Reshaping the European Order: Diplomatic Transformations and Realignments in the Wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine

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Abstract

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine provoked a radical evaluation of the European order, which has resulted in a cross-sectional examination of its geopolitical and socio-economic foundations. This paper will discuss the effects of this war in the context of geopolitics on the assumption of peace and economic interdependence in Europe following the cold war. The war has also cast uncertainty on the question of sovereignty and autonomy of both the major and peripheral European states. The study places the conflict in the context of the greater geopolitics to emphasise how the ex-Eastern bloc states have placed their interests in the context of international geopolitics; struggling both with Russian neo-imperialism and with Western patronage. Likewise, European Union's policy towards further enlargement, accentuating integration highlights the significance of "East" and marks a shift in interest from technocratic governance towards an over-arching policy-making embodied in the EU. Through a qualitative approach, the paper contends that Europe is undergoing a structural metamorphosis further shaped by imminent dangers of war, border security issues, by both large and small states.

Keywords: European Integration, Russia-Ukraine war, Enlargement, Geopolitical Realignment, Post-Cold-War Era.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research paradigm in analysing the geopolitical and socioeconomic preconditions that led to the Russian incursion in Ukraine and its implications in regard to the European

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geopolitical constellation. Qualitative framework is justified to the extent that the investigation is based on the interpretation of complex politics, notions of sovereignty, and the metamorphoses of integration that pervades the European ideological underpinnings. The approach is descriptive and analytical, based on the subtle understanding of geopolitical breakthroughs, policy rebalance, and local adaptive policies.

Introduction

Russia and Ukraine were formerly part of the Soviet Union. Ukraine happens to be the largest country by far in continental Europe. Located in the Eastern Europe, it is adjacent to Russia. After the disintegration of the USSR, Russia recognized Ukraine as an independent state in December 1991. Through the Minsk Agreement 1991 (Belovezh Accords), signed by Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had established to replace the USSR.[1] The Moscow-Kyiv closeness solemnized by a number of agreements between the two countries in the multiple domains, signed in 1992 and onward.[2] Bilateral relations between Ukraine and Russia have remained strained in the past marked by several skirmishes such as in 2004 when the Ukrainian population protested against the then Ukrainian President, Leonid Kuchma and pressured him to step down under the allegations of corruption.[3] Likewise, in 2006, the ties got further strained as Ukraine, being the gateway of energy supplies to Europe, could not pay its fines and debts to Russia, the principal supplier of gas. As a result, Russia stopped supplying gas to Ukraine. 2014 drew public ire as pro-EU Ukrainians protested against the then president Viktor Yanukovych. Yet, due to a sizeable presence of pro-Russian community in Crimea, it fell into the hands of Russia in March 2014.[4]

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[1] "End of the Soviet Union", *The New York Times*, 26 December 1991. https://www.nytimes.com/1991/12/26/world/end-of-the-soviet-union-the-soviet-state-born-of-a-dream-dies.html. See also "Minsk Agreement – 1991", https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1991-2/the-end-of-the-soviet-union/the-end-of-the-soviet-union-texts/minsk-agreement/.

[2] Alexander A. Pikayev. "Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine: Who Can Push the Button?" *The Non-proliferation Review*, (Spring-Summer 1994). Visit at https://web.archive.org/web/20140521083227/http://cns.miis.edu/npr/pdfs/pikaye13.pdf.

[3] "Ukraine: Protesters Call for Kuchma to Step Down," (06 February 2001). https://www.rferl.org/a/1095679.html.

[4] Nindya Raihan Zani, Sherina Oktavia, *et al*. "Analysis of the Response of the Baltic Countries to the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine" *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Science,* (2022). https://ijoms.internationaljournallabs.com/index.php/ijoms/article/download/175/274/1124.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 has cast a preponderant impact, primarily on Europe's security and economic policies leading to reconfiguration of diplomatic alignments. In the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine war, European states and institutions have responded with a surge in security policies and heightened militarization, leading to new patterns of cooperation in the energy sector, and precipitating into alliances aimed at coping with the Russian threat, thereby influencing foreign policy towards Russia and other non-Western actors. The ongoing crisis coincided with another humanitarian disaster taking place in Palestine. These occurrences mark geopolitical apocalypse on the international political arena where Europe strives to seek unity in the face of pronounced internal polarization and widespread popular outcry.

Thus, the current geopolitical milieu in the wake of Russia-Ukraine conflict has catapulted Europe into a defining era of long-term adaptations and changes within and outside the continent. The commonly invoked ideals of long-term harmony, peace, and coherence have now paradoxically led to the pursuit of autonomy, deterrence, and a more robust and systematic defence paradigm, hence affecting the institutional structures and regional affiliations. This has necessitated a massive transformation of Europe, drifting from its formerly acclaimed integrationist model into a comparatively multipolar structure, where the idea of 'union' transcending integration seems to be underway.

Amongst the significant geo-political transformations immediately after the Cold-War, in the hitherto 'European Community' evolving into European union, were those which transpired in the shape of economic interdependence and the security apparatus being led by the NATO, safeguarding not only frontiers but also democratic values and growth of the European Union. That is why, Russian aggression into Ukraine has jolted the EU out of a prolonged complacency highlighting the irony behind many a celebrated notion such as 'integration' and 'economic cooperation'. Europe is undergoing a period of political vexation, reacting to and bracing through the consequences of war, ushering in a paradigm shift whereby security measures are now tight-fisted and, therefore, posing questions regarding independence and autonomy. The security measures have culminated into a relatively tougher stance towards imminent threats. The Russian invasion of Ukraine being the largest conventional war in the region since 1945, followed by continued skirmishes, expose the latent

vulnerabilities of a continent that had long prioritized economic integration over and above rigid security and intensive militarization. Few weeks into the war demonstrated that the long-standing notions centring the presumed stability of EU's neighbourhood and that of coping with Russia's as a 'partner' were abruptly abandoned. Also, the once celebrated idea of 'soft-power' was ruptured by the intermittent drone incursions into Eastern Europe, infiltration of NATO airspace, and instances of intrusion and interference in the electoral process in Romania and Moldova. These are indicative of what is laconically termed as "*Gerasimov* Doctrine"[5] signifying a new military doctrine based on 'non-linear' or 'new-generation-war'.[6]

Drones were also employed as a means to disrupt air traffic and cause chaos. Meddling with the electoral process was quickly seen in tandem with the Russian role; with accusations being levelled against Russia to have covertly intruded the US Presidential elections in 2016.[7] Since 2022, Russia is alleged for involvement in cyber-attacks targeting cyber-optic cables as well as orchestrating assassination attempts, against what it deems as enemies in United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe, illustrate Moscow's struggle to retain its stronghold in power politics.[8] Russia, in a bid to extend its influence and achieve its erstwhile status of super power, considers Europe a space for hybrid warfare.

For Russia, military upper hand is not tantamount to defeating Ukraine in the battleground solely, but to damage the country to an extent that Kyiv lends itself conveniently to a one-fifth of annexation of its territory to Russia and is permanently rid of any prospects of NATO membership. That

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[5] "Gerasimov Doctrine" refers to a breakthrough in modern warfare combining conventional, Soviet style warfare tactics with modern, hybrid military techniques. The title 'Gerasimov' is derived from Russian General Valery Gerasimov's article published in 2013, referring to this new military technique employing Information Technology, economic sanctions and socio-political diplomacy. See https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media /News/News-Article-View/Article/1981229/on-the-gerasimov-doctrine-why-the-west-fail s-to-beat-russia-to-the-punch/.

[6] Kazakov, Alexander. 2025. "Russia Now has a Strategy for a Permanent State of Hybrid War." *The Conversation*, October 16, 2025. See https://theconversation.com/russia-now-has-a-strategy-for-a-permanent-state-of-hybrid-war-266936.

[7] Ibid.

[8] "Hybrid threats: Russia's shadow war escalates across Europe", *The Parliament Magazine,* 21 January 2025. Visit at https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/hybrid-threats-russias-shadow-war-escalates-across-europe.

is why, Russia subsequently aims at weakening Europe since a strong alliance between European Union and NATO is a force to reckon with. Therefore, Russia in order to reclaim its political ascendancy in both Central and Eastern Europe is proceeding with intensified hostility, opening a new chapter in hybrid warfare.[9]

This is not to forget that the Russia–Ukraine war is marked by an asymmetry between the two countries, in terms of military strength, economic resources, and geopolitical influence. Ukraine is faced by a powerful aggressor, formerly a super power which targets civilian infrastructure with impunity; seeking military aid from allies like China and North Korea. For Ukraine, the prospects were grim as US aid was stalled by the Congress, mounting pressure on Germany in particular and Europe in general to dispense with support to Ukraine.

Therefore, among the most immediate and palpable developments in the aftermath of Russia-Ukraine conflict has been the issue of self-defence and entrenching defence alliances. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has made this amply evident that there is a stark absence of long-term planning and investment in military readiness in Europe, especially, in the context of escalating danger on the eastern flank of NATO. Countries with a long-standing practice of strategic restraint, and in particular Germany, departed from their earlier policy of 'restraint' on the military front in a bid to strengthen military capability.

In a landmark speech to the Bundestag just days after the invasion, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the creation of a €100 billion special defence fund, marking what was popularly remarked as "Zeitenwende" (epochal shift)[10] signifying a historical turn in Germany's security doctrine.[11] Germany transitioned from its celebrated *Ostpolitik*, the overture seeking

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9 Ibid.

10 "Zeitenwende" refers to 'turn of times', based on German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's speech in German Parliament in response to Russian invasion of Ukraine. See "How Russia's invasion changed German foreign policy", Chatham House, 18 November 2022. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/11/how-russias-invasion-changed-german-foreign -policy.

11 Christoph O. Meyer. "The Event-Agency-Structure Framework for Explaining Continuity and Change in Foreign and Defence Policy in Europe: The Case of Germany Prior to and after the *Zeitenwende", Defence Studies* 25, Vol. 4 (2025): 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2025.2562979.

congenial dialogue with Russia as marked in the coalition agreement of 2021, to later clearly spelling out Russia as a potential threat to Germany, allies in NATO, and the EU at large.[12] This did not merely raise Germany's defence budget numerically but also marked an ideological departure from Germany's post-World War II stance of contained militarization.

It is interesting to note that Germany's economy is exceptionally large as compared to other EU member states, yet, its budget allocation for foreign and defence policy has been disproportionate compared to other European states. Ukraine's pressing demand for military aid especially impacted Germany, being the largest economy with second highest defence budget and growing military industry. Yet, Germany's volume of military aid could not satisfy Ukraine's need.

Shifts in Diplomatic and Security Outlook
A number of European states have undergone significant shifts in their security outlook in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, particularly those which had previously underestimated the threat posed by Moscow. Measuring the scale and scope of the Russian threat with respect to the country's size, geopolitical standing, and its level of ambition, major European states have undergone a volte face. For example, the German Chancellor's words smacked of military ambition in categorical terms by emphasizing the role of German Army as becoming the 'cornerstone of conventional defence in Europe' and evolving into the 'best-equipped' army in the entire Europe in the face of Russian-Ukraine crisis.[13]

On the other hand, in southern Europe, countries like Spain and Italy had hitherto prioritized socio-political challenges rooted in their southern periphery such as the phenomenon of growing migration and regional instability. Thus, historical institutionalism advocates that key decision-making factors are congruent with historical contingency. This professed attention to crisis management over conventional territorial defence is deemed as wilful neglect by critics. Spain and Italy's overt attention to

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Policy statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Member of the German Bundestag, Berlin. 27 February 2022. https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/service/archive/policy-statement-by-olaf-scholz-chancellor-of-the-federal-republic-of-germany-and-member-of-the-german-bundestag-27-february-2022-in-berlin-2008378.

resolution of issues surfacing in Southern neighbourhood and ignoring the Russian threat on account of territorial distance from Russia contributed to a strategic reorientation that underestimated security threats posed by Russia.

However, the war in Ukraine has prompted a re-evaluation of security apparatus. Spain has embarked on a new course of threat perception, explicitly identifying Russia as the principal security challenge, while Italy has pledged greater support to NATO's eastern flank and committed to increased defence spending.

Similar shifts have been visible across Europe. For instance, France avowed its commitment to bolstering defence industry. France alongside UK and Norway has been mindful of the Russian threat in the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, thus triggering an increase in the investments in defence to assure compliance with NATO commitments.

Unlike Spain and Italy, Poland and Baltic states had been wary of the Russian threat and the Ukraine invasion only resulted in the validation of their longstanding concerns. One of the reasons why these countries have always looked at Russia as an existential threat is owing to the conflicts in the Soviet-era and geographical vicinity to Russia. Therefore, in contrast to their European counterparts, for Poland, Estonia and Lithuania, deterrence and military readiness have always been on the cards. In comparison with Germany, Estonia or even Finland consider tackling the Russian threat as a pivotal marker of security policy, whereas for Germany, it has emerged as significant, yet, still not as pressing when compared to the Baltic response. This can be substantiated by the 2023 policy guidelines in Germany which call for a drastic 'change' in the socio-political outlook, duly substantiated by Defence Minister Pistorius who forewarned Germany of a potential war with Russia.[14] Yet, ironically the spending on defence does not match the resolve expressed in words.[15]

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[14] Federal Government of Germany. *Robust, Resilient, Sustainable: Integrated Security for Germany: National Security Strategy* (2023). https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf.

[15] B. Tallis. "The End of the Zeitenwende: Reflections After Two Years of Action Group Zeitenwende." *DGAP Online Commentary* (2024)*. https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/end-zeitenwende.

The Baltic Response

Despite a palpable response by the Baltic region, the Baltic states have responded differently. Lithuania and Latvia curtailed their diplomatic ties with Russia forthwith. Russian ambassador was asked to leave both Latvia and Lithuania in the wake of tensions between Russia and Ukraine. One of the reasons behind this rapid response to threat management is the annexation of Crimea to Russia in 2014 which puts the Baltic states in a precarious position, fearing to become the next target of Russian invasion. The Baltic states have been considered most vulnerable by the NATO. The subsequent deployment of heavy NATO forces in the Baltic region has also raised Moscow's apprehensions and, thus, the Baltic region could become a space fraught with tension between Russia and the West. Despite these factors, the dominant presence of pro-Russian population in the Baltic states which almost makes up for a quarter of population aggravates the political fiasco. The ethnic Russian minorities in the Baltic countries are supportive of Russia and this raises security concerns.[16]

On the other hand, Poland has announced one of the largest programs based on intensive militarization in the EU, and, consequently, the Baltic states rapidly scaled up military spending and civil defence initiatives. NATO has once again emerged with renewed relevance in the wake of impending threats, reinforcing its presence by deploying additional multinational troops in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. Both history and geographical proximity evolve into internal axes of cooperation within Europe. The alliance also intensified its joint military exercises and has been boosting security measures since 2010. Poland and the Baltic states have emerged with the most belligerent and hawkish stance, actively seeking uncompromising support and propounding maximalist policies against Russia. Therefore, it is small wonder that Poland has allocated increasing funds for defence and military procurement.

Bolstering the defence mechanism as a form of deterrence is rooted in defensive realism. This often culminates into the 'security dilemma' in which countries cooperate on security grounds even outside alliance, usually triggered by the presence of a common threat. This reciprocity of cooperation among nation-states can be analysed in the context of Treaty of Westphalia and post WWI and WWII peace accords. Since decolonization

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[16] Zani, Oktavia *et al,* "Analysis of the Response of the Baltic Countries to the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine".

led to independence of numerous nation states, it increased the need for cooperation among them to safeguard their newly achieved independence.

The Nordic Response
The biggest change has been Finland joining NATO in 2023. Sweden, likewise, followed suit in 2024 characterized by an end to decades of neutrality. This clearly had pronounced geo-political implications stimulating a fundamental change in strategic calibration, and viewing Russia as an existential threat to regional stability. Finland has always treated Russia with a pinch of salt owing to strained historical relationship, shared borders, and ensuing tensions. Nevertheless, the magnitude and the severity of the 2022 invasion led to a radical change in its long-standing policy of military non-alignment. Finland in NATO was a fairly expected development, yet, it has increased the level of security threats in the eastern border. Government officials and defence analysts have forewarned amidst the gradual increase in military activities by Russia near the border. According to Finnish military sources, the current Russian stance may not have been a sign of a massive mobilization, but an indication of a step-by-step and highly orchestrated strategy of aggression. Construction activities and logistical transfers furnish substantial evidence, but the extent is not very high. This incremental intensification provokes two important questions related to the strategic intent of Russia: is the mission to position forces to conduct the long-term operation in Ukraine or to build a stronger military presence on the recently strengthened north eastern flank of NATO? It is possible that both of these goals are being achieved concurrently, as Russia is working out all the directions to restore its power. Irrespective of such developments, the Finnish defence officials seem to have underrated the urgency of the Russian threat.

The leaders of Finland and NATO apparently assume that, as long as the security environment is dynamic, no direct or immediate military threat is posed by Russia. However, Helsinki has recognised that the Russian response to the membership of Finland to NATO, especially the re-aligning of military forces in the border, is a structural change in the security equation between the two countries.[17]

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[17] Miranda Bryant. "Finland 'Preparing for the Worst' as Russia Expands Military Presence Near Border", *The Guardian,* 21 May 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/21/finland-expects-russia-to-build-up-troops-at-border-after-ukraine-war-ends.

Finland has also seen a silent revival of civil preparedness with more people now taking part in national defence programmes. Hundreds of citizens have signed up in voluntary training programs that aim at making them better prepared in case of a crisis. The given phenomenon highlights a larger societal resilience that supplements the security guarantees of Finland, formalised under NATO, and indicate the long-term value of the territorial defence in the Finnish security apparatus.

EU Response
The European Union, however, has sought a pivotal position along the security continuum, in a bid to become less reliant on external forces and more strategic on its own. Following this, the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects have been revitalised to strengthen the collaboration of defence and joint development of capabilities among the member states.

In March 2022, the idea of the Strategic Compass highlighted the underlying EU ambition to evolve into an invincible force to reckon with. The paradigmatic shift to rapid-response, prioritizing cybersecurity, and counter-hybrid warfare suggest that Europe is gradually moving towards a two-pronged security construct pegged on transatlantic defence through NATO but increasingly backed by independent European efforts that will attain long-term stability and independence in the defence policy.

Hungarian and Bulgarian Responses
Another category comprises states whose responses to the war in Ukraine has been characterized by ambivalence. For instance, Hungary did formally express its condemnation of Russian attack on Ukraine, yet, it has adopted a position often deemed as 'obstructionist' within both the European Union and NATO. Hungary's 'Eastern Opening' became a part of foreign policy agenda in 2011.[18]

The significant tilt in Hungary's Foreign Policy, especially the attempts at making friendly overtures to the Eastern countries, can be partially explained with the help of historical analysis. This tactical repositioning and redefinition do not merely symbolize a geopolitical repositioning, but it is also a symbolic gesture that can be traced back to the common history of

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[18] https://politicon.co/en/analytics/182/hungarys-neutrality-on-the-russo-ukrainian-war-and-its-consequences-may-pragmatism-lead-to-a-governmental-change.

shared lineage and a sense of cultural belonging. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has characterized this outreach as a reunion with Hungary's heritage as an allusion to ancient Magyar tribes' migration to the East. In an official visit to Kazakhstan, Orbán made this very clear when he said that we had close people here, and we had no relatives in Brussels, implying a sense of cultural intimacy with Central Asia in contradistinction to the cold estrangement of Western European institutions as described by him.[19] This rhetorical position is directly articulated in trying to redefine the Hungarian position in extreme opposition to the liberal principles of European Union, and at the same time, developing alternative partnerships based on the same historical narratives and political expediency. The Orbán government has had close energy relationships with Moscow, and it remains adamant on a fast reversion to a diplomatic relationship, as an indication of a continued allegiance to the pre-2022 European security status quo. The ambivalence surrounding this stance brings to limelight the prioritization of economic needs and ideological affiliations above security. Orbán has refused sanctions by the EU and still continues with cooperation with Russia in the energy sector.[20] The divergent position taken in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a harsh reminder that the EU's policies remain contested internally and outside.

Similar ambivalence is expressly manifest in subsequent policies propounded by Bulgaria. Despite the fact that successive governments have been supportive of Ukraine; yet the stability of the country has been a hard hit by internal political unrest aggravated by frequent elections and alliances. The ensuing repercussions have delayed the much-needed prospects of a unified and long-term security strategy. In both instances, Russia has been recognized as being an agent of instability for the namesake but not as an immediate or existential threat. The restricted budgetary allocation is in line with this stance for defence. Such conflicting positions highlight the fact that the notion of creating a single European security interest is still far-fetched and that the national interests, dependencies, and political paths of countries are at a tangent.

Interestingly, Russia is not the only European country that has been deemed as an existential threat, facing the likelihood of sanctions and

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Zoltan Kiszelly. "Hungary's realpolitik on Russia", 5 May 2025. https://www.gisreportson line.com/r/hungary-russia/.

conversely bleak chances of economic aid by the same token. For instance, Greece which still refers to Turkey as its main security issue and the old tensions in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean leave a deep mark in the security policy. Greece is cognizant of the gravity of Russia-Ukraine war and the pervasive risk of conventional warfare in Europe. Yet, its foreign policy on security still hinges on deterrence against perceived threats posed by Ankara. Greek officials have gone as far as to propose that their readiness to engage in traditional warfare puts them in a position of advantage as compared to other members in the European Union whose ability to defend against conventional military attack has been less potent over the past decades.

Turkey, in return, has a complex and intentionally ambivalent position with respect to Russia. Turkey has been selective in its foreign policy; especially on energy, trade, and regional foreign policies. This has been widely termed as contained confrontation, which offers Turkey the room and political freedom to go about relations with Russia without necessarily identifying with either the west or the Russian bloc. However, it is aware that Russia is a strategic threat but not an immediate one at that. Instead, Turkey's policies and practices are driven by the issues of regional instability, competition with Greece, Kurdish question, and the security problems along its southern borders. This localized sense of orientation demonstrates that the lines of the larger European strategy are still determined by the difference in the perception of threats.

The UK's Role
The role of the United Kingdom is one of the most pivotal strategic actors among other nations, and it has attested a multidimensional response, which includes the domains of military, economic, humanitarian, and diplomatic. The United Kingdom has had a long track record of being a key ally in the fight against the Russian aggression against Ukraine and has been at the centre of more extensive Western action to limit and deter Russian aggression by its proclamation of human rights, adherence to international standards, and advocacy of democratic principles. Compared to most other European states who have failed to set up enough funds to respond to the Russian threat, the UK has set both funds and resources to assist Ukraine in an attempt to ensure fiscal resilience.

United Kingdom has committed a significant number of resources to support the fiscal strength of Ukraine. By 2024, non-military aid amounts to more than £ 4.7 billion, with over 4.1 billion in fiscal aid and an extra £ 640 million in bilateral assistance which includes essential medical supplies and humanitarian aid. The combined total of defence-related spending and other supportive resources to Ukraine across the United Kingdom totals about £ 9.3 billion, thus demonstrating a long-term policy to underwrite the functionality of the state and social stability of Ukraine during a period of ongoing conflict.[21]

The United Kingdom has taken a central stage in the provision of vital equipment and the increase of defensive capabilities of Ukraine in the military sphere. The British military aid has included the supply of main battle tanks, long-range precision missile, anti-tank and anti-aircraft equipment, armoured vehicles, drones, artillery, and naval ships. In addition, the United Kingdom has also provided non-lethal personnel support such as body armour, rations, and field medical kits to the Ukrainian forces.

Over 45,000 Ukrainian soldiers were also trained in the United Kingdom since 2022 with specialisation of marines and combat pilots. The United Kingdom also jointly leads two global military capability coalitions that aim at enhancing the Ukrainian maritime and unmanned aerial warfare capabilities. The introduction of the International Fund for Ukraine was also a notable institutional innovation created by the collaboration of the United Kingdom and Denmark and allows the quick acquisition of battlefield-relevant supplies. As of now, the fund has received the contribution of nine allied states where it has accrued more than £1 billion to help Ukraine meet its growing security needs. In what can be described as a humanitarian move, the United Kingdom has changed its immigration policies to house the people that were displaced as a result of the conflict. 'Homes for Ukraine' is an over-arching sponsorship programme provides an opportunity to individuals, communities, and civil-society organisations to seek refuge despite the fact that these displaced Ukrainian citizens do not have family connections with the United Kingdom. This is a strategy that is consistent with the greater EU and NATO initiatives to provide refuge whilst ensuring domestic social cohesion.

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[21] Visit at https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/russian-invasion-of-ukraine-uk-government-response/about.

Working together with military and non-military assistance, the United Kingdom has imposed sanctions on thousands of Russian citizens, organizations, and subsidiaries, including major oligarchs and related companies. These steps include asset freezes, travelling restrictions, and company limitations. The United Kingdom has similarly participated in liaising with G7 allies in cutting off Russia from the global financial infrastructure, including the SWIFT inter-bank system, with the overt intention of sabotaging the fiscal resources of the Moscow military campaign.

Realignments in Europe

Russian invasion of Ukraine has also rekindled the strategic justification of European Union expansion, specifically in terms of the Eastern partner countries. What was previously a slow and to a great extent technocratic process of convergence in regulatory processes has been redefined as a geopolitical necessity to ensure consolidation of stability in the eastern periphery of the European Union and to counter the impact of aggressive external forces. The fact that Ukraine achieved the EU candidate status, a few years ago deemed politically unrealistic, was raised to a strategic imperative by mid-2022. This review has spread to Moldova and Georgia, increasingly integrated on threads of deeper integration, and to the Western Balkans, long consigned to peripheral places, a return to the region of increased priority. However, these new impetuses of enlargement also reveal some dark institutional and political undertones in the Union. The possibility of accession of states that are still experiencing unresolved territorial issues, deep-rooted corruption, or not being able to embrace democratic and humanitarian ideals poses grave threats to the unity and the ability of the EU to make decisions. Besides, still, there is a divided opinion among the people of the current member countries, fear over economic burden-sharing, immigration, and watering down of the original EU values. To address these challenges, a redefinition of enlargement as a long-term security investment will be required in addition to creating intermediary policies like a staged accession strategy or structured partnerships, which will have tangible payoffs short of full membership and still provide incentives to reform.

At the same time, the EU's Neighbourhood Policy has been redefined by the war. The Eastern Neighbourhood is no longer being abstracted as a peripheral buffer area but it is being seen as a key element of the Europe's

strategic frontier.[22] This re-conceptualisation requires long term and multi-dimensional participation which includes safe people mobility, the rebuilding of the infrastructure, flows of investment, capacity building of governance, military cooperation, and economic integration. More importantly, such efforts should be integrated into a long-term vision that would go far beyond the time span of the war, prompting a need to look at long-term commitment instead of responding to the war.

Consequently, we reach a cross-section of temporal contexts in which foreign policy during 'normal times' develops through 'incremental' or 'adaptational' approaches. Policymakers adjust and strengthen focus in response to emerging foreign policy challenges. During atypical periods, fluctuations persist between heightened agency and contingency until a new equilibrium is established. Transitions take place within and occasionally extend beyond policy domains, potentially exerting a lasting impact on the polity, whether at a regional or global level.[23]

Conclusion

The new realignments also make us question the relationship between China and Russia, since China has backed Russia and has intermittently played down Russia's aggression towards Ukraine through diplomatic overtures and political rhetoric. European leaders have decided to change their relationship with China from "decoupling" to "de-risking" because of this. In the same way, Russia has turned its economy towards China and India and is leaning towards non-Western actors. The war in Ukraine has brought about a new order based on military and defence cooperation, strategic realignment, and changes to institutions. This order is very different from the model of liberal peace and interdependence that came after 1989. Europe is now rebuilding its geopolitical identity in a world where there are competition, hard power, and recurrent conflict.

Numerous facets of the new European order are still developing unevenly as it continues to undergo transformation. The ability of European institutions to control public expectations, preserve strategic coherence in the face of external shocks, and balance internal diversity will determine

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[22] Visit at https://www.thenewfederalist.eu/from-buffer-to-bridge-rethinking-the-eu-s-neighbourhood-policy-towards-a?lang=fr.

[23] Meyer, "The Event-Agency-Structure Framework for Explaining Continuity and Change in Foreign and Defence Policy in Europe."

how long it lasts. The potential of "alliance fatigue," the enduring internal divides, and the financial cost of ongoing conflict are some of the main obstacles. Transatlantic relations continue to be crucial, and NATO, which was reenergized by the crisis, continues to offer the hard security backbone. However, when viewed through the lens of the ongoing impasse in Palestine and the mounting public discontent, Europe is also bracing for a future in which US focus may falter and international instability may worsen.