series of border skirmishes occurred during 2014-2021, which led to thousands of people dead and injured.[1] The tension converted into a humanitarian crisis with millions of refugees and collateral damages after the 2022 war. This recent situation can be termed as a geopolitical warfare, which is based on the politics of security to assert political advantages in the desired geopolitical sphere of influence.

In this paper, an effort has been made to examine the structural, bilateral, and regional issues that have led Russia to engage in a risky war. It hypothesise that this war cannot be recognized only as a bilateral war between Russia and Ukraine based on the old issues, rather it is the result of new developments in the shape of Ukraine's pursuit for a new identity and

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[1] *Conflict-Related Civilian Casualties in Ukraine*. United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 2022.

affinity with West, its bid for NATO membership and as a client of US and EU against Russia in the great power rivalry. The theoretical lens of Neo-Realism and the security dilemma best explains the causes of the war between the two. Finally, this study also endeavours to trace some important implications for the Eurasian Region.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, Geopolitics, Russia-Ukraine War, Great Power Rivalry, Eurasia.

Introduction
Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states became a common neighbourhood of the Russian Federation and European powers after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. People living in Eastern Ukraine are mostly Russian-speaking natives who look to have good relations with Russia, while the western part of the country's Ukrainian-speaking community is willing to integrate with the EU. The events of euromedian in 2013-14 drastically polarised the nation between east and west. Thus, it has invited external powers to assert their influence to install the government in Ukraine with their backing.[2]

Ukraine holds unique and significant geo-political importance due to its geographical proximity. Second to Russia, it was the most powerful and populous state of the USSR. Besides accommodating the Kremlin's military and defence industry, it not only fulfilled the most of USSR's agricultural needs and served as an arch rival of the United States, during the Cold War, and evinced as 'coup de grace' for the USSR upon her strong commitments with the ailing superpower, in 1991. Since then, after the disintegration of the USSR, Ukraine is an independent-states and looks to have more close relations with the Western states including EU and NATO member states. However, it also struggled to have balance in its foreign policy due to the existing deep internal divisions.[3]

The peace and stability of Ukraine were undermined by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, when Russia expressed solidarity with the separatists in Donbas, by arming them. According to United Nations Human Rights

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[2] Daniel Yergin, *The New Map: Energy, Climate and the Clash of Nations* (New York: Penguin Press, 2020), 81.

[3] Eve Conant, "How History, Geography Help Explain Ukraine's Political Crisis," *National Geographic*, January 2014 at https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/140129-protests-ukraine-russia-geography-history.

Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, more than fourteen thousand people died in fighting during 2014-2021,[4] which made it the bloodiest conflict in Europe since the Balkan war in 1990, which marked a shift in international order from a unipolar world dominated by the US, to the renewed power completions between great powers, for many political analysts.[5] The recent Russian invasion is regarded less as bilateral, but a provocation on the part of Ukraine, its bid for Western European identity, its tendency towards NATO membership and expanded strategic and military support from EU members and the US against Russia in a bid to tackle the challenge of its expansion of influence in the Eastern Europe and engagement with the Central and Eastern European states. Hence, this war between Russia and Ukraine can be categorized as a geopolitical one based on the politics of security and geopolitical areas of influence.

The study aimed to examine the structural, bilateral, and regional issues that have led Russia to engage in a risky war. Various structural factors have been traced that can help explain the causes of war. This study hypothesizes that this war cannot be recognized as a bilateral war between Russia and Ukraine based on the old issues, rather it is the result of new developments in the shape of Ukraine's bid for affinity with the West, its bid for NATO membership and as a client of US and EU against Russia in the great power rivalry. The theoretical lenses of Neo-Realism and the security dilemma best explain the causes of the war between the two. Finally, this study also endeavours to trace some important implications for the Eurasian Region.

Theoretical Framework
Much has been written and spoken about the theoretical explanation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Though it is a complex war and cannot be explained through one single theoretical lens, predominant explanations have come from the Realist school of thought. Reviewing the literature has provided that the great power geopolitical angle and security dilemma have played a vital role in Russia's war with Ukraine. Kenneth Waltz's theory of Structural Realism or Neorealism heavily focuses on the structure of the international system and the international environment as a determinant of the state's foreign policy. Anarchy in the international system is considered

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[4] *Conflict-Related Civilian Casualties in Ukraine*. United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 2022.

[5] Ronald O'Rourke, *Renewed Great Power Competition: Implications for Defense* (Congressional Research Service, 2022).

by Waltz as the major independent variable that presents significant opportunities and challenges for states as they relate with each other. In his words, the anarchic and competitive system forces the states to either opt for self-help or go for the balance of power through alliances for their survival and security.[6] Waltz believes that a state's position in the international system determines its policy choices, preferences and actions and that domestic factors are less relevant in informing the making and shaping of foreign policy. This reasoning implies that structural constraints force states to focus more on the acquisition of power for their survival and security as compared to their international responsibility and ideological preferences.[7] It can be inferred here that when there is no higher authority above the state to protect its existence and ensure its interests, and that external aggressor may threaten its survival and interest, especially in the case of major powers, states' fear may cause misperception and lead to unwanted actions even a war or attack on the perceived aggressor.

The related theoretical lens that best explains Russia's invasion of Ukraine is its security dilemma as Russia fears aggression from NATO in its backyard and resultantly endeavours to maximize its potential to tackle the challenge. The security Dilemma concept, as Robert Jervis argues, is a state's quest for more security ends up making its adversary less secure, who in turn also makes additional investments in its security – unleashing a spiral."[8] States engage in a series of risky actions of arms build-up and alliances or partnerships also engage in zero-sum struggle. In this case, the West's constant military and strategic assistance to Ukraine in its bid for managing security threats from Russia have led it to bold steps like its quest for NATO membership has signalled Russia negatively as it perceived the new development as a threat to its security and survival. This fear led Russia towards a risky and dangerous course of preventive war though in its bid for security but has forcefully engaged it in a spiral of great power geopolitics in the region.

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[6] Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 71-73.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Charles L. Glaser, "Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics* 50, No. 1 (October 1997), 171-172, at https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25054031.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A253db 8ca5f9660b1dcee99251ffe556e&ab_segments=&origin=.

Russia's interests in Ukraine

Both Russia and Ukraine were part of the Soviet empire. These two countries are incredibly significant for the USSR because of the abundance of natural resources. Their geographical proximity and the shared border always made the USSR to value these two states, as the empire relied on them for economic and industrial needs. Since then, the two states are bound in such a complex way that, even after the three decades of USSR dissolution, it seems impossible to separate these two independent states. A desire of having good bilateral ties with Ukraine, is equally inevitable for Russia and all existing powers, due to her unique features as Ukraine is among the countries holding the world's largest natural gas and oil reserves. As of 2021, Ukraine's proven oil reserves were more than 400 million barrels, world's 3rd biggest exporter of vegetable oil, and having the world's second-largest natural gas pipeline system.[9] Ukraine is important for Russia because of its proximity to the country, and its possession of the world's largest natural gas transit infrastructure, which helps Russia to supply natural gas throughout Europe. Each year, Europe receives 2.9 – 3.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas from Russia through Ukraine. Since independence, Ukraine has been dependent on Russian energy supplies,[10] which makes Russia capable of exerting disproportionate political pressure over Kyiv, through gas prices and shut down.

One of the most complicated binding links between Ukraine and Russia, is the military sector, as during the times of the Soviet empire, Ukraine has actively served Moscow's military-related products. Particularly its eastern cities that accommodated the empire by providing vital military equipment including intercontinental missiles and weapon systems. This cooperation was not disrupted after the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. The defence industrial ties and energy cooperation stayed established, until the war broke out.[11]

The Russian invasion of Ukraine

Russia started to deploy its troops with military weapons along its border with Russia in November 2021 and kept dispatching its forces to Belarus and Russian-occupied Crimea in the following months. It was estimated that

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[9] About Ukraine at https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/UKR.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Visit at https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/30/saving-ukraine-s-defense-industry-p ub-56822.

more than 190,000 troops encircled Ukraine and claimed that they are to attack in February 2022, by western defence analysts,[12] which was dismissed immediately by Russia, referring to the massive naval build-ups to the part of the scheduled exercise in the Black Sea.[13] The Western leader consulted both Russian President Putin and Ukrainian President Zelensky to tackle the rising tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Moscow demanded to restrain the NATO expansion from its near neighbouring countries including Baltic states by reminding the US promise at the end of the Cold War. The Kremlin warned Kiev to avoid the NATO shelter. However, the proposal was rejected, and President Putin responded by recognizing the self-proclaimed independence of two Ukraine states: Donetsk and Luhansk,[14] and ordering the Russian troops in Ukraine for 'Peacekeeping' work.[15] The western countries expressed their solidarity with Ukraine, and imposed sanctions on Russian financial institutions.[16] However, President Zelensky asks the native Russian people to stay peaceful, while intending to protect their freedom by Ukrainians itself.[17] On the same day, President Putin declared the 'Special Military Operation" in the major cities of Ukraine, air raids and explosions began in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv,[18] Immediately after, nations across the globe started to express their solidarity with Ukraine, condemning the attack. President Zelensky announced 'Martial Law' in the country, and ask

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[12] Patrick Wintour, "Russia Has Amassed up to 190,000 Troops on Ukraine Borders, US Warns," *The Guardian*, 18 February 2022. Visit at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/18/russia-has-amassed-up-to-190000- troops-on-ukraine-borders-us-warns.

[13] Maria Kiselyova and Ece Toksabay, "Six Russian Warships en Route to Black Sea for Drills," *Reuters*, at https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-says-six-warships-are-heading-black-sea-drills-ifax-2022-02-08/.

[14] "Russia Recognizes Independence of Ukraine Separatist Regions | Dw | 21.02.2022," Deutsche Welle, https://www.dw.com/en/russia-recognizes-independence-of-ukraine-separatist-regions/a-60861963.

[15] Andrew Roth, "Putin Orders Troops into Eastern Ukraine on 'Peacekeeping Duties'", (2022), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/21/ukraine-putin-decide-recognition-breakaway-states-today.

[16] Jarrett Renshaw and Daphne Psaledakis, "U.S. Announces New Russia Sanctions over Ukraine Invasion," *The Reuters*, visit at https://www.reuters.com/world/g7-eu-announce-measures-stop-russia-avoiding-sanctions-us-official-2022-03-24/.

[17] Paul Sonne, "Ukraine's Zelensky to Russians: 'What Are You Fighting for and with Whom?'," The Washington Post, last modified 2022-02-24, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/02/23/ukraine-zelensky-russia-address/.

[18] "Ukraine: Putin Declares Special Military Operation," British Broadcasting Corporation, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-60505319.

the military-age population to mobilize against the Russia attack.[19] The announcement of the operation, and the rapid operation from Russia, clearly indicated that this is not something planned instantly rather an organized attempt done with extensive preparation. Meanwhile, the Russian troops started to enter from the Belarus side and captured the Chernobyl nuclear plant,[20] and made an attempt to encircle Kharkiv, which failed due to the strong Ukrainian resistance and shortage of Russian logistic essentials.

The Ukrainian people started to flee to other countries as the situation got worsened, after the death of six hundred people, in a Russian attack on Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre- a widely known building for bomb shelter. By March 2022, the number of Ukrainian Refugees who flew to Europe for looking security in the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland, were reached more than 4 million,[21] which made it the largest Refugee Crisis since World War II. The Russians also targeted the cultural sites, school, hospital, and water treatment plants, and looted the homes located in an area occupied by Russia. It was, in fact, a clear violation of the Geneva Convention.

Initially, Russia has been dominant by getting personnel and material advantages, but the situation changed in the favour of Ukraine, when Western allies supported Ukrainian troops with billions of dollars in humanitarian and military aid. Several times, President Zelensky appeared on the live telecast, pledging to various organisations including International governmental and non-governmental organisations to help Ukrainians with aid, in times of high crisis. However, the Ukrainian military is not dependent on foreign support. Most of the Ukrainian armed personnel defending the country, have experienced fighting against Russia through ongoing proxies since 2014. Ukraine also dramatically increased its defence budget after the Russian annexation of Crimea, which has enabled the country to possess state-of-the-art military weapons. Interestingly, after holding office, President Zelensky ordered the renovation of Ukroboronprom- the state's

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[19] "Zelensky Introduces Martial Law in Ukraine, Urges Calm," Cable News Network, https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-news-02-23-22/index.html.

[20] "Chernobyl Power Plant Captured by Russian Forces," Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/chernobyl-power-plant-captured-by-russian-forces-ukrainian-official-2022-02-24/.

[21] "Ukraine's Refugee Exodus Tops 4 million — Nearly 10% of Prewar Population," The Washington Post, last modified 2022-03-30, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/30/ukraine-refugees-4-million-russia-war-un/.

factory, to produce military weapons,[22] which also enabled the country to have strategic partnerships with international weapons-related firms such as Lockheed Martin. The rapid advancement of military weapons produced at the Ukrainian industrial complex was displayed when the Russian guided missile cruiser '*Moskva,*' was stuck by the two Ukrainian-made anti-ship missiles on the coast of Odesa,[23] The sinking of *Moskva* on the following day boosted the morale of the Ukrainians.

The tension between Ukraine and Russia was further intensified in Donbas, on which the Ukrainians retaliated with a counteroffensive operation, and pushed back the Russian troops aiming to threaten Kharkiv, meanwhile, after resistance of three months, Mariupol surrendered to Russia. On the other side, a brutal confrontation was seen in the Azovstal steel plant, which made the observer recall the Battle of Stalingrad. It was estimated that more than 20,000 people were killed there,[24] and more than 90 percent of Maripol's infrastructure was damaged.[25] There are numerous factors behind the Russian reluctance to war in Donbas, as it has failed to manage Ukraine's offence, and its inability to estimate the troops and weapons required to execute successful operations. Russia needed to provide logistic support to its personnel, but the roads were in the control of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian anti-tank guided missile teams were capable enough to destroy the most advanced Russian tanks. Although Russia has technological advance aircraft, the Russian air force could not keep the air superiority in the field of the ongoing operation, which refers that Ukrainian aerial vehicles that can drop small but vulnerable bombs in defence.

Russia's 'special military operation' against Ukraine could not fulfil its objective to get control of Kyiv, rather the former have to lose dozens of

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[22] Iryna Soloneko, "The Mystery of Volodymyr Zelenskiy," *Berlin Policy Journal* (2019), available from http://dx.doi.org/https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/mystery-volo dymyr-zelenskiy.

[23] David Axe, "One of Russia's Biggest Cruisers has Sunk Off Ukraine," *Forbes*, visit at https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/04/13/the-ukrainians-claim-they-damaged-a-russian-cruiser-be-skeptical/.

[24] "Fate of 2,500 Ukrainian Pows from Steel Plant Stirs Concern," National Public Radio, (22 May 2022), visit at https://www.npr.org/2022/05/22/1100582879/fate-of-2-500-ukrainian -pows-from-steel-plant-stirs-concern.

[25] Richard Spencer and David Charter, "90% of Buildings in Mariupol 'Damaged or Destroyed'," *The Times*, 17 March 2022, at https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/us-to-send-800-million-in-military-hardware-to-ukraine-885 r9f68q.

army generals, and the sinking of her largest ship 'Moskva' has been lost due to Ukraine's action,[26] which is, in fact, the largest ship torpedoing of the century. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, Russia has been facing economic crises as well, as its banks have been isolated from the international banking system, and sanctions have been imposed by other big nations including the US, UK, EU, and Canada. These countries have also closed the airspace for Russian air traffic, too.

Great power geopolitical rivalry
After the disintegration of the USSR, Boris Yeltsin was the first Russian president, tried to integrate Russia into the West, but he also believed that it would be more appropriate to negotiate with the United States for setting the new international order rather than integrating into the one established by the United States, as Russia was the former great powers and deserves such negotiations with the US, for the new international order. However, the US was not interested enough and ready to negotiate for the new international setting as the US policy marker was of the view that the USSR had been defeated in the Cold War, so it must accept the prevailing global order and should integrate into the West. The last US ambassador to the USSR – Jack Marlock, contended that the negotiation between the USSR and US to end the Cold War and the disintegration of the USSR were two different events, so these should be considered separately. He opined that if Russia had negotiated with the US to hold the influence over Eastern Europe, it would not have been defeated in the Cold War.[27] Although Russia desired the same international prestige as it had during the USSR, it did not possess the same spirit, due to the establishment of new states around its periphery.

The tug of war in Ukraine is assumed by many experts as the revival of great power competition and thrust for the possession of mainland power. Eastern Europe is now the source of competition to grab its market and consumers. Russia's vision of Eurasian economic union, China' initiative of Belt and Road, which intends to create a huge space of trading routes from Asia to Europe with potential of alternating western dominant world economic order is

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[26] Jenny Hill, "Russian Warship: Moskva Sinks in Black Sea," *BBC News*, 15 March 2022. Visit at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61114843.

[27] Jack F. Matlock, *Superpower Illusions: How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray and How to Return to Reality* (Yale University Press, 2010).

directly in conflict with the US, G7 and its financial instruments. The EU is in a challenging position.[28]

Russia became more possessive of its influence over the East Europe states and opted the aggressive behaviours toward her neighbours in the region, which make the other states more violent, considering Russia a resurgent power, willing to mateine its influence across the region.[29] The Russian behaviour made these small states insecure, and they started to look for NATO membership, which tensed the overall regional security environment. This current Russian invasion in Ukraine is the result of the frustration between Russia and the US that matured over time, on the difference in the world order. This is different to the Cold War, as it is not based on Ideology, but rather on geopolitical desires and interests.

Open society always has two main foundations: Freedom of Speech and the Press, but both could be vulnerable to any actions as they provide the access to disseminate information on electronic and social media. Moscow has used these techniques to destabilise western democracies, by creating discourse, to create division among political stakeholders. In Ukraine, Russia tried to question the legitimacy of political institutions, by supporting extremist polarized candidates, to damage the Western political system, and thought that this would cultivate division in Western allies, which weakened the commitments among allies, and resulted in less response from Western allies to Russian invasion in Ukraine.

Russia struggles for political influence in European politics and policy-making and tries to weaken NATO. It considers division and discord among EU and US states, to get direct benefits and useful in attaining its long-term strategic goals.[30] However, all went in vain, as Western democracies were prepared in their way to tackle this hybrid warfare, and Russia had to face sanctions, in response to the invasion. Even the small states look for public support to condemn the Russian operation by isolating it. With the return of great power politics in Europe, a great concern about nuclear security exists

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[28] Visit at https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3111129/great-power-com petition-and-the- russian-invasion-of-ukraine/

[29] G. Doug Davis and Michael O. Slobodchikoff, *Cultural Imperialism and the Decline of the Liberal Order: Russian and Western Soft Power in Eastern Europe* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

[30] Visit at https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0227-8.

among Rusia, along with other European powers.[31] European countries avoided direct involvement in war. The US and Russia have not entered a proxy war in Ukraine. while China is carefully monitoring the situation with its intention of setting its global order.

The United States' and EU's response
Russia's invasion has strengthened the pace of US-EU ties. Both, the EU, and the US are closely coordinating with each other, and have been taking identical actions since the beginning of the issue. The EU and US also encourage the other task forces to a strict offensive reaction to the violation of international law and norms, through sanctions, while both are also pondering suspending the Russian trade. To fulfil Europe's energy needs, President Biden works with other international partners to boost the swift shipments of Liquefied natural gas.

The European Union strongly condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and declared it "Russia's unproved and unjustified military aggression".[32] It also condemned the Russian attempt to recognize the non-governmental control in the conflict regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, and Belarus' support to the Russian administration. Since the beginning of the invasion, the European Council and the Council of the European Union, holds meetings to regularly monitor and discuss the ongoing war, and emphasises resolving the conflict peacefully through dialogue and diplomacy. The EU leaders have also voiced for an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional withdrawal of Russian invasion forces from Ukraine, and respecting Ukraine's sovereignty. Brussels also appreciated the Ukrainian leadership and public's strive for defending their own country. The EU also imposed military sanctions against Russia, and expressed unity with Ukrainians through humanitarian support, as the EU considers Ukraine, a part of the Europium community, and is committed to accommodating the refugees, with other allies including the UN and G7 group.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, *Consilium* at consilium.europa.eu/en/policies /eu-response- ukraine-invasion/

Implications

Economic, Energy and Trade

Military tension, conflicts and war have also been proven, to last its immediate and immense effects on the regional and global economy.[33] Military confrontations not only impact the states involved but also the other countries that indirectly take part in them.[34] Besides direct costs which are generally referred to as life and resources, it also damages property and disrupts global trade.[35] Although wars, tensions and military confrontations drastically reduce the trade among the states involved through sanctions and embargoes, it starts to revive immediately after the ceasefire, and the trade and economy starts to recover.[36] The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war dramatically altered the trade of oil, energy, and raw materials, which instigated hesitation in western consumers.[37] The increasing number of sanctions has impacted the global supply chain significantly, which is vesting the post-war damages.

Food Security

The Russia-Ukraine war, with all the aspects of human security, has brought back the world, to the preexisting challenge caused by energy crises, the Covid-19 pandemic and ship constraints, and worsened them to the peak.[38] Global hunger has started to rise again which has been declining in the last decade.[39] The ongoing war is expected to rise more, which put the lives of

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[33] Andres F Jola-Sanchez and Juan Camilo Serpa, "Inventory in Times of War," *Management Science* 67, No. 10 (2021).

[34] Nguyen K. Hang, *et al.*, "The Long-Run Effects of War: A Literature Review," (September 2021). Visit at https://osf.io/kg39r.

[35] Reuven Glick and Alan M Taylor, "Collateral Damage: Trade Disruption and the Economic Impact of War," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92, No. 1 (2010).

[36] Madina Khudaykulova, He Yuanqiong, and Akmal Khudaykulov, "Economic Consequences and Implications of the Ukraine-Russia War," *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration* 8, No. 4 (2022).

[37] David Simchi-Levi and Pierre Haren, "How the War in Ukraine is Further Disrupting Global Supply Chains," *Harvard Business Review*, (March 2022). Visit at https://hbr.org/2022/03/how-the-war-in-ukraine-is-further-disrupting -global-supply-chains.

[38] Nicas Jack, "Ukraine War Threatens to Cause a Global Food Crisis," *The New York Times*,20 March 2022, available at https://www.nytimes.com/subscription/gateway/subcon /variants/variant-5.html.

[39] Tilman Brück *et al.*, "The Relationship between Food Security and Violent Conflict," (22 December 2016). Retrieved from https://isdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Food-Security-and-Conflict-2016-12-22.pdf.

7.6 to 13.1 million people, at stake,[40] which would definitely compromise the United Nations' achievement in the domain of food, under its UN Sustainable Development Goal 2030. Both Russia and Ukraine, combinedly contribute almost 30 per cent of the global wheat trade, and 12 per cent in calories.[41] However, the conflict has frozen the exports of food including barley, corn, and a large volume of fertilizer, and held it in Russia and Belarus, due to which the price of food essentials have skyrocketed,[42] and this would affect the farmers across the globe,[43] The scarcity of grains and the price hike seems vulnerable to the major food importing countries particularly the Middle Eastern and North African, and it has become hard for them to meet the food requirements as most of the African countries food's imports were from the Ukraine and Russia.[44] These countries are poor, and history is witnessed that food supplies to these countries are disturbed greatly by socio political upheavals,[45] and many counties provide the food on subsidy to avoid hunger problems.[46] The ongoing conflict is also disrupting the working of international bodies that provide food to the countries suffering famine and has minimised the volume of their food programs due to high cost, while excluding the millions of food aid beneficiaries.

What kind of war?

The competing area of great powers, controlling and influencing the developing world has been shifting due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Although Russia invaded Kyiv and could attain what they planned, she moved her focus to the East and replayed the forces thereafter withdrawing from Kyiv. She also increased her invasion troops by redeploying its forces from the Middle East and North America, which resulted in increased

[40] Patrik Berlinger, "Ukraine War Exacerbates Famine in the Global South," Helvetas, (April 2022), available at https://www.helvetas.org/en/switzerland/how-you-can-help/follow-us/blog/Other/Ukraine-War-Exacerbates- Famine-in-the-Global-South.

[41] Joel K. Bourne Jr, "War in Ukraine Could Plunge World into Food Shortages," *National Geographic*, 25 March 2022 at https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/war-in-ukraine-could-plunge- world-into-food-shortages. See also Fiona Harvey, "Ukraine Invasion May Lead to Worldwide Food Crisis, Warns UN," *The Guardian*, 14 March 2022.

[42] Jack, Ukraine War Threatens to Cause a Global Food Crisis.

[43] Berlinger, Ukraine War Exacerbates Famine in the Global South,

[44] "War in Ukraine Sparks Global Food Crisis," United Nations in Western Europe, last modified 2022-03-22, https://unric.org/en/war-in-ukraine-sparks-global-food-crisis/.

[45] Sean Yom, *The Societies of the Middle East and North Africa: Structures, Vulnerabilities, and Forces* (Routledge, 2021).

[46] Harvey, "Ukraine Invasion May Lead to Worldwide Food Crisis, Warns UN.

concerns over domestic security in the states of Armenia, Syria, and Libya, which have close ties with Russia. Although Russia could rely on its air power, the immense moment of the forces did jeopardize the dependent population.

During the times – from the disintegration of the Soviet Union to Ukraine's invasion, Russia and Ukraine have been using various asymmetric tactics including psychological / information warfare to gain war's outcome in their interests.[47] These psychological tactics were nonmilitary, in which cyberattacks and psychological war with military activities prevailed by Russia and received much attention. The strategy is to be called 'Hybrid Warfare' in the West, and 'non-linear war' in Russia. It refers to the importance of non-military stakeholders of the state, in modern warfare.

Such wars are typically fought through academics, computer hackers, diplomats, economists, and other nonmilitary groups of state, to advance the state's strategic agenda. During the hybrid war, these actors try to deeply interact with the opponent's populations to alter their perception, for delegitimizing the opponent's actions. This is why Russia is opting to gain its strategic objectives by using military force.

The big powers, the US, China, EU and India, are reluctant to be involved in the war. They are more concerned about the economic impact rather than taking any side. Turkey being a NATO member enables it to take risks while exploiting Russia's role in Syria, but restrain itself in direct conflict with Moscow. Likewise, Israel has multiple defence treaties with the US and Britain and has granted a non-NATO ally. Iran' support to Russia against Ukraine could cause an escalation of tension between Russia and Israel. The threatening position of the US allies in Europe posed insecurities towards Russia that could instigate a great power rivalry, which would deteriorate global peace. Simultaneously, the Russian movement in Ukraine has inflamed division among US allies, over the financial cost of indulging in the war.

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[47] "Information/Psychology Warfare in the Russia - Ukraine War: Overview", *IFANS Focus*, (31 May 2022), at https://www.ifans.go.kr/knda/ifans/eng/pblct/PblctView.do?menuCl= P11&pblctDtaSn=14006&clCode=P11.

Conclusion

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is the manifestation of a state's obsession with its security and the preservation of its interests. The non-zero-sum game between Russia and Ukraine in the politics of power and partnership has made the conflict between the two escalate to a full-fledged Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russia-Ukraine conflict is regarded as complex and protracted with multiple factors involved but the recent episode is primarily the result of two-pronged factors; Firstly, the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea that has led Ukraine to re-construct its identity and its affinity with the West and strategic and military support from NATO members, its bid for NATO membership, and US diplomatic, political, and military support. Though US and NATO allies started supporting Ukraine under the pretext of self-defence and human security, the real purpose can be counted as a great rivalry to contain the Russian and Chinese influence in Eastern Europe. Secondly, Russian perception of Western and especially NATO and US defence and military partnership with Ukraine and NATO's expansion plan to Russian borders served as a security threat to its survival and vital interests.

In the analysis, this war between Russia and Ukraine can be categorized as a geopolitical one based on the politics of security and geopolitical areas of influence with a variety of implications for the region and beyond. This Russia-Ukraine war has dramatically altered the trade of oil, energy, and raw materials, which instigated hesitation in western consumers.[48] The increasing number of sanctions has impacted the global supply chain significantly, which is vesting the post-war damages. It has made the Eurasian states more concerned about the spill-over effect of the war not only in terms of economic and trade embargoes and disruption in food and energy supplies with higher prices but also about the spread of violence in the region. If this geopolitical war, as its tendency shows, continues for a longer period, there is a possibility of the engagement of other regional actors directly or indirectly. Specifically, the involvement of transnational actors may lead the situation to the level and extent that would result in the inevitability of the direct engagement of the great powers in the war with grave consequences for regional and international peace and stability.

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[48] David Simchi-Levi and Pierre Haren, "How the War in Ukraine Is Further Disrupting Global Supply Chains," *Harvard Business Review* (2022).