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Focus: **UKRAINE Crisis: Indian Perspective**

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Focus: UKRAINE Crisis: Indian Perspective

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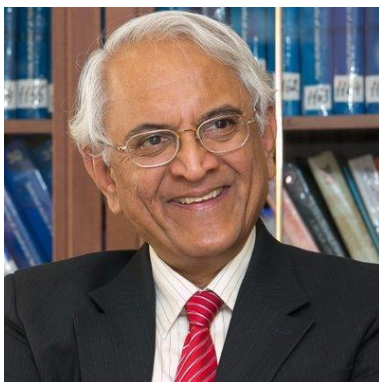
Ambassador Nalin Surie has served over a long and distinguished career in the Indian Foreign Service from 1973-2011, holding a number of strategic, policy and advisory roles, including as the High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Ambassador to China and Poland. More recently, he has also led the Indian Council of World Affairs, as the Director General from 2015-2018



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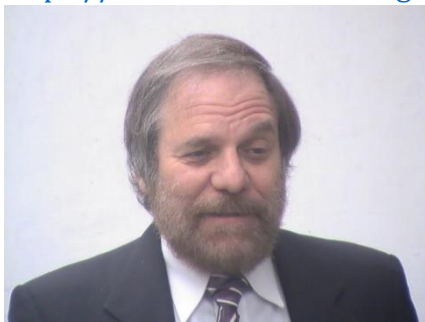


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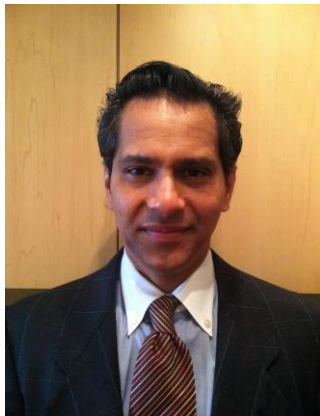
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Preface

This special issue of **FPRC Journal (50)** focuses on **Ukraine Crisis : Indian Perspective**

It comes out at a crucial juncture in Ukraine War that constitutes the biggest threat for world peace. It would have implications for India also.

India's diplomatic initiatives during the crisis are surely unique. India has demonstrated its strategic autonomy by urging all countries-big or small-to work for world peace instead of an impending nuclear war. The manifold challenges the Ukraine war brings to fore, have been identified by distinguished contributors of this special volume. They have also visualised the way forward for world peace, not war.

We take this opportunity to express our heart-felt thanks to contributors who have shared our sentiments and accepted our invitation to enrich the contents of the Journal. They have always been a source of strength to us.

Dr. Mahendra Gaur

Director

Dr. Indira Gaur

Mg. Director



Foreign Policy Research Centre

New Delhi

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FPRC Journal (J-50)

Focus: **UKRAINE CRISIS: Indian Perspective**

QUESTIONNAIRE for Interview

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice,” he said. Do you agree?

3)India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it's worth?

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

RESPONSES :

1) **Ambassador Nalin Surie**

Distinguished Fellow, Delhi Policy Group

Response to Question 1: The effort to corner India on its very principled position on the Ukraine crisis, for not condemning Russia, has not succeeded. This is because the pressure on India was not only hypocritical but also reflected an unwillingness to understand and appreciate India's position based on well established principles of India's independent foreign policy including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. India's persuasive explanation of its stance, has found widespread acceptance in Western governments, think tanks, the media and the international community at large.

The effort to project a European problem into an international one has not succeeded either.

Response to Question 2: As explained in my response to the first question, the stance taken by India's External Affairs Minister on the Ukraine crisis is based on India's principled and independent foreign policy positions.

Response to Question 3: I do not agree with the suggestion that India's responses to the Ukraine crisis are simply based on "a China angle". The India-Russia relationship has been and will remain an important one for India. This is for several reasons ranging across the geo-strategic, economic, technological, defence, space, energy and Eurasian dimensions among others. Irrespective of the outcome of the Ukraine conflict, Russia will remain a power centre in Eurasia; rich in resources, S&T foundations, market, cultural achievements and military power among other factors. India's relationship with Russia is based on

strong foundations. That is also pertinent vis-a-vis India's relations with Ukraine. India-Russia relations are a function of shared interests and similar perceptions on many critical issues in international relations.

Response to Question 4: India does not duck hard choices. Indeed, to stand ones ground in the face of a determined onslaught to put India in a corner and yet to emerge unscathed from it is a reflection of the strength of India's strategic independence and international acceptance of it. India's commitment to multilateralism and multi-polarity remains strong. Reformed multilateralism and greater multipolarity remain the preferred way forward.

Response to Question 5: I am confused by the question. The Ukraine crisis has in fact given a new and broader lease of life to NATO. In its new 2022 Strategic Concept[June 2022], NATO has determined that while the Russian Federation is the "most significant and direct threat to Allies security and to peace and stability in the Euro Atlantic area," it has for the first time clearly stated that the "ambitions and coercive policies" of the Peoples Republic of China "challenge our (NATO's) interests, security and values." It goes on to add that "the deepening strategic partnership between the PRC and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our (NATO) values and interests."

The 2022 NATO Strategic Concept also specifies that the Indo-Pacific is important for NATO since developments there can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security. NATO will, therefore, strengthen dialogue and cooperation with new and existing partners in the Indo-Pacific to tackle cross-regional challenges and shared security interests.

The short answer to the second part of Question 5 is that the QUAD Summit on 24 May 2022 does indeed indicate a much greater convergence of interests among the four partner countries and their determination to move ahead and become the catalysing force in the Indo-Pacific.

20 July 2022

2) **Amb. P.S. Raghavan**

Distinguished Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation,
Emeritus Resource Faculty, Rashtriya Raksha University,
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Ambassador of India to Russia (2014-16)
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1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

The foreign policy of any country is designed to further its national goals and aspirations. India's ambitions are to promote economic growth with equitable development, become a developed country in the shortest possible time-frame and expand its global footprint by enhancing its comprehensive national strength. Protection of national security from domestic and external threats is essential to facilitating the promotion of national objectives. India's foreign policy responses to regional and global developments should be seen through this prism. India's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the message that it has sent to its international partners clearly conveyed this.

The totality of India's statements and actions could be summarized in four basic points: one, India may not like Russia's action in Ukraine, which is clearly a violation of international law, but it will not be pressured into a public condemnation, just to please its other partners; two, India's actions reflect its geopolitical and security interests that flow from its own history and geography, which are distinct from those of the parties involved in the Ukraine

war; three, its actions in protecting and furthering these interests do not conflict with India's shared strategic interests with other partners; and four, India's position is not one of passive neutrality; in fact, it has actively called on all the parties to the dispute to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue, since the win-lose situation of a military conflict is not conducive to establishing a harmonious world order.

From the evidence of India's engagement with its western partners over the recent months, they seem to have absorbed this message.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

"When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said.

Do you agree?

European attitudes towards Russia are a product of their historical experiences and their geography. The war in Ukraine is a consequence of post-Cold War policies and actions of a multiplicity of stakeholders, who were seeking to shape the European security architecture in line with their interests.

India's historical experience with Russia is very different from that of Europe. Our geography shapes our strategic perspectives vis a vis Russia, which are different from those of some European countries. What our External Affairs Minister was essentially trying to convey was that how you react to developments in the world depends on where you see them from.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

It would be simplistic to ascribe all of India's actions to a "China angle". It is arguable that China poses a formidable strategic challenge to India's interests in its region and its ambitions in the world. It is a challenge that has to be addressed at various levels. But there are other interests that drive India's foreign policy responses. India has major economic and security interests in the maritime domain, as well as in the continental domain – the Eurasian landmass to its north and north west. India needs to build partnerships and shape its political and economic relationships in these domains with partners with which it has converging interests. Further afield, India's vibrant relations with countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas have political and economic value in promoting India's growth and development.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

Preserving strategic autonomy requires more strength and resilience than merely ducking hard choices. India's response to recent pressures to conform to a broad Western position on Russia demonstrates this fact. The alternative to strategic autonomy is alignment with a

dominant global power, which would mean subordinating its interests to those of that power. As long as India retains the ambition of remaining an independent force in a multipolar world – on the strength of its geography, history, demography, economy and strategic location – it should exercise its strategic autonomy to further its interests.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China’s rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

India’s efforts to protect its strategic, security and economic interests in the Indo-Pacific include bilateral and plurilateral partnerships with countries in both the eastern and western Indo-Pacific. The Quad is one such important plurilateral group and the commitment of its members to its agenda was demonstrated at the recent summit. The perspectives of European countries on the challenges in the Indo-Pacific are varied, and the current crisis in Ukraine may have somewhat reoriented the strategic compass of some of them more towards their European preoccupations than the challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

3) Amb. K.P. Fabian

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signaling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

I do not agree with the quoted statement. It implies that state is amoral, and that therefore, individuals acting on behalf of the state, or claiming to be doing so, are not bound by ethics. Good foreign policy consists in combining due regard for ethics and national interest.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia’s actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we’re not giving you that advice,” he said. Do you agree?

Do agree. EAM has correctly drawn attention to the Euro-centric , or Westo-centric mindset in the West, enthusiastically and often unwittingly embraced in the non-West by those who refuse to apply their mind.

3)India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

India has several good reasons to refuse to join the West's confrontational policy towards Russia. Biden wants to weaken and ease out Putin. Biden wants to reduce

India's *spielraum* and make her overly dependent on U.S. India voted for India at UN on the Ukraine-related resolutions. Not for Russia, nor against U.S. India does need to factor in China's hostile attitude and needs to keep its relations with Russia in a state of good repair. Nor can India afford, politically and economically, to join the West in imposing sanctions on Russia.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

No. The MEA could have put across India's case with more lucidity and logic. It is not a question of ducking hard choices. The choice is clear. India has stood up to bullying, public and private.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May, 2022) indicate growing strength?

Let us not delude ourselves that Washington will come to India's aid in any serious fashion if attacked by China. Do not expect too much from Quad. It is high time we distinguished between rhetoric and intentions.

When the AUKUS matter was in the headlines, the U.S. Embassy called in senior journalists and briefed them on QUAD. The message was QUAD was a variation of the Red Cross. I do not know of any media, print or television, carrying a story on that briefing.

Coming to the Indo-Pacific, China has more or less completed its illegal taking over of South China Sea and it is a *fait accompli* that cannot be reversed.

(Ambassador K P Fabian's book **THE ARAB SPRING THAT WAS AND WASN'T** commissioned by the Indian Council of World Affairs has been published by MacMillan Education in June 2022.)

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Q1) “Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

ANSWER: Foreign policy should be about the national interest. The national interest involves trade-offs between competing demands such as energy security for citizens and a secure international environment in which India can develop. It is self-evident that rising energy prices impact disproportionately on India’s poor and could easily trigger social unrest, particularly in urban areas.

However, it is one thing for India to continue to import fuel from Russia to staunch rising energy prices and another thing to modify, export and resell Russian fuel for a profit.

With hindsight, India might have done a better job explaining why it took the actions it did. Despite European sanctions on Russia some European countries continue to import Russian fuel because their economies are vitally dependent on it.

India abstained on all three votes in the UN General Assembly – condemning Russian aggression, on humanitarian issues raised by the war in Ukraine, and suspending Russia from the UN Human Rights Council. India was not in the majority but it was in a substantial minority of 35, 38 and 58 states on the three votes, respectively. India failed to articulate the concerns of this group.

Criticism of India was not exclusively an exercise in the West trying to take the moral high ground but about realpolitik. Putin’s brutal invasion of Ukraine has upset the post-World War II international order and precipitated a global food shortage on developing countries, not to mention death and destruction of Ukraine.

India needs to take a hard look at how its national interests will be served by a protracted conflict in Ukraine and the polarization of the international system. Will China become emboldened to act against India? Is it in India’s long-term interest to see China’s international position enhanced? And what should the international community do – abstain – if India is threatened by China?

Q2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia’s actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we’re not giving you that advice,” he said.

Do you agree?

ANSWER: India's external posture has always contained a heavy dose of moralism based on its experience under British rule. Sometimes a real life crises defies an easy moral solution. India's response to European pressure is like "whataboutism," a distraction from the central issues raised by Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The US/West botched its intervention in Afghanistan. That is water under the bridge. The West is unified and standing up to Putin's Russia. At stake is not just the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine but stability Europe itself as well as global order.

I do not see any parallels between Afghanistan and Putin's war in Ukraine where resistance is palpable and Zelensky is a popular charismatic leader.

Consider an historical counter-factual: what would the world have been like if there had been no western intervention in Afghanistan? Al Qaeda and other extremist groups would have had a safe base under Taliban rule to spread their violent ideology. Pakistan might have become embolden. India might have fallen victim in Kashmir.

The West got China's rise wrong, trade did not lead to liberalisation but to the growth of China's economy and the wherewithal to develop a world class military. But throwing that back in the West's face doesn't solve the pressing problem of how we curb China's aggressiveness and break up the Russia-China partnership "without limits."

Reference to a "rules based order" misses the essential point: the UN Charter and the UN Security Council are unable to resolve the war in Ukraine. This is a far more fundamental issue which can only be addressed through realpolitik and balance of power strategies.

Q3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

ANSWER: Basically, yes. If India had voted to condemn Russian aggression, Putin would have responded immediately by sanctions against India. India has a long legacy of defence cooperation with the Soviet Union/Russia relating to the procurement of modern military arms, platforms and technology. India needs to retain this transactional connection in the immediate future to deter China from using threat of force or force. It is not in India's interest to see Russia weakened and dependent on China.

Q4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight: What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

ANSWER: Pursuing strategic autonomy is a difficult path to pursue. However, India must continue to pursue strategic autonomy but with more flexibility. At the present juncture, India needs engage more closely with the United States, Japan, Europe and Australia to deter China. But it is not in India's long-term interest to become dependent in the United States due to its domestic polarization and unpredictably and legal regime that could result in sanctions on human rights grounds or arms procurements from Russia.

In addition, India should take up the cause of developing countries that are affected by the collateral effects of Putin's war in the Ukraine. Also India should join with countries like Indonesia in advocating dialogue between Russia and Ukraine to achieve a cease fire and a negotiated settlement.

Q5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May 2022) indicate growing strength?

ANSWER: The Quad Summit 2022 demonstrated declaratory support for broad principles such as the UN Charter, international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and ASEAN centrality.

The Quad Joint Leaders Statement stated, "We strongly oppose any coercive, provocative or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo and increase tensions in the area, such as militarization of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia, and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities."

The Quad leaders provided no indication of how its four members would work together to oppose China's "coercive, provocative or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo" such as hard power responses to Chinese aggressiveness.

5) Dr. David J. Karl

1)"Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

China and India have become two of the most significant buyers of Russian oil, in the process providing important funding for Russia's military campaign in Ukraine. The Biden administration has attempted to persuade both countries from increasing their purchases, though given India's growing alignment with the US, it is hoped that New Delhi would be the more amenable to Washington's arguments.

Many in the West are also perplexed that India is not more supportive of the international norms involving the inviolability of national sovereignty and territorial integrity given that India itself is the victim of Chinese aggression in eastern Ladakh. New Delhi has long sought to uphold these norms but has now seemingly turned its back on them. Foreign Minister Jaishankar has asserted that Europe's security problems are not India's concern. But by the same logic, Europe has no normative reason to come to India's aid if China ever renews its aggression on the Himalayan front. If Jaishankar is asserting that it's now every state for itself, then India will emerge less secure in the end.

The Biden administration has so far largely been understanding of the predicament the Ukraine war poses for India. And it is worth noting that India's actions -- specifically purchasing Russian oil to export the refined products back to Europe -- reminds one of how the early American republic proclaimed its neutrality during the Napoleonic wars in Europe but then took every opportunity to benefit from the conflict commercially. Of course, such actions created serious frictions with both imperial Britain and revolutionary France. In the end, Washington was able to resolve its differences with Napoleon, while the frictions with Britain ultimately led to war.

To date, India has avoided any serious fallout with the West. Nonetheless, India's conduct in the last five months is adding to the doubts being raised regarding New Delhi's reliability in the halls of the US Congress and elsewhere.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

"When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said.

Do you agree?

I've addressed this question in part in my response above. Jaishankar's remarks have drawn much applause in India. But the participation of the Japanese and South Korean leaders, in addition to their Australian and New Zealand counterparts, in the recent NATO summit shows that at least a few Asian countries reject his logic. To this group, the Ukraine war has serious reverberations throughout Asia and must be dealt with.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

Yes, the China factor looms significant, even if part of the reason for Indian purchases of Russian oil is to blunt inflationary pressures in the domestic economy.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

I have a different take on this issue. Strategic autonomy has been the chorus in New Delhi since the outbreak of the Ukraine war. But what the last five months has demonstrated is how strategically constrained India is. It is entirely predictable that India would assume a neutral position on the Ukraine question, given the acute dependency on Russia for its military needs vis-a-vis an assertive China. Indeed, to do otherwise would take an act of heroism that is alien to statecraft.

But why does India find itself in this position? The bottom-line reason is that 75 years after independence, India has yet to establish a military industrial base that matches its great-power aspirations. It was quite telling that, following the start of Chinese incursions in Ladakh, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh's first port of call was Moscow. When the Ukraine war broke out, the Wall Street Journal quoted an Indian government official as saying, "Tomorrow if Russia stops supplying components of the old warfare equipment we have, our whole China story will be over."

Fifty years after the 1971 Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship and cooperation, India finds itself in an even worse strategic predicament: Still heavily reliant upon a foreign power for its defense needs vis-a-vis its Chinese neighbor, except now that power no longer considers Beijing an adversary but as a "no limits" security partner. India's present plight began not on February 24 when the Russian offensive commenced in Ukraine, but on February 4 when Beijing and Moscow issued their joint statement on closer strategic collaboration. Jaishankar's biting remarks may obscure this problem in the short term, but rhetoric will not suffice as a response.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

As my response to the last question indicates, I see growing signs of Indian weakness rather than strength. Besides India's increasing security problems, a number of recent developments raise questions about New Delhi's capacity to deliver the goods, whether it concerns upholding its part of the Quad COVID vaccine initiative or being able to back up Prime Minister Modi's pledge to be the world's granary. India is widely regarded as the Quad's weakest link. Its actions over the last two years will only deepen this assessment.

6) **Dr. David Arase**

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

Quad and EU members had difficulty understanding the meaning and motivation behind India's perception of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its stance toward the economic sanctions designed to punish Russia and to discourage it from similar acts toward other former Soviet republics that, like Ukraine, want freedom to pursue political and economic association with the West. India's commitment to democracy and the rule of law in the world at large, and its desire for the rest of the world to care about India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are endangered by Pakistan and China, are well known.

And yet, India averts its gaze from a massively brutal and bloody cancellation of these same principles and rights in the case of Ukraine. Why? India's friends deserve an explanation. I think these friends now understand more clearly India's ambivalence and mixture of motives in this case, and this explains why India is still treated as a friend and strategic partner by for example, the other Quad members and the EU, in contrast to the latter two groups' attitude toward other states that refuse to condemn Russia's invasion or denounce the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty such as China.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice,” he said.
Do you agree?

No, I don't. This is a case of “what-aboutism”, of distraction from an embarrassing situation, by hurling accusations of equal, if not worse, wrongdoing by those questioning India on its curious position toward Ukraine and Russian sanctions. East Asia, which is a part of Asia, is where the US and other stakeholders in the rules

based order have been denouncing China's violations of international norms by secretly aiding North Korea, militarily threatening Japan and Taiwan, and brushing aside the sovereign rights of other coastal states and international navigation rights in the South China Sea literally for decades now. In Afghanistan, the US can be blamed for the incompetent way it withdrew, but after 20 years of effort to stabilize and democratize a land few American's had ever heard of, and over a decade of trying to get out without seeing the government in place fall apart afterward (from the administrations of Barack Obama to Joe Biden), it's not like the US didn't let India know it was leaving. Meanwhile, the US and Japan have been sympathetic and have tried to be helpful to India in its own dealings with China along their border and in South Asia and Indian Ocean region more generally.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

It's hard to disentangle China from any aspect of India's foreign and security policy calculations, and India's relations with Russia are no exception.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

I think it is clearly understandable why India chooses to stick with strategic autonomy or "multi-alignment," but if this language means that India must maintain cold war legacies of historically warm and close relations with the Soviet Union as well as an anti-Western, post-colonial rhetorical stance in global discourse in today's changing circumstances, one may question whether this "strategy," if one can call it that, is optimal in today's circumstances. It is up to Indians to judge this matter.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May, 2022) indicate growing strength?

Yes, I believe so because it survives and develops into much more than a geopolitical alignment despite changes of government in the US, Japan, and Australia. It is developing into an economic, human security, civilian technological cooperation, and supply chain resilience partnership in addition to a maritime security and mutual strategic support partnership that should be of great value to India after it abandoned RCEP and discovered that India cannot allow itself to become critically reliant upon China for critically important strategic goods and services.

7) Prof.Michimi Muranushi

1

This depends on the case. In a case like the Burmese persecution of the Rohingya, the moral nature of the matter overwhelms what Indian economic interests may be at stake. India's lukewarm position on Myanmar was morally wrong. But in the case of Ukraine-Russia War, I agree on the implication of this question without using the point in the question. The position that Ukraine is totally just and Russia is totally wrong is a position which the US and Europe choose almost unanimously, not necessarily for the sake of justice or virtue, but for the sake of concealing their own national interests. If India is refraining from hitting this point back to the accusers of Russia and keeps low profile, India is a little too modest as the biggest democracy.

2

I do not agree. The European and American position was probably that rules-based-order should be primarily maintained in the cases where Europe and the US are dissatisfied or victims. Otherwise, like in the Iraq War, or in central America, rules have been ignored.

3

I do not agree. Yes, the expansion of NATO certainly threatens China, if it expands not only to Ukraine but also to Georgia and central Asia. So long as Ukraine is the issue, China can occupy a pivotal position between the west and Russia, and the war provided an ideal situation for China now in the sense that the west is forgetting about the threat of China. But ultimately China has to support Russia as its buffer against the west. When we talk about India, it is more important to point out that India can claim itself to be more REASONABLE than the western democracies so far as this war is concerned. While the core of the problem of the war is structural, i.e. how to find now a stable buffer in the west of Russia, which worked effectively during the Cold War, the west is arguing as if an obsessed dictator of Russia were the fundamental problem.

4

As I said, I think India is too strategically modest. Argumentative Indians are not speaking out what they could say more eloquently on this matter. Indians could point out submerged colonialism in the expansion of NATO to the Russian and Ukrainian oil and natural gas fields. The strongest message India may be able to send to the world is

that democracies can differ on their positions on this war and awaken the peoples in the west.

5

I think that the spirit of restraining China will be gone so long as the issue of Ukraine continues. Just as the 9/11 attack on the US wiped out the issue of China Threat, the issue of Ukraine will virtually crowd out the issue of China Threat for a decade. The so-called neo-cons in the US have again demonstrated their special skills in saving China by redirecting western foreign policy concerns to critical oilfields such as Russia and the Persian Gulf.

8) Dr. IAN HALL

1) "Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

To be frank, I find the targeting of India by some Western critics hard to explain, because several other states in the Indo-Pacific have also been reticent about vocally condemning Russia, including some significant Southeast Asia states. But I think we also need to acknowledge that the United States government has not been especially critical of India - most of the criticism has come from commentators and analysts. Washington understands that India remains dependent on Russia for arms and other difficult to obtain technologies, including nuclear power plants. It also understands that China is looming on the Line of Actual Control, with more than 70,000 People's Liberation Army troops now deployed all year round.

Personally, I think India remains in a very difficult position and may continue to be so for some time. If it directly criticises Russia, it risks being cut off from strategic partner it needs to manage China along the LAC. But if it does not, then there is also a risk that if the Chinese decided to seize and annex territory India claims as its own, then some might point to Ukraine as a precedent, if indeed Russia does manage to seize and annex the Donbas region, as well as Crimea.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

"When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said. Do you agree?

The Europeans are themselves in a difficult position, but one that is largely of their own making. It has been clear since the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008 that Vladimir Putin was willing to use force to maintain Russian influence in the former Soviet space. The attack

on Ukraine in 2014 confirmed that. And yet major European states have continued to buy Russian oil and especially gas in huge quantities, effectively signalling to Mr Putin that he can do these things with near impunity. So, European states do not stand on very firm ground when they criticise other countries, including India.

For what it is worth, I think Mr Jaishankar is also correct to say that greater trade and investment with China has not led to the kind of interdependence that fosters lasting peace. Instead, we have seen those economic relationships used as leverage or even as tools of coercion. Australia has experienced this firsthand and as a result, is re-evaluating its view of China and the possibility that it might evolve in a more peaceable direction.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

Yes, I do. Managing China and the potential threat from China is the greatest challenge that India faces. The challenge for others, including the US, is going to be find India options for dealing with China that mitigate India's dependence on Russian weapons, because it is not at all clear that Russia will have the capacity to supply others with arms after a conflict that is inflicting significant damage on the Russian military. If India cannot access Russian ammunition, for example, in a crisis, then it could be at a significant disadvantage with China. India needs alternatives, and fast.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it's worth?

No, I don't think so. All states want to make their own choices, free from coercion. And India has made hard choices - it has stuck with and deepened a strategic partnership with the US and it has reconvened the Quad, for example, despite clear signs that Beijing is not happy with those developments and despite a degree of domestic scepticism. India's problem is that China is determined not to see it emerge as a significant pole of power in Asia and determined that it should not be close to the US or Japan. But frankly: India has no choice but to try to break out of the trap China would like to put it in. To do that, India needs to forge as many strategic partnerships as it can.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May, 2022) indicate growing strength?

Personally, I think the Quad is progressing quite well - it is evolving into a provider of public goods, like maritime security or infrastructure financing, that is positioned to give regional states alternative options to China. The conversations about hard security issues are occurring elsewhere, in bilateral discussions, and some of those will be difficult, I think. But

as I said before, the challenge is not to browbeat India into some kind of ritual condemnation of Mr Putin, but rather to give New Delhi some options to be able to transition away from dependence on Russian arms.

9) ZHIQUN ZHU, PhD

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FPRC Journal (J-50)

Focus: UKRAINE CRISIS: Indian Perspective

Response to QUESTIONNAIRE

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

All nations defend their own national interests--and those interests should be defined by themselves, not anybody else. There should be no question about this. However, India is a great power and people outside seem to hold the bar high for India. Many people would like India to be more straight-forward in condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. No matter what reasons Russia comes up with, its encroachment of Ukraine's sovereignty has clearly violated the UN Charter.

India has taken a somewhat neutral position in the Russia-Ukraine war largely due to its long-standing and critical military, economic, and political relations with Russia. India also wants to maintain a strong relationship with all other great powers. From India's perspective, this should not be a problem. However, external expectations of India are high as a responsible great power. That's why India has been singled out for not playing the role as a great power in this case.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice,” he said.

Do you agree?

I think Mr. Jaishankar pointed out the double-standards in some Western countries' foreign policies. Frankly speaking, NATO and the United States have repeatedly violated the UN Charter and international law by launching wars with various justifications. Those wars including the ones in Afghanistan and Kosovo were not sanctioned by the United Nations.

A worrisome trend is that some Western countries attempt to dominate the narrative about the international order and rules. If you do not follow the rules they prefer or do not support their foreign policies, then you will be criticised and attacked. If India has followed international rules set by the United Nations, not just by a few Western powers, then it does not need to worry about pressure from Europe. After all, India's foreign policies are made in New Delhi, not in Brussels or Washington, DC.

3)India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

To some extent, this is true. New Delhi tends to magnify China's negative influence in India's foreign policy while underestimating the common interests between the two largest developing nations. To compete with China seems to be the top priority of India's policy today. Naturally India would not like to see Russia move too close to China in the India-China competition. In other words, India may be afraid of losing Russia as a key partner or a counter-force to China in its foreign policy. So this might be one of the reasons why India has refused to condemn Russia, which serves India's interests. Of course there are other military, economic, and political considerations that have led to India's hesitation in joining the West to condemn Russia.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India’s approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India’s hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it’s worth?

India's foreign policy is based on pragmatism. As External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar commented, India is not sitting on the fences; it is sitting on the ground. To maintain strategic autonomy gives India more flexibility in dealing with other powers in today's world.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China’s rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

The idea of QUAD was initiated by the late Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, and formalized in 2017 during the ASEAN Summit in Manila. India has been a leader of the non-

aligned movement, so it has arguably violated its own principle by joining an apparently anti-China security group.

Among the four members of the QUAD, India is the least enthusiastic about turning it into an Asian version of NATO. India has also been a member of the BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, where it works closely with China and Russia. So India has been very skillful and balanced in managing China's rise, different from the one-dimensional, largely confrontational approach taken by some Western countries. In other words, India's foreign policy is pretty sophisticated and nuanced.

10) Dr. Richard L. Benkin

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FPRC Journal (J-50)

Focus: UKRAINE CRISIS: Indian Perspective Response to QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) *"Foreign policy is not about virtue-signaling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens." Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?*

I hate to be so cynical, however, before we get to the question itself, it's important to recognize that virtue signaling generally happens within a context of "the best interests of citizens," as understood by their national leaders. They reflect domestic political concerns as well as geopolitical strategy, in addition to any substantive issues.

To take an example, in 1981, the Israeli Air Force bombed and destroyed Saddam Hussein's nuclear reactor, which was the cornerstone of his effort to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The United States was surprised by it (largely because the outgoing administration of President Jimmie Carter did not pass on Israeli notification to the incoming administration of President Ronald Reagan); and being pressured by America's Arab allies, issued a strong condemnation of it. Even so, many in the administration (especially Secretary of State General Alexander Haig) who saw the strategic value of it to the United States (US). While public words were strong, action was mild (delaying the delivery of a small consignment of fighter jets and allowing a condemnation resolution to be passed by the Security Council). Ten years later, after the US invaded what would have been a nuclear armed Iraq, Vice President Dick Cheney privately thanked the Israelis for that raid. Several US and Israeli officials even at the time of the strike thanked Israel for doing what it did. Israel's destruction of Iraq's nuclear program was in the best interests of the American people. Condemning it as a violation of principles, as opposed to praising it for its military success, was also in their interests, especially given the Reagan administration's effort to build alliances

with Sunni countries to thwart the new (at the time) Iranian threat. Hence, the seeming contradiction. So we need to parse the public statements and the granular geopolitical interests.ⁱ

Additionally, East and West (for lack of a better nomenclature) see the war in the Ukraine in very different perspectives. The latter see it as a *global conflict*; for the former, it is a *regional or European conflict*, and they have been pulled into European conflicts and spilled a lot of blood far too often in history to blithely join in one again. One cannot deny the global implications, however. While Russian President Vladimir Putin has made no secret of his aim of reconstituting the old Soviet Union to include historical territories like the Ukraine; the war is more significantly, part of an effort by China and Russia to end United States hegemony as the world's singular superpower with an overwhelming monopoly on the international financial system. It also is a challenge to a rules-based system that favors a liberal democracy or democratic republic over dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. On July 8, 2022, Putin admitted as much while commenting on his war in Ukraine: "The course of history is unstoppable, and attempts by the collective West to enforce its version of the global order are doomed to fail."ⁱⁱ

Putin's blustering aside, the strength of the US economy drives the outcome of both the war in Ukraine and the ultimate struggle for global hegemony. What India does is an important element, and likely will emerge a stronger player regardless of those outcomes. Hence the measured and relatively mild US comments about India's stance.

United States officials are well aware of India's decades-long relationship with Russia and the latter's involvement in multiple sectors—from oil and food to military sales and training; and more. Moreover, India is dealing with inflation rates similar to America's, and its bargain purchase of Russian oil since the conflict hopefully will help bring relief to the vast Indian population. So, pay more attention to what comes out of the Biden Administration and Capitol Hill, than to articles in *The Washington Post* or other media.

I also disagree with the premise of the question that the US has singled out India. It also has criticized two close Middle East allies, Israel and the United Arab Emirates, for less than a full throated condemnation of Russia. Like India, both of them have good reasons for their positions, most of it related to the volatility of their Middle Eastern neighborhood; and as with India, the comments have not led to action. Condemning Europe is even trickier. Many European countries are key to the western alliance against Russian aggression, yet continue to be major customers for Russian energy. Yet, the latest sanctions passed by the European Union (EU) only embargo Russian crude oil delivered by sea—and not even that until the end of 2022; other petroleum products in 2023. Pipeline deliveries are exempted, and therein lies US President Joe Biden's greatest dilemma. One of his early actions after taking office on January 20, 2021, was to drop US sanctions against the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. If he now condemns Europe's use of Russian energy, US voters will blame him for his actions and for being unclear in his policies. It would be a political disaster.

Whether justifiably or not, however, India still stands out from other countries not buying into the western narrative about the Ukraine-Russia conflict. If we except those nations irrevocably outside our sphere of influence (Russia and its puppet state Belarus, China, North Korea, and Eritrea), India is the only country to abstain from all three UN resolutions condemning Russia. That, unfortunately, makes it an easy target for words without action.

- 2) *India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.*

"When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said. Do you agree?

Minister S. Jaishankar, no less than President Biden or German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz, speaks to his domestic audience whenever he talks. Since the first election of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has pushed back against western domination and emphasized India's place in the international, rules based, world order. Nor is India unique in getting the flawed advice he noted. It was, for instance, an essential element in western assumptions about solving the Middle East conflict—that trade and prosperity overcomes other conflicts—which of course has not worked. The same can be said for Jaishankar's reference to the Afghanistan withdrawal. The way it happened, the people left behind, the options not taken, and more have become something of an embarrassment for many in the West, something that Jaishankar had to know. Meanwhile, India under NDA and UPA governments has developed its own *modus vivendi* for living with those same challengers to the international rules based order.

Moreover, I think we all recognize that the rules based order is used and discarded as it suits individual actors, which Jaishankar seems to be saying. The number of times so many nations have violated its rules about national sovereignty, and done so with effective impunity, challenges credulity. Its rules about human rights? Violated every day, with nations large and small, democratic and authoritarian, ignoring them. Israel, and now more frequently India, are judged by different standards and according to inconsistent rules (often fabricated to justify pre-judged narratives) than other countries. We can go on and on. Add to that, the post-World War II is largely the product of a world dominated by western countries, many of which occupied Asian countries as they touted these rules. So, for instance, what do the rules of sovereignty mean when national borders were drawn by European colonizers in their interests that also ignored the wishes of their many *and varied* Asian subjects: Pashtun, Baloch, and Sindhi forcibly incorporated into Pakistan, the Durand and Goldschmidt lines, the cobbling together of an Iraq from three separate Sunni, Shiite, and Kurd nations; Chinese troops in Arunachal Pradesh with its huge hydroelectric resources; Tibet; and much more.

Nor is just those “bad” westerners. Asia’s and Africa’s continued passive compliance was possible only because Asian and African elites happily and hungrily grabbed and still grab the substantial material rewards, ignoring the plights of their own people. Today, Asian countries, no less so than western seem to champion situational morality in geopolitical decisions.

It’s not all bad. The United Nations can be and often is ridiculous and biased. It also remains the most comprehensive venue for weighing and negotiating that rules based order and reaction to their violation; though is frequently falls short of the mark. With all the above noted violations and cynicism in applying international rules, they are observed more than ignored, just as the worst crime waves obscure the fact that laws are observed far more than broken.

- 3) *India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?*

Partly, although India has strategic interests here that exist apart from China. Russia is a declining power and India is an ascending one; and the South Asian giant has to navigate the changing nature of their ties to the former superpower. I do agree that India cannot afford to take its eyes off China regarding any geopolitical venture; and I do not think it does. But China has been somewhat cagey with its positions during the Russia-Ukraine. At first, it advanced public displays of support for Russia, most notably when the leaders of the two countries stood together at the Beijing Olympics in February 2022 just before Russia invaded Ukraine. Credible reports suggest that Chinese President Xi Jinping asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to hold off the operation until after the Olympics. China’s role in that regard is not unlike Germany’s just before World War I, when it gave tacit approval to the Austro-Hungarian Empire for its attack on Serbia. Of course, the two varied significantly after that when Germany became a combatant.

China’s stances and more nuanced than they might appear. Perhaps its most consistent message has been that the West, and particularly the United States, is as much to blame for the conflict as Russia. It often attributes US culpability to its “unfair” treatment of Russia since the end of the Cold War. But it hardly matters what pretext China uses, since the goal (as I noted in answer to the first question) is to degrade US hegemony. Nevertheless, it distanced itself from Russia and its war atrocities in the Ukraine and in March offered to broker a truce.

We should not let that make us sanguine about that meaning a change in Chinese policy or international morality. The Chinese economy, which still enables Russia to fund its war (now Russia’s top export destination and its only large source of international funds), is dependent on the goodwill of western consumers. If China is seen as a partner in war crimes, it could have a disastrous effect on it, as well as China’s strategic plans via its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), which also depends on trade with the West. (India already has taken a big step in that arena by forcing China to ditch its Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor from BRI.) Given China’s shifting stance

and severe economic dependence on western trade, my advice to India would be to keep its gaze fixed on its own geopolitical and economic interests and make sure to assess any moves by China within that context. It makes a lot more sense than trying to parse the motives for China's frequent changes—let alone anticipate them. That's also good advice for India to follow in its relationship with the West.

- 4) *The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:*

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

What's wrong with ducking hard choices? Why force yourself to disadvantage your people if you can wait and see if new information makes choice clearly better than the other? Sometimes not making a choice gives you added leverage for when you do. For example, quite a few Afghans fled to India both before and after the US withdrawal/Taliban takeover. They are people who worked for the US government during its time there and have proven not to be security threats but rather hard working people. Many are stranded there while the bureaucratic machinery of granting them Special Immigration Visas grinds on slowly. Might India offer the US its services to accept them in India, where at least they will be safe, while that process moves ahead? It can be for a temporary stay until the process is complete, or permanent immigration to India, once they prove themselves to be productive citizens. The specifics can change and be arranged through a process of negotiation; but the idea holds in any of those variations. That would help the US in many ways—from lowering the level of US embarrassment to keeping former US charges safe. What could India demand in exchange for it? Or what if India made certain (significant) emissions commitments. Most Americans understand that while we have to take climate change seriously and do what we have to do in that regard; a real solution to climate change must recognize global, especially Indian and Chinese contributes to greenhouses gases. India, however, cannot shut off its energy flow and thereby retard or even thwart its movement to full development. Another situation in which Indian leverage is high. And how can India help the United States have a strong presence in the area now that they've left it. Again, India is the best chance to gain control of rare earth metals and other resources. As with the others, the question is how India can leverage its "strategic autonomy" to be a geopolitical leader. Perhaps India can leverage other countries to recognize and use their leverage take action in defense of persecuted Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

There is a much broader principle at stake in India's strategic autonomy. In a discussion several years ago in Washington, one powerful US leader asked me what we can do vis-à-vis India. My response was simple: "The first thing we have to do is stop treating India like a pet." India is one of the most consequential nations on the planet, and its significance only will grow. Certainly, other nations must recognize India as such, however, India itself must act in its foreign policy like a consequential

nation. Too often, Indian leaders have not, looking rather for approval from the West, in particular. Strategic autonomy means that era is over, and India *never* will achieve its rightful place in the panoply of nations until that ends.

This is an historic moment for India to make that jump. It has an assertive Prime Minister and ruling party, and one of the two salient elements of the Modi waves is asserting India's role in the world. India also has been hewing its own course, based on its interests (such as energy and its historical ties with Russia). Can it be the mediator that helps end this bitter war? In any event, it must signal the rest of the world clearly that it will do what is best for its people, not what any other nation wants it to do, and leverage its importance in exchange for any requested actions. Maximize what it does in, to use the words of an earlier question, the best interests of its people, and get as much as it can for them.

- 5) *At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?*

Undoubtedly. It is difficult to read the statements issued by the QUAD, compare them to bi-lateral communiques from the Japan and Australia with the United States, and not appreciate India's importance, especially as they reflect varying positions on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

- US-Australia: "President Biden reaffirmed his steadfast support for the US-Australia alliance and commitment to strengthening it further. He commended Australia's strong support for Ukraine since Russia's invasion, and the leaders agreed on the importance of continued solidarity, including to ensure that no such event is ever repeated in the Indo-Pacific."ⁱⁱⁱ
- US-Japan: "As global partners, Japan and the United States affirm that the rules-based international order is indivisible; threats to international law and the free and fair economic order anywhere constitute a challenge to our values and interests everywhere. Prime Minister Kishida and President Biden shared the view that the greatest immediate challenge to this order is Russia's brutal, unprovoked, and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. The two leaders condemned Russia's actions, and called for Russia to be held accountable for its atrocities. They reaffirmed their support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Prime Minister and the President underscored the importance of the international community's unity, and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people in responding to Russia's aggression through sanctions, including financial sanctions, export controls, and other steps, taken with like-minded countries to impose long-lasting economic costs on Russia."^{iv}
- US-India: "President Biden met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India today in Tokyo to reaffirm their commitment to work together for a more prosperous, free, connected, and secure world.... President Biden condemned Russia's unjustifiable war against Ukraine. The leaders' committed to continue providing

humanitarian assistance, and discussed how to cooperate to manage disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine, in particular the rise in energy and food prices, to protect their respective citizens and the world.”^v

And that was it about Ukraine in the US-India readout. The joint US-India statement reflects the US-India differences in their approaches to the Russia-Ukraine war by stating explicitly that “*President Biden* condemned Russia’s” Ukraine war, not both leaders; which makes it as important for what it did not say as what it did. Specifically, Prime Minister Modi declined to join President Biden’s condemnation. In the published remarks of the two leaders before their bi-lateral meeting, Biden starts by condemning Russia, Modi ignores it, and it is never raised again.^{vi} This also tells us that even though the remarks and their joint statement went on and on about the strong US-India relationship, India is strong enough to craft a foreign policy that sometimes varies from that of the US (or any other country). This was not always the case in the past. While not anywhere nearly aggressive as the joint US-Japan statement, even the US-Australian communique connects Russia’s Ukraine war to strategic matters in a not so veiled message China. That just does not happen in the US-India statement. Rather, it pivots immediately to how committed both nations are to “humanitarian assistance,” which is neutral and needed regardless of what caused the need.

The length of the three communiques is also significant. Australia’s and Japan’s are 135 and 117 words respectively, while India’s is more than four times longer than the larger and almost five times larger than the smaller; unlike the others, replete with bullet points and the announcement of new joint initiatives. These disparities do not occur accidentally or without significance. Not only that, all of the communiques were announced through the White House, further giving observers another indication that the US acknowledges India’s strength and new global profile.

So what does the QUAD statement say about Ukraine. It mentions Ukraine twice, once each in the third and fourth paragraphs.

- “With the COVID-19 pandemic still inflicting human and economic pain around the world, tendencies for unilateral actions among states and a tragic conflict raging in Ukraine, we are steadfast. We strongly support the principles of freedom, rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes without resorting to threat or use of force, any unilateral attempt to change the status quo, and freedom of navigation and overflight, all of which are essential to the peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and to the world. We will continue to act decisively together to advance these principles in the region and beyond. We reaffirm our resolve to uphold the international rules-based order where countries are free from all forms of military, economic and political coercion.”^{vii}

It merely acknowledges that the “conflict” (i.e. not war or invasion); nor does it include disparaging modifiers such as “unjustified” (Biden) or “brutal” (Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida). It is clear that the Indian Prime Minister would not have concurred with such language, and the other powers demurred in deference to India. It then talks about general principles that readers can connect to the Ukraine conflict or not.

- “We discussed our respective responses to the conflict in Ukraine and the ongoing tragic humanitarian crisis, and assessed its implications for the Indo-Pacific. Quad Leaders reiterated our strong resolve to maintain the peace and stability in the region. We underscored unequivocally that the centerpiece of the international order is international law, including the UN Charter, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. We also emphasized that all countries must seek peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.”^{viii}

The second and final paragraph that deals with Ukraine also spoke of general principles governing international relations and only implicitly tied them to the conflict. Russia was not even mentioned in the entire communique. That is far more in keeping with India’s statement, in which Russia is mentioned only once and even then disassociated with India. Compare that to the multiple, negative mentions of Russia by Australia and Japan.

The Quad essentially went into hibernation in 2008 at the time of the great economic collapse, and it is no coincidence that it was revived in the final two years of Modi’s first term in office. By then, the world came to recognize India’s new assertiveness and realize its economic and geopolitical importance. What happens next is in India’s hands. There is no doubt of its importance to the United States: as a bulwark against Chinese expansion in Asia; a proxy to maintain joint interests (as well as its own) in the region; and as an economic partner with the United States, as suggested by the initiatives mentioned in the joint statement. India can continue to assert that economic and geopolitical power, even when it means taking an independent course at variance or even in conflict with that of the United States; or it can revert to prior eras, before the current regime and the demands of the Indian people that carried it into power, when its western allies treated India as a pet and India looked to the western Europe for guidance and permission for its direction.

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11) Dr Andrey Volodin

1. **"Foreign policy is not about virtue- signaling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?**

Basically, the question seems to be rhetorical. Every country is acting in its own national interests. In principle, India is vitally interested in the polycentric world order to materialize. That is number one. Indian foreign policy establishment is in complete understanding that the war is going on not between Russia and the Ukraine (territory, not nation-state, and has never been before) but between Russia and the so-called "collective West" headed by the USA. Then, the question arises: why India should take a definite side in the conflict? Why New Delhi should abstain from the "dreary business" of diplomacy? That is number two. The United States, according to this country's behavioral logic, is focused on the "containment" of China. "Containment" of China and the "untimely Ukrainian crisis" are two different issues. Why India is expected to take a stance other than regulating this conflict by means "amicable" to diplomacy? Neutrality is a powerful force to be put into operation when the belligerent parties are in need of assistance from outside. And that is number three. India is *de-facto* a world power (along with Russia, China, America and Brazil). The crisis in and around the Ukraine has demonstrated this fact convincingly. Why the world power should accept others' motivations when dealing with any issue of global and regional politics thus dismissing its own long-term interests? That is number four, a final consideration.

2. **India's External Affairs minister S.Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade. "When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we are not giving you that advice", he said. Do you agree?**

I totally agree. The External Affairs minister's remarks are a mere statement of fact. Let me elaborate this argument a little bit further. Western Europe has ceased to be an independent actor ("subject", to put it academically) in world affairs. Reasons are plenty. Development potential of this area is exhausted in principle. Such a state of national economies is aggravated by the multiple migration crises, "the great migration crisis" of 2015-2016 in particular. "Demographic dividend" cannot be found just around the corner. The "new arrivals", the former socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe, are heavily donated economies. Western Europe is an area of extreme shortage of minerals necessary for economic growth and development. This shortage was accentuated by the "sanctions from hell" adopted by the European Union against Russia. The European Union is doomed to think in terms of its "domestic" issues while India will take care of itself. The present leadership of the "collective West" is very weak, and this is an open secret for the outside world. So, the

reconfiguration of the global order is in full swing. This trend is fully understood in New Delhi.

3. India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle”. Do you agree?

I agree, although with certain reservations. It goes without saying that India is uneasy about China’s rapid economic growth transforming into “excessive” geopolitical activity. Nonetheless, if we accept this argument, a number of counter-trends are to be taken as vivid. One: China is devoting a lot of its effort to “repel” America’s interventionist initiatives aimed at preserving its exceptional role in the Asia Pacific (or Indo Pacific, to emulate the Indian social science discourse). This factor is, cynically speaking, is India’s evident “asset”. Also, two: Russia is a force to balance China, and this is an opportune “moment” of India’s foreign policy. Last but not least, three: the broadening transcontinental scope of the BRICS platform is an obvious advantage for India. To my humble mind, the role of “China factor” is exaggerated by our Indian friends and colleagues. The Soviet Union had experienced a protracted period of strife in our bilateral relations with China, and we are still alive. Finally, India is knowledgeable that in case of need Russia will come to rescue.

4. The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war has put India’s approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight: what New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, India’s hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it’s worth?

I disagree entirely. As an already recognized “civilizational state”, India is doing its best to contribute its energy to the creation of peaceful and exposed- to- compromise model of the coming world order. The problem is not with India, Russia, China, Brazil, etc., but with the United States and its “allies” suffering from systemic ailments but doing their best to defend the obsolete *Pax Americana*. Strategic autonomy, in my view, is the only reliable behavioral pattern in the global order of the nearest future.

5. At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China’s rise in the Indo Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD summit (24 May 2022) indicate growing strength?

At the risk of being discourteous, I would dare to suggest that the question is more about the past than about the present and future. The Ukraine crisis, engineered by the incumbent administration of the United States, has dramatically expanded the scope of actions for India and for other influential actors of the emerging world order. It is entirely up to India how to deal with QUAD and how to promote its interest within other formats and platforms. Since the beginning of this crisis, the role of India has dramatically increased. My understanding goes as far as to anticipate the “dissolution” of India-China controversies in the complexity of the coming polycentric world order.

12) Prof. B. ALAM

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

Comments : Conduct of foreign policy and decision making do not operate on morality lines, rather it is operationalised along realpolitik and along Machiavellian principles of pragmatism and national interests.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice,” he said. Do you agree?

Comments : EAM S. Jaishankar is absolutely right in emphasising India's prerogative in choosing and charting its strategic options, be it on Ukraine, Afghanistan or any other trouble spots around the world.

3)India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

Comments: China figures prominently in the India's overall foreign policy calculus and in harnessing and exploring window of opportunity wherever it exists.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it's worth?

Comments:,India has taken a deliberate and correct stand based on rational foreign policy decision making and one that is rooted in maximising spheres of influence globally with particular emphasis in the Indo-Pacific theatre.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

Comments : QUAD is a good beginning to usher in liberal international order in the Indo-Pacific. However, there is a need for developing long term perspectives along with targeted goals and objectives.

13) Pooran Chandra Pandey

Fellow, Center for Media, Data and Society, Central European University Democracy Institute, Budapest/ Brussels

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

Foreign policy in times of extreme events and geopolitical uncertainties of the day appears to be increasingly getting played out by a new rule book which is quick fix, and abundantly obviously tilted in favour of national interests at the expense of values, multilateralism, and seemingly compromised in ways that foreign policy pursuits in the past were followed- a deterioration of sorts. The overall conduct of foreign policy matters overtime has undergone qualitative and quantitative changes amply reflected in nations’ behaviour and nuanced approaches. Problem of our times difficult to be bucketed as standalone is real and visible. For instance, it’s now increasingly difficult to decouple economic issues from social, geopolitics and climate and this interconnected poses obvious challenges leaving conductors of the foreign policy with no or a little redeeming value. Aftermath of Covid-19 is an apparent case in point.

A latest case in point has been European and Western powers heaping blame on India for its continuing partnership and normal bilateral and diplomatic ties with Russia. Knowing well that despite coordinated economic sanctions imposed against Russia by European and Western powers led by US have not been able to fully decouple them from Russian fossil fuel and then the same nations ask India to stop buying oil from Russia reflects a contradictory approach on their part. It is clear that in the changing world, Europe’s and West’s problems no longer remain world’s problems and it is fair to say that every sovereign country would like to maintain strategic autonomy keeping in view variables of foreign policy decision making processes while protecting guarded national interests.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia’s actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we’re not giving you that advice,” he said. Do you agree?

Yes, I tend to agree with overarching statement.

The sequence of events that panned out caused by abrupt and chaotic pull out by NATO forces from Afghan soil posed a catastrophic socio-economic, security and political situation the world to watch helplessly, that could have been avoided by all means available. Preceding this was India- China near eye ball to eye ball military confrontation on LOC that almost came dangerously close to a war like situation. While West, Europe and US know it well that Asia will offer them a big market for next decades estimated to total up to USD 35 trillion (with India and China contributing USD 27 trillion, together),

their approach to the region does not yet appear to have matured beyond rhetoric and some announcements of intent. Demonstration of real engagement on ground is what is hoped for in order for them to restore trust deficit caused due to Afghan situation, in particular. Absence of scalable on ground actions and unwavering foreign policy measures to match would only further widen the wedge and pose layers of security challenges to the West, Europe and the US.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

India’s diplomatic instance on Russia-Ukraine has been consistent and clear since the onset of the war between the two parties. India has all along advocated for peace, security, importance of direct dialogue and engagement between the two warring nations, due place for diplomacy to succeed and offer of its support to find a negotiated settlement to the problem. India is, at the same time, seized of its deep, strategic and historical relations and partnerships with Russia with a number of layered arrangements ranging from defence equipment purchase to joint military exercises to energy purchases to promotion of art and culture and proven trust between the two nations. India therefore can’t and essentially would not like to sacrifice such a deep rooted engagement with Russia at the altar of ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine by taking sides. India also does not have much control on the complexity of situation, given the involvement of Europe, US, the West and NATO. In addition, Russia has been a trusted behind-the-scene player offering its good offices both to China and India to help them avoid any large scale escalation in military operations along LOC, jeopardizing regional peace and international security, notwithstanding Sino-Russian relations. India’s stance on Russia-Ukraine war does entail China factor, directly and / or indirectly and can’t be overstated.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India’s approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India’s hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it’s worth?

Strategic autonomy and its application in conduct of international relations has evolved and matured over time and nations are seen to be successfully leveraging it in conduct of their foreign policy affairs. Going further, sovereign nations also tend to combine their soft power attributes with notion of strategic autonomy to escalate their diplomatic response. Therefore, it is considered well ordained that nations follow through their independence based on differentials of issues and circumstances and avoid being seen in ally ship with other nations while keeping their options to align open. Such an arrangement is seen to be part of diplomatic ambiguity and works well with exceptions. For instance, while India has stayed away from being called an ally of US, but at the same time, it is an integral part of QUAD as a coalition of willing with Japan, US and Australia,

expanding horizons of multilateral partnerships in dealing with a larger problem that no one country would potentially be able to tackle alone. Diplomacy is about widening options while not falling through the cliff without reasonable cushion underneath. India has played its options well and a nuanced 'strategic autonomy' charter as a part of its foreign policy doctrine would potentially help country advance its interests and play a greater role on the world stage.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May, 2022) indicate growing strength?

One thing that seems to be clear beyond shades of doubt is that there is a bipartisan consensus in US and a comprehensive EU policy on China about it being a threat to international peace and security, given an overwhelming pattern in China's actions. EU policy no longer recognises China leading Asia in future, the block rather sees Asia as a 'multipolar' region with powers such as India and Japan playing an equally important role. Recent NATO strategic meeting held in Madrid has named China an adversary articulating the need to be watchful of its actions, going forward. Issue of Taiwan in particular and decisions taken during recently concluded in person QUAD Summit in Tokyo further puts the onus of responsibility and burden of proof on China in no uncertain terms. In this context, there has been no change in stance of democracies on China and consequently no change in strategic frame of reference of the West, Europe and the US towards it. Recent overtures towards China have rather hardened instead and taken a more definitive shape with NATO's recent strategic security document reading a riot act for China and NATO potential role in Indo-Pacific. Eventually, as the trend suggests, future points towards aggregation of democracies through unshakable partnership routes in putting out iron circuits against authoritarian and autocratic regimes. The winner of the game would determine a great deal the contour and trajectory of the international order in the making and course of democracy and its values.

14) Commodore RS Vasan IN (Retd)

FPRC Journal (J-50)

Focus: UKRAINE CRISIS: Indian Perspective

QUESTIONNAIRE

1)"Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

There can be no doubts that there was application of double standards while singling out India for not condemning Russia. The historical reasons for the Ukraine crisis notwithstanding, India has made it clear that it continues to demand for cessation of the long

drawn out war that has caused loss and destruction on both sides. Then Soviet Union and now Russia have remained strong strategic partners and have flourished together. The heavy dependence on Russia up to nearly 60 percent for our military hardware in the face of stand off with China along the LAC for the last two years is not the only reason for not joining the chorus, but also the long term need to serve specified national interests. As the unfolding events have demonstrated, Russia has been meeting the energy needs of India with the volatile fluctuation of oil and gas prices due to the sanctions. The unambiguous stand related to sanctions is to ensure that India is not left high and dry with the western narrative.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

"When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said.

Do you agree?

There can be no difference amongst the discerning analysts in endorsing the approach adopted by the Government of India and the EAM who was critical of the double standards of the west. The EAM of India has been candid during various interviews with western news reporters in bringing out the double standards which continues to be driven by motives of profit and arms sales. This indeed has been a refreshing approach in pointing out the fault lines in the thinking of the west which appears interested only in its own survival and prosperity. While the west wanted India to stop importing energy products from Russia, it had no qualms in importing gas from Russia to serve the energy needs which will only grow manifold with the onset of winter.

The selective application of rule based order has lost its meaning and stands exposed. It can not be that the rule based order is so defined and applied only to suit one set of countries. The GoI needs to be complemented for exposing the manipulations and the double talk of the west which has no time for dealing with the emergent situations in Asia. The situation today in Sri Lanka is a standing example of how the west hardly cares for the crisis in Asia.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

Not entirely, though there is a definite China angle when it comes to dependence on military hardware from Russia. With the two year old stand off with troops along the LAC deployed eye to eye, India needs cutting edge technology both from the West and from Russia to stave off any danger to our territory by aggression. The Atmanirbarata has a long gestation period and we need at least a decade plus to stand on our own. While this is the military dimension, the other issues that compel India to abstain from condemning Russia are related to energy security, trade and also the long standing strategic and historical partnership with Russia. The Russia India China (RIC) triangle is also a vital one in terms of using Russia to work on the alternatives if and when required. So it is prudent for India to be part of both the RIC and also the USA, Japan and India trilateral.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

This definitely is being debated not just in India but also in strategic circles around the world. Time and again, India has clarified that it would align with its own long term interests and not necessarily with country A or alliance B. With the prolonged war between Russia and Ukraine, there are legitimate questions on how long can India abstain from condemning the aggression. If the war had terminated as per expectation within the first few weeks, there is a view that India's stand would have been vindicated. With the prolonged war, and with each passing day, this stand is being increasingly put to test. It will take all of India's diplomatic acumen to do the balancing act should the war go on endlessly with serious global impact. However, the decisions even if perceived to be incorrect by some observers will always be driven by the long term interests of India in a ever changing global power dynamics. With India finding alternate ways to meet its energy requirements through Russia by innovative financial instruments, the harsh reality is that India will find it difficult to change its stand vis-a-vis Russia.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

As has been clarified by the partner nations, QUAD is not a military alliance but is examining and adopting other areas of cooperation which will forge stronger relations and provide options. The statements during the QUAD summit in Tokyo made on 24th May makes it clear that cooperation and collective action is the focus in areas such as Indo Pacific Economic Forum, STEM(Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) cooperation, funding and exchange of students at the university level, vaccine diplomacy, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief and many other areas. These initiatives will allow the democratic nations to optimize their strengths and synergise their efforts for mutual benefit.

The formation of AUKUS has made it clear that India need not be a part of any military alliance and can leave it to the partners of AUKUS to work on the military options to contain China in the Pacific. In a way it relieves India of any obligation to be part of a military alliance. India has never shown any inclination to be part of a military alliance and thus it is a win win for India's engagement with the Pacific nations including ASEAN.

What is important to understand is that not being a military alliance, QUAD provides alternatives and options for India to engage in the areas of interest using this reinvigorated platform. The earmarking of some 10 billion USD by USA is indicative of the willingness of still the number one economy to put money where mouth is. India stands to benefit from the expanding scope of QUAD and has nothing to lose. The unstated objective is also to counter the dominance of China in the area and the strong words used by China to criticize the QUAD and the IPEF are a result of its own concerns on the challenges that it would face from the combined might of the four countries. It is therefore in the long term interests of India to use the platform to derive substantial benefit from the emerging nature of partnership with like minded nations. The fact that many nations in the region would like to decouple from China to the extent possible is another factor that favours India's Act East policy.

15) Dr. Daniel Markey

Senior Advisor for South Asia, United States Institute of Peace

Answers to FPRC Questionnaire, 7/15/2022

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

This quote from Ramesh Thakur is simultaneously true and, in important ways, misses the point. When it comes to Ukraine, neither the United States nor its allies that oppose Russian aggression are engaged in mere “virtue signalling.” Their votes at the United Nations and public statements are broader signals of intent. They are simultaneously engaged in policies designed to punish Moscow for naked aggression against Ukraine—through arms transfers, sanctions, and other means—to reduce the chances that Russia achieves its strategic aims and to deter similar actions in the future. States like India that have not signalled their intentions are also less likely to follow through with these other sorts of policies.

If India is being “singled out” for not condemning Russia, it is because New Delhi has often claimed to be a defender of the basic rules of the post-war international order, including sovereignty norms, and is a self-described democracy like Ukraine. As Thakur observes (correctly) in the subsequent sentence of his essay, “Every country’s policy is based on a mix of geopolitical and economic calculations (realism) and core values and principles (idealism).” Everyone knows that even states with idealistic commitments adhere to them imperfectly, at best. Yet only states that profess commitments to idealism—and in this case, to a world order founded on certain liberal principles—would even bother to care about being criticized for hypocrisy.

Members of a liberal world order share an expectation that fellow states will pay some costs for violating rules, not that liberal states will never break rules in the first place. India would not be unique—nor even unusual—for breaking principled commitments in order to advance other interests, but neither should it be surprised by outside criticism. Indeed, the more India attempts to silence criticism as illegitimate rather than to accept it as the natural cost of balancing ideals and interests, the less other states will take its principled commitments seriously.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we’re not giving you that advice,” he said.

Do you agree?

India is more than justified for its criticism of how the United States and other western powers withdrew from Afghanistan. Similarly, it is true that many in the West have been inadequately concerned about longstanding challenges to the rules-based order in Asia (by China). The trouble with these comments by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is that he levels his critiques as a pure debating ploy—to cast every state as equally dismissive of the rules-based order and, by extension, to suggest that the order is not worth defending.

Western powers, including the United States, could be excused for viewing such comments as counterproductive and meant mainly for domestic political purposes. In private, I expect Indian officials, perhaps including S Jaishankar, are far more likely to point out their strategic constraints—including their reliance on Russian-made arms and desire not to see a tightening of the China-Russia axis—and to seek practical means to advance shared interests with the West without entirely rejecting the value of a rules-based international order.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

India’s defense and diplomatic ties to Russia do relate very directly to India’s sense of insecurity with respect to China. Of course, India’s Russian-made tanks, jets, and other arms are also vital to its defense against Pakistan, and Russia’s role as an independent (often anti-Western) power in the international system has in some ways created space for New Delhi’s pursuit of a foreign policy characterized by “strategic autonomy.” Russia has encouraged India’s membership in new multilateral groups, such as the SCO and BRICS, that include China as well. Thus, not everything in the Indian calculus on Russia has a China angle, even if that is an important motivation for aspects of Indian policy.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India’s approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India’s hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it’s worth?

The strategy of “strategic autonomy” has reflected New Delhi’s expectation of a global order characterized by multipolarity and shifting, interest-based relations among the world’s major powers. In that context, India could pick and choose among partners to secure favorable arrangements and avoid costly commitments. Over most of the past two decades, during a period when India’s own power was growing but continued to lag behind its competition on all other counts (military, economic, etc.), New Delhi had the luxury of not just “ducking hard choices,” but of selecting from the widest possible range of advantageous opportunities.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was not the first major event to crimp India’s options. Until 2020, New Delhi actively explored a variety of economic and diplomatic initiatives with Beijing even as it pursued closer relations with the United States and Europe. But after the violent Sino-Indian border clashes that summer, relations between India and China have been “abnormal,” and their cooperation constrained.

Now Russia’s war makes India’s task even more difficult. Although New Delhi has continued to maintain ties with both sides, the war appears to be sharpening international alliances, including between China and Russia (in opposition to Europe and the United States). If that new equilibrium holds, it would reduce India’s operating space from a multipolar system to one that more closely resembles a loose bipolar system. In that context, it is hard to imagine that India would do well by continuing to hedge between a weakened, China-dependent Russia and an increasingly unified Western bloc. That said, much remains to be decided about the outcome of Russia’s war in Ukraine, and for the time being, New Delhi appears steadfast in its desire to avoid jumping to quick

conclusions. In the short run, India may even squeeze material benefits from nonalignment (arms and energy deals, for instance) sufficient to offset the added diplomatic pressure it faces to choose sides.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

Having witnessed how prior U.S. efforts to "pivot" or "rebalance" to the Indo-Pacific were derailed by other international commitments (especially in Afghanistan and the Middle East), the Biden administration has taken great care to make sure that Russia's invasion of Ukraine would not lead to a similar outcome. Not only have senior administration officials delivered public articulations of Washington's strategy for the Indo-Pacific and China in recent months, but they have pushed ahead with regional initiatives like the Quad and AUKUS. In addition, the United States has brought its core Asian allies into recent NATO discussions and encouraged its European allies to consider the strategic threat posed by China even as they take significant steps to support Ukraine and to deepen their own defenses against Russia. Overall, at least for now, the war in Ukraine has unified and strengthened U.S. alliances globally rather than coming at a cost to the West's ability to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific.

16) Sanjay Upadhyaya

Sanjay Upadhyaya is a Nepalese journalist, author and analyst based in the United States. He has worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Times of London, Inter Press Service, Khaleej Times and the United Nations. His latest book is *Empowered and Imperiled: Nepal's Peace Puzzle in Bits and Pieces* (Kathmandu: FinePrint Books, 2022).

FPRC Journal(50)

Focus: UKRAINE CRISIS: Indian Perspective

QUESTIONNAIRE

1) "Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

The criticism of India owes much to such factors as its identity as the world's largest democracy and New Delhi's bucking political correctness to pursue its national interest. Furthermore, India's stance punctures some convenient Western-advanced narratives, such as the democracy-autocracy contradiction in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. More broadly, singling out India for not condemning Russia fails to understand and appreciate New Delhi's appraisal of the wider dimensions of the conflict. India does not ignore the hazards accompanying its public neutrality toward Russia. New Delhi recognizes that it risks being associated with the Putin regime rather than to Russia as a nation. India's stance also exposes the inconsistency in its commitment to protecting the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific over that in Europe. More oddly, it puts New Delhi in the company of traditional adversaries

like Beijing and Islamabad. Yet India's core calculus here remains how alienating Russia might undermine its interests.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

"When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said.

Do you agree?

With that statement, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has underlined an important contradiction that helps explain divergences in understanding key tenets of the global order. Moreover, the statement underscores the reality that the basic premises of the rules-based order may no longer be tenable in view of the shifting global power dynamics. The fallout from the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan has forced the region to pick up the pieces. There is no doubt that Russian aggression is the proximate cause of the Ukraine crisis. However, Moscow's brazenness does not mean the West can afford to mismanage its response with equal defiance. Those cautioning against moral equivalence here must confront this reality: The West cannot expect the rest to pick up the pieces resulting from any Western bungling in Ukraine. A viable rules-based order can no longer be premised on the preferences and predilections of a few.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

That assertion is correct to the extent that China has come to define key elements in the general Indian strategic calculus. India's public neutrality toward the Russian invasion is driven significantly by its concerns regarding China and Pakistan, which New Delhi regards as immediate and enduring threats. By maintaining its traditional friendship with Moscow, New Delhi hopes to discourage deeper Russian relations with China and to check Moscow's drive to construct new strategic ties with Pakistan. Matters inevitably come down to New Delhi's understanding and advancement of its national interest.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

In an age of expedient definitions, it becomes harder to pursue issue-based approaches. As a counterweight to the moral absolutism that sometimes tends to grip international affairs, 'strategic autonomy' may be equally guilty of representing a self-serving camouflage. Yet, the value of strategic autonomy outweighs its cost. A universalist posture is validated neither by India's historical experiences nor its perception of current challenges.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May 2022) indicate growing strength?

The Quad still conveys a palpable level of creative ambiguity in which participants and others can attribute and extract whatever they wish from the grouping. Implicit in 'managing' China's rise is a risk of mismanagement and its consequences. Furthermore, when certain dimensions of China's rise are less urgent to be 'managed' than others, a reevaluation is bound to set in. The 24 May summit has certainly solidified commitments that would strengthen the structure and purpose of the Quad. However, given the diversity of values, attitudes, needs and expectations among its participants, the Quad would need to go beyond rhetoric and resolve to craft resilience in both ardor and action.

17) **Dr. K.B.Usha-JNU, New Delhi**

FPRC Journal (J-50)

Focus: **UKRAINE CRISIS: Indian Perspective**

1) "Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

Answer: The US-led west's selective targeting of India has several reasons. India is a country that has demonstrated the economic, strategic and cultural strength to emerge as a global power. Despite strong pressures and warnings from the west, India has strongly upheld her strategic autonomy in foreign policy without bending to western pressure tactics. India has shown that it is well within its right of the country to take positions on global issues and to pursue an independent foreign policy based on India's core national interests and pragmatic goals.

From a strategic point of view, it is clear that the west failed to use India as a counterweight against China in the Indo-Pacific, thinking to take advantage of the occasional unsettled border issues between the two countries. India is engaged in multiple platforms like the Russia-India-China trilateral, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, etc. to address issues with China. However, it should be noted that India is part of the Quad initiative (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) led by the US, though this step is disliked by Russia and China.

The US-led west expected that India will support their narrative of Russian aggression against the "free world" and NATO expansion to Russia's borders as India has the credentials of being the world's largest democracy. Indians largely see the Russia-Ukraine war as a proxy war of the US-led West against Russia in Europe, not a global war. India needed help from both Russia and Ukraine to evacuate Indian citizens, mostly students scattered in the war zone. Protecting Indian citizens was a priority principle of foreign policy at that difficult time. India does not ignore the global consequences if the war escalates and is prolonged without a solution. Therefore, India calls for a diplomatic/political solution to the ongoing military conflict at the earliest. Promoting world peace is one of the core principles of Indian foreign policy. India,

along with 57 other countries of the Indian Ocean Commission, abstained in the UN General Assembly on the resolution which sought to condemn Russia.

India is among the few countries which have good relations with both Russia and the US/west. In today's context, the cooperation of both is needed to solve many global and regional issues. Therefore, it is not in the interest of India to take sides. Given the geopolitically significant location, non-alignment/neutrality is the only option left for India. On the economic front, India is a big market for western products and a big trade partner. The West cannot keep India away easily.

2) India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade. "When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said. Do you agree?

Answer: Yes. It could be seen as an appropriate response from the Indian Foreign Minister about the double standards Europe and the west have shown to countries and problems in Asia and other developing regions. The racial and orientalist elements of the "Us" and "them" identity dichotomy and "superior" vs "inferior" treatment were also reflected in the Western approach to Ukraine and Afghanistan. When the west faces challenges and threats they take it as a global problem that the whole world should fight to save the west. When it comes to problems in the Global South, the west does not show that serious approach. Ukraine is the crisis in Europe (occidental) and Afghanistan in Asia (oriental). Now all attention of the US and the west is on Ukraine and the West forgets that Global South is also facing multiple crises which need urgent attention and solution. The Indian Foreign Minister reminds Europe that India should be treated with values of equality, freedom, dignity and mutual respect, not with pressure and intimidation tactics like a junior partner obedient to western orders.

It is true that the "rules-based order", i.e., the unipolar world order the US-led west constructed after the Soviet disintegration, was not only unfair but also detrimental to a large majority of humanity, mostly in developing countries. In this context, India upholds the values of international law, UN charter, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Indian Foreign Minister was alerting the west about the need to consider equally the interests of all regions in the global society.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

Answer: Such an opinion, especially concerning diplomacy, that everything has a "Chinese angle" has been voiced in India. Indian diplomacy to Europe has a Chinese angle to take advantage of a strain in EU-China relations over the Ukraine crisis. India's refusal to condemn Russia's special military operation in Ukraine is not confined to the China factor alone. It has many other reasons also rooted in history. It should be noted history saw that the Indo-Russian friendship withstood all weathers.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

Answer: If India can be viewed as the only country uniquely positioned geographically in two regions: Eurasia and Indo-Pacific, India has the potential to play a balancing role to deal with the emerging challenges in both regions. Towards this end, given the context of a global systemic transition to multipolarity, India has been left with the sole option of a neutral approach and cultivating cooperation with the East, West and other regions. India has good trade relations with China, Europe, America and other regions. However, the emerging Chinese hegemony could be a big challenge to India in Asia, especially in South Asia and Indo-Pacific region. India needs both Russia and the US-led West to balance China in the region.

India has good relations with Europe. However, in India the memory of 200 years of European colonization, brutal rule and exploitation cannot be erased from memory. At present, the future of Europe itself is uncertain. Europe failed to show geopolitical autonomy in dealing with global problems, but remain subservient to the US and obey their order. India also has the memory of how the US treated her during the Bangladesh war in 1971 (the Soviet Union thwarted the US attempt to intervene), the US support to Afghan rebels who were involved in terrorist activities on India's Kashmir border and the failure of NATO in Afghanistan despite twenty years of occupation.

It gives India adequate leverage to play a balancing role, build cordial relations with countries in the respective regions and promote peace in the changing geopolitical context. The uncertainty about the future of Europe, the possibility of Chinese hegemony and the US-China superpower rivalry justify India's strategic autonomy and the possibility of pursuing new non-alignment jointly with Russia.

India's relationship with Russia is deeply rooted in history, civilizational values and mutuality of interests. No conflict of interest exists between India and Russia due to their relationship being qualified as time-tested, all-weather, etc. The "special and privileged" nature of the partnership gives an opportunity for India and Russia to emerge as a third pole in the global systemic transition to multipolarity, which Sanjay Baru calls a bi-multipolar intermediary phase and represents a new Non-Aligned Movement. As the geopolitical analyst Andrew Korybko noted, "The Putin-Modi Summit in 2021 was a global geostrategic game-changer unlocking the potential for the two great powers to jointly assemble a new Non-Aligned Movement ("Neo-NAM")." India and Russia can maximise their strategic autonomy to emerge as a balancing third pole through coordinated efforts of their Greater Eurasian Partnership and Indo-Pacific strategies.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May, 2022) indicate growing strength?

Answer: The agreements arrived at the fourth QUAD summit on 24 May 2022 indicate the growing strength of the quadrilateral security dialogue groupings of the US, Japan, India and Australia in addressing the challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. Although India has a different

position on the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the joint statement focused on peace, cooperation and stability in the Indo-Pacific region as major concerns. Chinese aggression is less mentioned in the joint statement. It upholds, rule of law, sovereignty, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of conflicts, etc. and opposes coercive, provocative and unilateral actions threatening peace and stability in the region. The launch of certain new initiatives at the summit such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) for furthering growth and stability in the Indo-Pacific region has also the aim to counter Chinese aggression.

However, addressing Chinese aggression and the Ukraine-Russia conflict in Europe remains challenging tasks for the grouping on their path “to work for a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region”.

18) Dr. Raj Verma

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1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

The quotation bears resonance to the realist school of thought in international relations. It is true that nations act to maximise their self-interest but morality also plays an important role in foreign policy. India’s decision to not publicly condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine highlights pragmatic realism in India’s foreign policy. If morality had no role in foreign policy, then India should not have condemned the war crimes in Bucha.

India is not being singled out. But expectations in the West especially the US is that India is a democratic, rule based and status quo country and India should condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Why India should not condemn the actions of an autocratic, illiberal and a revanchist power such as Russia is difficult for people and policy makers in the West especially the US to fathom. The US believes the India-US relations are not only based on interests but also on core values of democracy, rule of law, human rights etc.

India is a sovereignty hawk and follows the UN charter. But India’s actions (not publicly condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine) also highlight its sovereignty paradox especially in the context of India-China standoff in Eastern Ladakh since May 2020. Statements by the Ministry of External Affairs, India highlights this point.

2) India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia’s actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade.

“When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we’re not giving you that advice,” he said. Do you agree?

Afghanistan and Russian invasion of Ukraine are not linked. The two events/cases are different.

Regarding the rules based order being challenged in Asia by China, there was a belief in the West especially the US that China’s behaviour could be changed, it could become a responsible actor and a status quo power in the international system. Liberal policies including trade were used as an instrument to integrate China into the international system. However, the West has been unable to change China’s behaviour. On the contrary, as China accumulated more economic power and concomitant political and diplomatic power and substantially increased military expenditure, there is a realisation in the US and the EU that China is a strategic rival. The US believes that China is the biggest threat to the rules based liberal international order and is taking measures to contain China or curtail its rise. Economic decoupling from China is a step in that direction but it is difficult to fully decouple economically from China.

AUKUS and Quad are also attempts by the US to contain China. An expanded Quad with the UK, France and other countries in Asia and Europe is the next step.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is different. The cases cannot be compared. Russia has invaded Georgia, annexed Crimea, supported rebels in Eastern Ukraine, supported the Assad regime which has used chemical weapons against its own people, interfered in the domestic affairs of countries in Europe and the US including the 2016 presidential elections.

3)India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a “China angle” to it. Do you agree?

China does play an important role but not everything has a China angle. Yes, there are concerns that Russia might stop supplying spare parts and arms and ammunition in case of a conflict in Ladakh. Yes, there are concerns that the Russia-China axis will get stronger to the detriment of India and Beijing might exert pressure on Moscow to stop supplying arms to India. But there are other reasons too. Some think that India will be able to wean away Russia from China but this is wishful thinking.

There are several other reasons for India not condemning the Russian invasion in Ukraine in public. First, India’s foreign policy of strategic autonomy or its new avatar multi-alignment which allows India to tilt toward one country and India does not have to agree with a specific country on each and every aspect. Second, India also needs Russia (and China) to fight against US hegemony and champion a multipolar world order. Third, India-Russia historical relations and the nostalgia of the relations with Russia as the successor state to the Soviet Union. Fourth (related to the third), Russia’s support to India in the UNSC on Kashmir and state sponsored terrorism.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India’s approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight:

What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India’s hewing to “strategic autonomy” more trouble than it’s worth?

It can be argued that strategic autonomy is beneficial and also detrimental for India. It is my opinion that in the coming years, India will have to make hard choices especially with respect to China. India will be forced to take a more forthright position on China. Similarly, as the Russia-China axis is further buttressed after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, India will find it very hard to maintain strategic autonomy and multi-alignment. As it is, there are some fissures in the India-Russia relations with Moscow unhappy with India-US strategic, defense and security ties and views Quad as an attempt to contain China in the Indo-Pacific. These fissures will become pronounced and India will have to strike an exquisite balance in the India-US-Russia-China-Pakistan relations.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

Lot of analysts have stated that China will benefit from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Some have argued that the war will undermine the US status as the most powerful country in the world as it will affect its material power capabilities because Washington is deeply involved in the conflict. Others have argued that with the US embroiled in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, its focus will be diverted away from the Indo-Pacific which will adversely impact the US efforts to contain China in the Indo-Pacific. Some also argue that China will benefit due to strains emerging in the trans-Atlantic alliance.

All the above is far from the truth. The US is deeply committed to containing China globally and especially in the Indo-Pacific and the Quad summit should have reinforced this view. What is important is that some European countries such as the UK and France have also expressed a desire to be part of the Quad leading to a Quad plus. Also important is how the West has framed the Russia-Ukraine war, democracies versus autocracies, and the west has warned China not to come to Russia's aid in any way possible.

But Quad is only one tool/instrument. AUKUS is another. The US still has the hub and spoke alliance system in East Asia.

But Quad needs more institutionalisation, more vision and more teeth. India and ASEAN countries might oppose this now, but this might change in the future.

19) Ramananda Sengupta

FPRC QUESTIONS ON UKRAINE

1. "Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens". Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

That quote in a column by Ramesh Thakur, a former UN assistant secretary-general and currently emeritus professor at the Australian National University and a senior research

fellow at the Toda Peace Institute, a Japanese think tank devoted to sustainable peace, should be taught to every student of foreign policy. (In fact, I strongly recommend the entire column, titled '[Double standards are normal in foreign policy](#)' to any aspiring or practicing foreign policy professional)

At the risk of sounding proud, pompous and perhaps even presumptuous, I can only think of one main reason for the western world wanting India on their side of the fence: it would lend immense global credence to their attack on Russia. But given that India has clearly explained how the time-tested Indo-Russian relationship, a continuation of the Ind0-Soviet relationship, cannot just be wished or washed away, I'm surprised Washington and London even tried to convince New Delhi to re-consider, only to later back down and accept India's position, albeit reluctantly.

But first, let's take a step back to parse the quote. What exactly is 'Virtue signalling?' In a 2015 article in *The Spectator*, British journalist James Bartholomew described it essentially as words aimed at "indicating that you are kind, decent and virtuous." In other words, to proclaim yourself as morally superior, and hence get away with reprehensible acts, usually citing the 'greater good.' This is often done by showing up the opposition as bad, evil and dangerous, as is clearly being done in the case of Russia. And while the phrase has acquired negative connotations, virtue signalling has worked wonders for the west earlier. The fact that no has called former US George W Bush a war criminal for carpet bombing Iraq based on patently false evidence about the country having weapons of mass destruction is just one example of how powerful Virtue Signalling really is.

As for the second part of the quote, no democratic government can survive if it is seen as acting against the interests of its citizens. That does not mean politicians don't put their own interests above that of the people and the country, but it cannot be blatant and obvious. In this case, however, the Indian government has done the right thing by refusing to sacrifice national interests at the altar of hypocritical virtue signalling.

2. **India's External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure on India to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine, by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade. "When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we're not giving you that advice," he said. Do you agree?**

While I am totally in favour of pushing back against any kind of external pressure, it is important to remember that this is not possible without a strong economic, military and most importantly political system or regime capable of withstanding such pressure. I have often argued that we have learnt how to leverage power only recently, and that it is still work in progress. Traditionally, we have been uncomfortable with power, and it was widely believed worldwide that when push comes to shove, India was likely to blink first. Nothing exemplified this more than the pathetic response to the attack on our parliament in December 2001, when after months of mobilisation for a strike against Pakistan, we suddenly decided to stand down and once again extend a hand of friendship. And of course, the way we released

four terrorist scum in exchange for the passengers of Indian Airlines Flight 814 in December 1999 was perhaps the clearest indication of our lack of political spine.

But the recent aggressive pushback against Chinese salami slicing of our borders, the continuous pressure on Pakistan and the clear rejection of European/American diktats on Iran and Russia appears to indicate that we have finally found at least a part of our backbone. And as the world reconciles with this shift in attitude, it is extremely important to clearly define our red lines, particularly the non-negotiability of our sovereign and territorial rights.

It is also pertinent to keep in mind that the Ukraine crisis has exposed the cracks within Europe over how to deal with Russia and the US, and these fissures are likely to widen during winter, when the lack of energy imports from Russia due to the sanctions will really start to bite. So, European (and US) advice to India to halt energy imports from Russia while refusing to do so themselves until they found alternative sources was blatantly hypocritical and begging for a pushback.

Separately, the abrupt American pullout from Afghanistan after two decades, allowing the triumphant return of the same odious Taliban it had set out to overthrow post 9/11, has clearly exposed Washington's sanctimonious horse manure about it being a force for good, and thus entitled to play policeman to the world.

Yet the fact remains that despite China's rapid rise, and India's strident calls for a multi-polar world, the US will continue to remain the world's sole 'superpower' for at least the short to medium term. And it would be naïve to believe that it will relinquish that position without a fight. Which means that even as India asserts its rights and pushes back against anything inimical to its interests, it will still need to strike what is being called a 'delicate balance' while doing so.

3. India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

While China does play a major role in India's strategic calculus re Russia at the moment, it is important to remember that the India-Russia relationship is important in its own right. Of course, there is unease in Russia over India's growing strategic relationship with the US, just as New Delhi is wary of the growing Moscow-Beijing bonhomie. The fact that both sides have taken pains to repeatedly reassure each other that their relationship with China is in no way an 'either/or' dictum when it comes to the Delhi-Moscow relationship is thus extremely significant. The Moscow-Beijing relationship is one of convenience and somewhat one-sided economically, and clearly Beijing has been exploiting the fact that the western sanctions over Ukraine have limited Russia's ability to negotiate. (Delhi is guilty of the same thing, as the huge amount of oil it is importing lately from Russia at subsidised rates indicates).

Bilateral trade between Russia and China has been rising dramatically over the past few years, and was pegged at the equivalent of \$146.9 billion in 2021. Days before Russian troops entered Ukraine in February, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping declared a "no-limits" partnership which would hike bilateral trade to \$250 billion by 2024. 'Trade between China and Russia totalled \$65.81 billion in the first five months of this year, up 28.9% from a year ago.... Most of the growth came from Chinese imports from Russia,' says a CNBC report quoting Chinese customs data from June 2022. Russia and China share a 4,200 km border, which makes trade –bypassing the Western sanctions ---that much easier.

India-Russia trade – which measured a meagre \$13 billion till December 2021, is mostly through the north Atlantic, then the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal into the Indian Ocean, a journey of almost a month.

India and China share a 3,500 km border, of which large sections are disputed, but even otherwise, the Himalayas that divide the two Asian giants limits cross-border trade to a few mountain passes. Of course, that did not stop China from becoming one of India's largest trading partners over the years, with the deficit heavily tilted in China's favour. Although the latest Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry latest data says the US has become India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade pegged at USD 119.42 billion, it also shows that the trade volume between India and China in fiscal 2021-2022 is about USD 115 billion, almost a third more than the USD 86.4 billion in 2020-2021. This proves that despite the Galwan clash of 2022 and the increasingly frosty diplomatic relations, India's dependence on Chinese manufactured goods –which range from high- end electronic and mobile equipment to nail clippers, fireworks and even the idols of Hindu gods and goddesses--- are unlikely to ease anytime soon.

But as Europe pledges to dial down its imports from Russia, India is likely to scale it up. Apart from the subsidised oil and commodities we are already importing on a large scale, there are serious attempts being made to broaden the scope and scale of trade, which has long been limited to mostly weapons and energy. According to a Reuters report, while bigger Indian players which have exposure to the west are unlikely to get involved, small and medium enterprises are exploring options of ramping up trade with Russia while remaining under the sanctions radar. A Russian team was recently in India to explore possibilities of importing consumer durables, spare parts for the transport sector, medical devices, construction materials for large infrastructure projects, and frozen food ahead of the winter season, and are “opening specialised bank accounts at home for roubles-to-rupees transactions,” the report said.

Meanwhile, India has also put in several high-level requests to Tehran to help fully operationalise the International North-South Transport Corridor, which connects India and Russia through the land-locked Caspian Sea (through the Russian port of Solyanka in Astrakhan to the Iranian port of Anzali) and then by road and rail through Iran to the port of Bandar Abbas on the Indian Ocean. India wants the port of Chabahar, which it has helped fund, to also be connected to this network. This route not only bypasses the Suez Canal, which can be subject to Western pressures, but also cuts the journey time from Russia to India by 15 days, and transports cost by almost a third.

However, given that this corridor also envisages an east-west connection from Teheran to Urumqi in China, across Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, there are some concerns that Beijing might project this as India having joined its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative. More importantly, Washington's intensely acrimonious relationship with both Moscow and Tehran guarantees attempts to ensure that this corridor does not quite take off. What form that takes is still to be seen, particularly with several European nations too showing interest in using this corridor. The Vladivostok-Chennai sea route, which passes through the troubled South China Sea and the Mallaca Straits, is also yet to realise its true potential.

But coming back to the original question, while it is true that at the moment that China is a major factor in India's foreign policy playbook, and there are some concerns over the increasing Moscow-Beijing bonhomie, India's relationship with Russia should not be seen through that prism alone.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight: What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

That cliched assertion that when it comes to international relations, there are no permanent friends, only permanent interests, is relevant only if you are absolutely certain about your permanent interests, which go beyond just territorial integrity and sovereignty. The increasing discord worldwide, mostly sparked by China's not-so-peaceful rise and the clear challenge this poses to the world's solitary superpower, the US, is already forcing several nations to seriously review their strategic worldview and what they hitherto considered their 'permanent interests.'

The flux and friction over this realignment will become even more obvious as the move to find an alternate to the US dollar as the world's dominant reserve currency gathers steam. The dollar's pre-eminence as the world's reserve currency is what gives the US the ability to impose crippling financial sanctions. The recent set of sanctions on Russia has shown how they can impact nations they were not originally meant to, and various nations, including the BRICS nations during their recent summit as well as European or western allies of the US, have been quietly trying to explore other options to avoid such a situation in future. China's attempts to push the Yuan has been clearly rejected owing the country's image as a currency manipulator, but sooner or later, the USD will have a challenger as the currency of choice.

While there have been several (mostly western) commentators and analysts who have been condescending and critical towards India's attempts to maintain strategic autonomy, and demanded that it pick a side, New Delhi has wisely refrained and stuck to its guns. While the Non-Aligned Movement might not quite be the relevant template here, India's decision to keep its options open and not choose a side for now is the best step under the current circumstances.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China's rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

The problem with the Quad is that bar perhaps a common show of strength against China, the four members have very different strategic priorities. The heartburn over the so-called Quad Vaccine Partnership, aimed at expanding "expanding and coordinating the efforts of Australia, India, Japan and the US to increase vaccine supply and support effective delivery in the Indo-Pacific region" is just one example.

This partnership, announced at the inaugural Quad Leaders' Summit in March 2021, was supposed to help deliver the Covid 19 vaccine to nations in the region in collaboration with various multilateral organizations including the World Health Organization, the COVAX facility, Gavi, CEPI, UNICEF is campaign and ASEAN.

But in June that year, US President Joe Biden invoked the Defense Production Act to ensure US vaccine companies prioritized federal contracts to ensure America did not run short of the vaccine. "We're using the Defense Production Act to launch a full-scale, wartime effort to address the supply shortages we inherited from the previous administration. We're going to be working across the government, with private industry, to ramp up production of vaccine and protective equipment," he declared. But this also halted the export of specialized inputs for vaccine production to other countries which were dependent on them, including India.

In April, Adar Poonawalla, the CEO of the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, tweeted a plaintive plea to Biden: "On behalf of the vaccine industry outside the US, I humbly request you to lift the embargo of raw material exports out of the US so that vaccine production can ramp up." He was not alone. Vaccine producers in the UK and South Africa categorically blamed Biden's invocation of the DPA for their production shortfalls, while *Der Spiegel* quoted the CEO of the German vaccine manufacturer CureVac as saying that "we are simply unable to get certain products out of the US." French President Emmanuel Macron too urged Biden to "end export bans not only on vaccines, but on ingredients of those vaccines."

Then in April 2022, a month after the second in-person summit (two others were held virtually) of Quad leaders in Tokyo, the WHO "confirmed the suspension" of the supply of Covaxin, manufactured by Bharat Biotech, through UN procurement agencies, owing to "deficiencies in good manufacturing practices," forcing the company to stop production for export. Strangely, the WHO statement also clarified that the "risk assessment to date does not indicate changes in the risk-benefit ratio. The data, available to WHO, indicate the vaccine is effective and no safety concerns exist." But the bottom line was that India's attempts to woo its neighbourhood with a supply of vaccines were nipped in the bud.

Earlier, the joint statement issued after the Quad leaders' summit in Tokyo insisted that Quad was a "force for good," pledged to "uphold the international rules-based order where countries are free from all forms of military, economic and political coercion," (all clearly aimed at China) and that the events in the Ukraine should not be allowed to happen in the Indo-Pacific. But while many felt this indirectly expressed New Delhi's unhappiness with the events there, the fact remains that despite immense pressure both before and during the summit, India refused to call out Russia by name or join the Quad countries in sanctioning Moscow.

This does not mean that the Quad serves no purpose. The fact that Russian and Chinese bombers staged a flypast near Japanese airspace during the summit indicates that both nations are aware and wary of the implications of the Quad's growing strength in the region, and underline the connection between the events in Ukraine and the conflict in the Indo-Pacific.

The Quad promise to invest more than \$50bn in infrastructure assistance in the Indo-Pacific region over the next five years is clearly aimed at countering China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, which has left many nations facing major debt traps in its wake.

Also of particular importance is the new Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), which aims to "support and work in consultation with Indo-Pacific nations and regional information fusion centres in the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and the

Pacific Islands by providing technology and training to support enhanced, shared maritime domain awareness to promote stability and prosperity in our seas and oceans.”

But again, while maritime security and compliance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) were high on the summit’s agenda, with the leaders pledging to oppose “any coercive, provocative or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo and increase tensions in the area, such as the militarization of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia, and efforts to disrupt other countries’ offshore resource exploitation activities,” one must not forget that the US, a key Quad power which actually helped shape UNCLOS, is not a signatory to the convention.

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20) Saurabh Gupta

1)“Foreign policy is not about virtue-signalling morality but about acting in the best interests of citizens”. Then why single out India for not condemning Russia for it?

It is true that foreign policy is not about virtue signaling, and the fact of the matter is that the Euro-Atlantic world’s response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is colored as much by morality and law as it is by the opportunistic effort to obtain a geo-strategic advantage within the European security system vis-à-vis Russia. This having been said, the international relations arena is not just about power and interest; it is also about adhering to rules, principles and norms so that the stability of the larger system can be protected to the benefit of all. Russia’s actions in Ukraine have unfortunately been the most nakedly significant violation of these norms since President Saddam Hussain strode unchallenged into Kuwait. Yes, at the end of the day, India has not – and does not - need to condemn Russia (after all, when did the western European countries and Japan formally condemn the United States for its endless illegal wars; to the contrary, they provided military or intelligence support to Washington). But India along with its BRICS compatriots (minus Russia) could have expressed a stronger formulation of non-support vis-à-vis Moscow’s actions. For example, they could have jointly said “we do not support Russia’s actions in Ukraine” rather than outright condemn Russia for its actions.

2) India’s External affairs minister S Jaishankar pushed back against European pressure for India to oppose Russia’s actions in Ukraine by highlighting the fallout of the chaotic withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan and their silence on challenges to the rules-based order in Asia for almost a decade. “When the rules-based order was under challenge in Asia, the advice we got from Europe is to do more trade. At least we’re not giving you that advice,” he said. Do you agree?

Well, up-to-a-point only. The magnitude of Russia’s actions, i.e. a flat-out invasion of a neighboring country, has no comparable equivalent in the Indo-Pacific region. Second, that the rules-based order is supposedly under a great challenge in Asia is an exaggeration (aside from the case of North Korea). In the 40 years of reform and opening

up since 1980, less than 150 soldiers have died in inter-state armed engagements on China's vast land and maritime frontiers. It would be good if other great powers and aspiring great powers could also establish such a record. Finally, while External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar is probably referring to the trading relationship with China at a time of difficult relations with that country, he and his party don't have qualms with building out a trading relationship with Pakistan (of course, Islamabad has dug-in its heels against) which is another country with which India has difficult relations. So EAM's response is more situational.

This having been said, India deserves credit for its stabilizing approach to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Rather than add fuel to fire, it has tamped down on overheated rhetoric and kept itself available to play a constructive role in managing the consequences of the crisis. And its generally non-preachy tone and approach to international relations is welcome at a time when there is too much fevered talk and action in global geopolitics.

3) India has several reasons for refusing to condemn Russia for the Ukraine crisis. Everything in the Indian calculus has a "China angle" to it. Do you agree?

Yes, everything has a 'China angle'. And this is unfortunate. Because by raising China on this obsessive political pedestal, New Delhi is thereby effectively signaling that it is no peer of China and, in fact, lives in anxiety in China's shadow. This effectively hands over the whip hand in the bilateral relationship to Beijing. Rather than being a 'leading power' that is rising in tandem with China, Beijing is becoming to New Delhi today what New Delhi has been to Islamabad for the past few decades – an entity of all-consuming focus that is heaping a sort of derangement syndrome over policymaking. China was once an important factor in India's upward spiral of relations with all the major powers, as the deepening of the relationship with China was leveraged to deepen ties with the other major powers. The framing of the China-India relationship on antagonistic terms has now instead deepened India's geopolitical dependence on the other major powers. In some respects, India's refusal to condemn Russia is a function of that additional dependence on the other major powers in the system. It is also a geopolitical play intended to limit Moscow's own dependence on Beijing.

This having been said, in this current case, there are also very good reasons to refuse to condemn Russia that go much beyond the 'China angle'. Russia will remain a powerful political player in the global system for as far as the eye can see, given its permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Besides, Russia (Soviet Union) has stood by India's side when India was either weak or was embroiled in armed conflicts. And President Putin has personally been exceptionally well-disposed towards India, even when some in New Delhi were pooh-poohing the importance of the Russia-India relationship. Friends don't backstab friends, and New Delhi has been wise to tend thoughtfully to its Russia interests.

4) The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War has put India's approach to strategic independence under an international spotlight: What New Delhi calls strategic autonomy might just be prettified language for ducking hard choices and in the emerging global order, is India's hewing to "strategic autonomy" more trouble than it's worth?

No, not at all; in fact, hewing to “strategic autonomy” has been absolutely worth it. India’s choice of “strategic autonomy” was built to be tested at moments like this – especially at a time when India is still a rising power and still some distance away from being an established and long-standing major power. And it took courage at Prime Minister Modi’s and EAM Jaishankar’s end to first conceptualize and thereafter stick with the neutral line, despite the naked illegality and cruelty of Moscow’s actions as well as the enormous pressure brought to bear on India by the Euro-Atlantic countries to tow their line. Five months out, India is still sought out by most major countries and pilloried by none with regard to its stance on the conflict. By contrast, Japan and Germany have destroyed 30 years and 50 years, respectively, of their arduously constructed Russia diplomacy because of their close association with or within the West, and ultimately because of their dependence on the United States to guarantee their security. They never chose or enjoyed 'strategic autonomy' and the consequences are coming home to roost today.

At bottom, the war in Ukraine is a consequence of the breakdown of the Euro-Atlantic community’s political relationship with Russia. There is ample blame to go around on both sides. Why should India have to pay the price for *their* diplomatic ineptitude going back decades. “Strategic autonomy” is that which has served today as a line of political defense for India from being complicit or embroiled in the bad decision-making by countries in a region (Europe) where India’s strategic stakes are fairly low.

5) At a time when Delhi seemed well inclined toward the West to manage China’s rise in the Indo-Pacific, the Ukraine crisis has rattled the strategic frame of reference for the United States and European countries. Does the QUAD Summit (24 May,2022) indicate growing strength?

There is no doubt that in the long-term, the Ukraine crisis is a huge gift to China. Russia is no longer a balancing power between the United States and China; it will be more-or-less dependent if not ensconced in China’s pocket, geopolitically. Further, a good deal of the attention of the Euro-Atlantic world’s focus will shift back to security anxieties closer to home, i.e. on the European continent. Much like 9/11 had diverted attention to the Middle East and Southwest Asia, the Ukraine conflict will redirect Western energies closer to home. We see that in NATO’s new Strategic Concept already. The war in Ukraine has also showed that the democracies v. autocracies framing is not the key dividing line in international society today. If anything, the key dividing line in international society seems to be one between the West and the Rest.

As for the Quad and its summit, it has clarified two important points. First, the strategic equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific is much more delinked than linked from the strategic (dis)equilibrium on the European continent. Europe and Asia reside strategically almost in two separate worlds. The strength (or weakness) of the Quad will ultimately be based on the strength and resolve of the Quad’s resident Indo-Pacific powers. Second, the realist, balance of power equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific region is the animating factor that sustains the Quad relevance. Its self-identification as a club of democracies is somewhat irrelevant. Both a democratic Quad power (India) and a non-democratic and non-Quad power (China) are, after all, in alignment in their conflict-related positions on Ukraine. Shifts in the Indo-Pacific’s power balance as well as the unity – or lack – of purpose of the Quad’s constituent members in the face of China’s conduct will be the key determinant of the Quad’s longer-term staying power in the region. Developments in the Euro-Atlantic world are not terribly relevant in this regard to India’s security.

The Backgrounder:

The Tragedy of Ukraine – “In war, truth is the first casualty” – Aeschylus

Joseph E. Fallon

On May 12, 2022, UN officials reported “About 14 million Ukrainians have been forced from their homes—including more than six million who have fled the country—and at least 3,496 civilians have been killed since Russia began its invasion.” Those numbers, even then, were considered an undercount. (Map 1)

Map 1ⁱ



Why is war raging in Ukraine?

As Professor John Mearsheimer wrote on March 19, 2022, “THE WAR in Ukraine is the most dangerous international conflict since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Understanding its root causes is essential if we are to prevent it from getting worse and, instead, to find a way to bring it to a close. There is no question that Vladimir Putin started the war and is responsible for how it is being waged. But why he did so is another matter.”ⁱⁱ

Is this war, therefore, an act of Russian aggression launched without justification by President Putin? Or is it something else? On March 3rd, 2022, in an interview with the Italian newspaper, Corriere Della Sera, Pope Francis suggested the something else. It was a response to NATO provocation. “Maybe it was ‘Nato barking at Russia’s gate’ that compelled Putin to unleash the invasion of Ukraine. I have no way of telling whether his rage has been provoked...but I suspect it was maybe facilitated by the West’s attitude.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In his February 22, 2022, address to the people of Russia, President Putin stated: “It is a fact that over the past 30 years we have been patiently trying to come to an agreement with the leading NATO countries regarding the principles of equal and indivisible security in Europe. In response to our proposals, we invariably faced either cynical deception and lies or attempts

at pressure and blackmail, while the North Atlantic alliance continued to expand despite our protests and concerns. Its military machine is moving and, as I said, is approaching our very border [A]fter the disintegration of the USSR, given the entire unprecedented openness of the new, modern Russia, its readiness to work honestly with the United States and other Western partners, and its practically unilateral disarmament, they immediately tried to put the final squeeze on us, finish us off, and utterly destroy us.”^{iv}

Do the actions of the West, which Putin cited -- actions he later expanded to include alleged acts of “genocide” against ethnic Russians in Ukraine, the threat posed by U.S. funding of Ukrainian biological research on dangerous pathogens, and the allegation the U.S. has contingency plans to employ migratory birds as biological weapons to carry such pathogens into Russia -- offer a rational justification for a Russian pre-emptive strike on Ukraine?

Many in the West deride Putin as “paranoid.” But as author Joseph Heller observed, “Just because you are paranoid does not mean they are not out to get you”^v Amongst relevant questions from a Russian point of view are:

“Is Russia’s western border vulnerable to attack?”

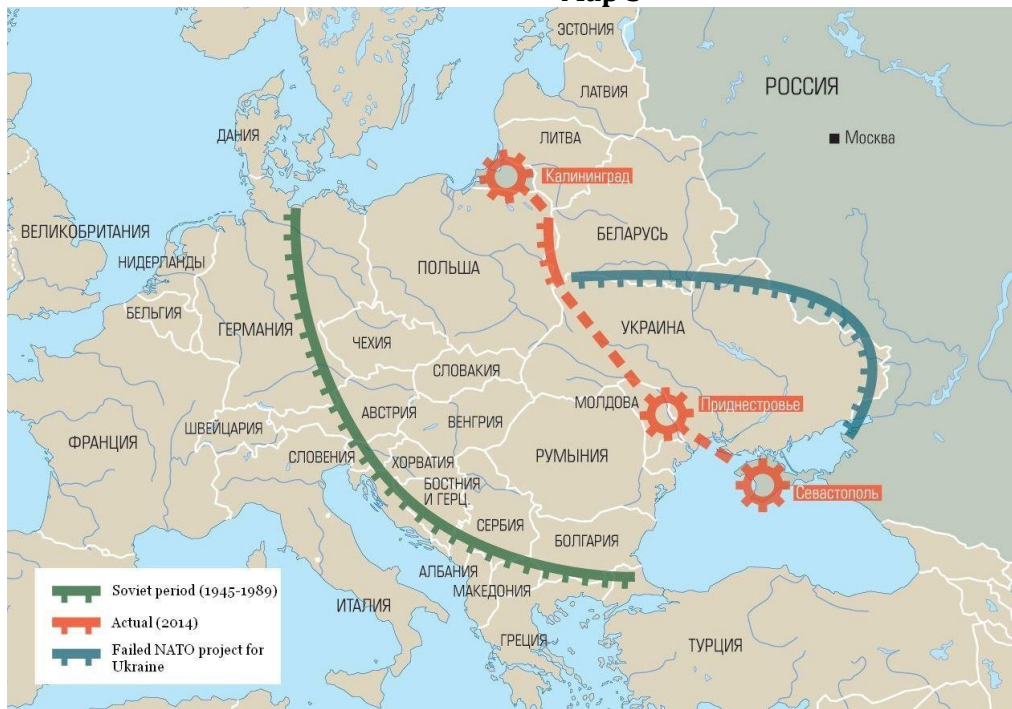
Russia lacks any natural barriers that can protect its western border – “no mountains, no deserts, and few rivers.”^{vi} The North European Plain between the Baltic Sea and Carpathian Mountains has provided a corridor through which Western powers have invaded Russia -- the Poles in 1605, the Swedes in 1707, the French in 1812, and the Germans in 1914 and 1941. (Map 2)

Map 2^{vii}



To Russia's south is Ukraine where enemy forces would have a 2,000-mile wide "flat route straight to Moscow."^{viii} (Map 3)

Map 3^{ix}



Were Ukraine to become a member of NATO, it would constitute a significant military threat to Russia's exposed agricultural, industrial, and demographic heartland. (Maps 4, 5, and 6)

Map 4^x

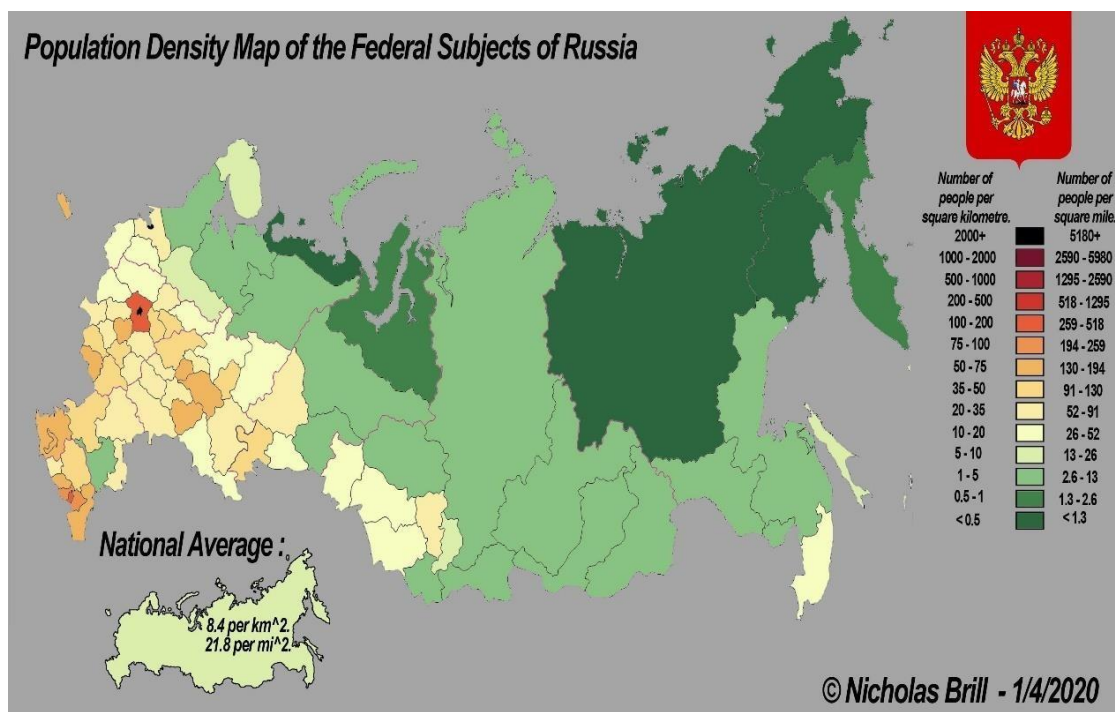
RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL AREAS



Map 5 ^{xi}
Top 250 industrial centers of Russia



Map 6 ^{xii}



As Tim Marshall wrote in *The Atlantic*, October 15, 2014, this geographical vulnerability explained Putin's annexation of the Crimea on March 18, 2014. "Two of Russia's chief preoccupations—its vulnerability on land and its lack of access to warm-water ports—came together in Ukraine in 2014. As long as a pro-Russian government held sway in the Ukrainian

capital of Kiev, Russia could be confident that its buffer zone would remain intact and guard the European Plain. Even a neutral Ukraine, which would promise not to join the European Union or NATO and would uphold the lease Russia had on the warm-water port at Sevastopol in Crimea, would be acceptable. But when protests in Ukraine brought down the pro-Russia government of Viktor Yanukovich and a new, more pro-Western government came to power, Putin had a choice. He could have respected the territorial integrity of Ukraine, or he could have done what Russian leaders have done for centuries with the bad geographic cards they were dealt. He chose his own kind of attack as defense, annexing Crimea to ensure Russia's access to its only proper warm-water port, and moving to prevent NATO from creeping even closer to Russia's border."^{xiii}

"Is the demand by the West that Russia respect Ukraine's borders disingenuous?"

A joint statement issued by the European Council and European Commission in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine included: "We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprecedented military aggression against Ukraine...We call on Russia to immediately cease the hostilities, withdraw its military from Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence."^{xiv}

Respect for the territorial integrity of states is a fundamental principle of international law. But member states of the European Council and European Commission have repeatedly violated that principle. They were the ones to repudiate the 1975 Helsinki Accords by which "all states of NATO, the then Warsaw Pact, and the neutral and non-aligned states of Europe agreed on...respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states; non-interference in their internal affairs and the inviolability of borders..."^{xv} They were the ones, in the 1990s, to violate the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of the borders of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union.

Western disingenuousness continued when NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg falsely asserted: "Once again, despite our repeated warnings and tireless efforts to engage in diplomacy, Russia has chosen the path of aggression against a sovereign and independent country."^{xvi}

As detailed in Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, "NATO-Russia Tensions: Putin Orders Invasion of Ukraine," 01.03.2022: "On 17 December 2021, Moscow submitted two draft treaties to stop the continuation of NATO's eastward expansion. At the same time, it wanted to prevent the alliance from stationing troops on Russia's borders or deploying in European states long-range missiles that could threaten Russia. To this end, Moscow demanded that NATO withdraw its 2008 summit declaration, in which it held out the prospect of Ukraine and Georgia joining the alliance. Instead, it should declare in legally binding terms that it will renounce any future expansion -- especially in the post-Soviet space -- and withdraw troops stationed in Eastern Europe after May 1997. In doing so, Moscow was invoking the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act [in which NATO pledged it would not undertake any 'additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.'] and the European Security Charter. In January 2022, the proposals were discussed bilaterally with the US in Geneva as well as multilaterally in the NATO-Russia Council and with the OSCE. The West rejected Russia's calls for an end to NATO enlargement..."^{xvii}

"Did the West promise Gorbachev and Yeltsin NATO would not expand eastward?"

A massive trove of documents reveals the governments of the U.S., the U.K., France, and Germany lied repeatedly to Soviet President Gorbachev and later to Russian President Yeltsin when they assured both men NATO would not expand to the east.

According to a 2009 investigative report by the German magazine, Spiegel: "After speaking with many of those involved and examining previously classified British and German documents in detail, SPIEGEL has concluded that there was no doubt that the West did everything it could to

give the Soviets the impression that NATO membership was out of the question for countries like Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia.”^{xviii}

In 2017, this was corroborated by the National Security Archive at George Washington University. “U.S. Secretary of State James Baker’s famous ‘not one inch eastward’ assurance about NATO expansion in his meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on February 9, 1990, was part of a cascade of assurances about Soviet security given by Western leaders to Gorbachev and other Soviet officials throughout the process of German unification in 1990 and on into 1991, according to declassified U.S., Soviet, German, British and French documents posted today by the National Security Archive at George Washington University.

The documents show that multiple national leaders were considering and rejecting Central and Eastern European membership in NATO as of early 1990 and through 1991, that discussions of NATO in the context of German unification negotiations in 1990 were not at all narrowly limited to the status of East German territory, and that subsequent Soviet and Russian complaints about being misled about NATO expansion were founded in written contemporaneous memcons and telcons at the highest levels.

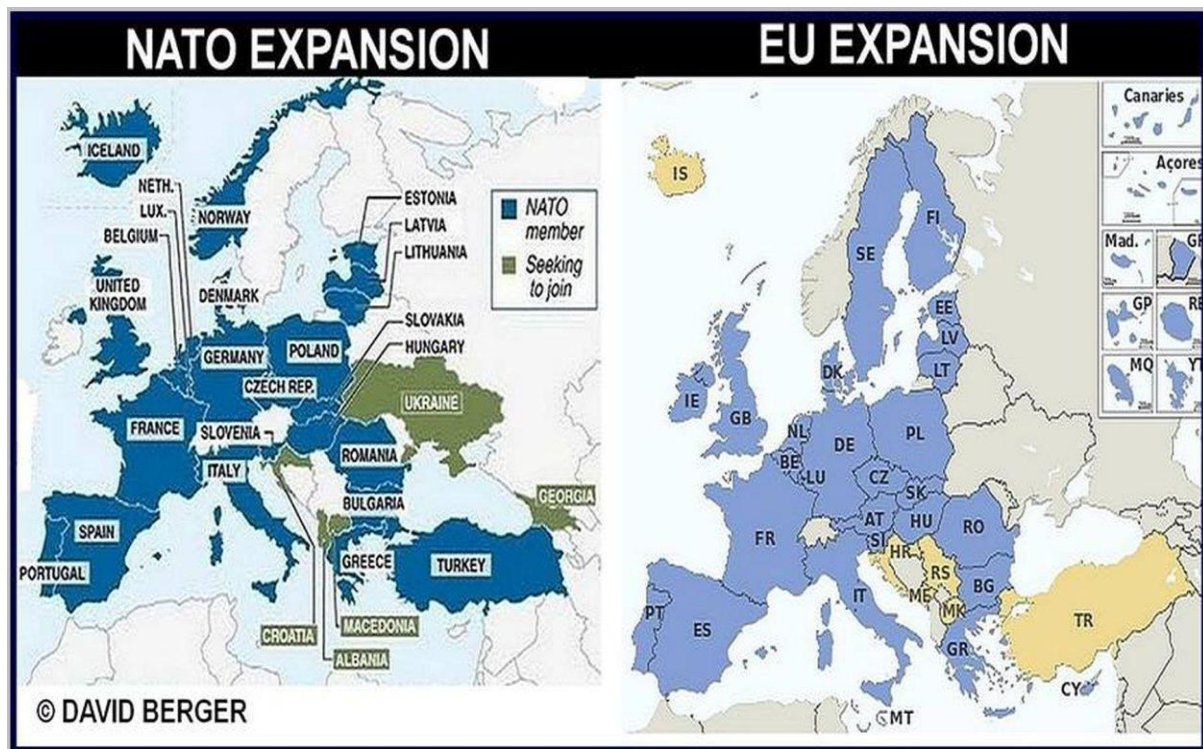
The documents reinforce former CIA Director Robert Gates’s criticism of “pressing ahead with expansion of NATO eastward [in the 1990s], when Gorbachev and others were led to believe that wouldn’t happen.”^{xix}

“Declassified documents from U.S. and Russian archives show that U.S. officials led Russian President Boris Yeltsin to believe in 1993 that the Partnership for Peace was the alternative to NATO expansion, rather than a precursor to it, while simultaneously planning for expansion after Yeltsin’s re-election bid in 1996 and telling the Russians repeatedly that the future European security system would include, not exclude, Russia.”^{xx}

In the January 10, 2018, issue of *The Nation*, Dr. Stephen F. Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian Studies and Politics at New York University and Princeton, wrote: “...the invaluable National Security Archive at George Washington University has established the historical truth by publishing ...not only a detailed account of what Gorbachev was promised in 1990–91 but the relevant documents themselves. The truth, and the promises broken, are much more expansive than previously known: All of the Western powers involved—the US, the UK, France, Germany itself—made the same promise to Gorbachev [NATO would not expand east of the border of a reunited Germany] on multiple occasions and in various emphatic ways...[implanting] in at least one generation of the Russian policy elite the conviction that the broken promise to Gorbachev represented characteristic American ‘betrayal and deceit.’...Putin put it bluntly: ‘They duped us, in the full sense of this word.’”^{xxi}

In 1999, NATO began a 20-year eastward expansion to the western border of Russia, incorporating former Warsaw Pact countries and the three Soviet Baltic republics. Bringing NATO within one hundred miles of St. Petersburg; Russia’s second largest city (population five million).

This was complemented by the EU in 2004 when it initiated a separate decade long expansion to Russia’s western border economically integrating into the West the former Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet republics politically and militarily incorporated into NATO. (Map 7)

Map 7^{xxii}

At the same time, NATO and the EU also extended their influence across the southern border of Russia with “partnership” programs with the three former Soviet Transcaucasian republics (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, 1994), the five former Soviet Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, 1994, Tajikistan 2002), and Mongolia (2012). (Map 8)

Map 8^{xxiii}



With Finland and Sweden becoming members of NATO, NATO would be in a position, if it chose, to blockade two of Russia's principal ports -- Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg. (Map 9)

Map 9 ^{xxiv}



NATO is already in position to blockade European Russia's principle sea lanes. "European Russia has three potential points from which to access global maritime trade. One is through the Black Sea and the Bosphorus, a narrow waterway controlled by Turkey that can easily be closed to Russia. Another is from St. Petersburg, where ships can sail through Danish waters, but this

passageway can also be easily blocked. The third is the long Arctic Ocean route, starting from Murmansk and then extending through the gaps between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom. During the Cold War, air bases in Norway, Scotland, and Iceland, coupled with carrier battle groups, worked to deny Russia access to the sea.”^{xxv} (Map 10)

Map 10 ^{xxvi}



While Russia’s north is encircled by the U.S., Canada, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Norway, and the Svalbard archipelago (Norway), its east is enclosed by the U.S., Japan, “NATO’s longest-standing partner outside the Euro-Atlantic area,” ^{xxvii} and South Korea, which has been cooperating with NATO since 2005.^{xxviii}

As a result, Vladivostok, Russia’s principal port on the Pacific, is surrounded by NATO allies to its north, south, and east. “This does not just halt the flow of trade into and out of Russia; it prevents the Russian fleet from operating as a global power, as it does not have year-round access to the world’s most important sea-lanes.”^{xxix} The encirclement of Russia was complete. (Maps 11 and 12)

“Boxing in” Vladivostok

Map 11^{xxx}



Map 12 xxxi

Department of the Air Force Equities in the Arctic

ALASKA

- ▶ **JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON (JBER):**
F-22, E-3, C-17, C-130, C-12F, Alaska Rescue Coordination Center: HC-130, HH-60
- ▶ **EIELSON AFB:** F-35, F-16, ANG KC-135, Polar Survival School
- ▶ **JOINT PACIFIC ALASKA RANGE COMPLEX (JPARC):** Airspace & Training Grounds
- ▶ **CLEAR AFS:** Ballistic Missile Early Warning, Space Domain Awareness
- ▶ **POINT BARROW/NORTH SLOPE:** Alaska Radar System (15 radars, 3 part of North Warning System)
- ▶ **EARECKSON AS:** Missile Defense Radar



DAF is responsible for **79%** of DoD Arctic Resourcing

Source: 2016 DoD Report to Congress

CANADA

- ▶ **NORAD:** North Warning System (~50 radars)

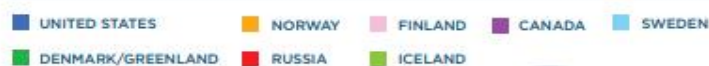
GREENLAND

- ▶ **THULE AB:** Ballistic Missile Early Warning, Space Domain Awareness
- ▶ **RAVEN CAMP:** ANG Training for LC-130



Map Source: National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

SAMPLE OF ARCTIC REGION MILITARY FACILITIES



Russia is then encircled separately by four of the seven U.S. military geographical commands. Each “has responsibility for U.S. military forces in that area” xxxii—

- U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM)
- U.S. European Command (USEUCOM)
- U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)
- U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)

(Map 13)

Map 13 xxxiii



“The end of the Cold War and the rapid disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union...contributed to a deep and lasting impression that Russia was finished—that it was in no position to challenge the U.S. and Western vision of a European security architecture, and that Washington no longer needed to take Russian interests, as Moscow defined them, into account...The sudden collapse of Russia as a military power was so convincing that the alternative—the reconstitution of its Cold War military capabilities and return to policies guided by long-standing security requirements and threat perceptions—was hardly ever imagined...The extent of Russia’s retreat and collapse of its military power was demonstrated during the disastrous campaign in Chechnya, in which its once-mighty army struggled for years to extinguish the separatist insurgency fought by small bands of irregulars. Not only had Russia lost the strategic depth so prized by its leaders, but its territorial integrity also seemed to be at stake...To outside observers Russia’s retreat and surrender to post-Cold War, post-Soviet realities seem complete. Some even wondered whether there would soon be a ‘world without Russia’ -- in other words, Russia would become a marginal presence on the world stage, in permanent decline, rather than a state capable of pursuing an independent and effective foreign policy.”^{xxxiv}.

Is this then NATO’s objective in its relentless drive to the east -- create a “world without Russia”?

That question leads to the fourth question, **“Has the West called for abolishing Russia?”**

The answer is yes. First, in his Foreign Affairs article, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia,"^{xxxv} then in his book, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*,^{xxxvi} the late Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had inter alia been President Carter's National Security Advisor, advocated Russia, while weak and vulnerable, be erased from the map.

Dr. Brzezinski believed even after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia remained an eternal enemy, an existential threat to the West. His solution -- a variation on a Carthaginian peace -- eliminate the threat by eliminating the country. He proposed Russia be replaced by a loose confederation "composed of a European Russia, a Siberian Republic, and a Far Eastern Republic...A sovereign Ukraine is a critically important component of such a policy..."^{xxxvi} (Map 14)

Map 14 ^{xxxvii}



"Is the purpose of an independent Ukraine to destroy Russia and a Russian identity?"

Dr. Brzezinski feared Ukraine "a potentially rich industrial and agricultural economy and of 52 million people ethnically and religiously sufficiently close to the Russians ...[would, if it remained part of Russia]... make Russia into a truly large and confident imperial state."^{xxxviii}

To prevent that he envisioned an independent Ukraine as the means to abolish both the Russian nation as well as the Russian state. For an independent Ukraine would undermine 1,000 years of Russian history compelling "all Russians to rethink the nature of their own political and ethnic identity."^{xxxix} "What are -- historically, strategically, and ethnically - the proper frontiers of Russia?"^{xl} The "redefinition of 'What is Russia and where is Russia' will...require a wise and firm Western posture."^{xli} The political and economic stabilization of the new post- Soviet states [in particular, Ukraine] is a major factor in necessitating Russia's historical self- redefinition."^{xlii}

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski's geostrategic concepts are shared and promoted by other individuals and institutions in the West. He was "active in many establishments, foreign policy institutions, such as the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Bilderberg meetings. In 1973, with the backing of David Rockefeller, he helped to found the Trilateral Commission..."^{xliii}

In his honor, the prestigious Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) established the Brzezinski Institute on Geostrategy, the Brzezinski Chair "awarded to a leading scholar-practitioner in global affairs and international strategy," and the Zbigniew Brzezinski Annual Prize and Lecture "to honor his legacy by recognizing and promoting the importance of geostrategic thinking with a transcending moral purpose."

The influential Atlantic Council, whose Advisory Board included Dr. Brzezinski until his death in 2017, promotes his call for the West to redefine "What is Russia and where is Russia." This goal includes splintering the Russian Orthodox Church. On September 10, 2018, the Atlantic Council proclaimed: "It's no exaggeration to write that the granting of autocephaly from the Russian Orthodox Church to Ukraine's millions of Orthodox believers is as significant as the disintegration of the USSR for Ukraine. Granting Ukraine's Orthodox Church, a Tomos is the last step Ukraine needs to take in order to become truly independent."

Most ominously, Dr. Brzezinski's views resonate in U.S. foreign policy and NATO/EU expansion.

"Overextending and Unbalancing Russia," is a 2019 report issued by the RAND Corporation, a U.S. think tank that "operates three federally funded research and development centers sponsored by the Department of Defense and one sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security." It states "Despite...vulnerabilities and anxieties, Russia remains a powerful country that still manages to be a U.S. peer competitor...Th[is] work builds on the concept of long-term strategic competition developed during the Cold War...The new report applies this concept to today's Russia."

A team of RAND experts developed economic, geopolitical, ideological, informational, and military options and qualitatively assessed them in terms of their likelihood of success... It "comprehensively examines nonviolent, cost-imposing options that the United States and its allies could pursue across economic, political, and military areas to stress -- overextend and unbalance -- Russia's economy and armed forces and the regime's political standing at home and abroad."^{xliv} (Table 1)

Table 1

Economic Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Expand U.S. energy production	HIGH	HIGH	LOW
Impose deeper trade and financial sanctions	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Increase Europe's ability to import LNG from sources other than Russia	MODERATE	HIGH	MODERATE
Encourage emigration from Russia of skilled labor and well-educated youth	LOW	LOW	LOW

NOTE: For all the tables in this brief, high and low rankings for costs and risks are inverted in desirability from the rest of the table; i.e., low costs are good in the same way that a high likelihood of success is. Thus, a low cost is shaded in light orange while a low likelihood of success is shaded in dark orange. All assessments listed in the tables in this brief are based on analysis by the report's authors.

Geopolitical Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Provide lethal aid to Ukraine	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH
Increase support to the Syrian rebels	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Promote liberalization in Belarus	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
Expand ties in the South Caucasus	LOW	LOW	MODERATE
Reduce Russian influence in Central Asia	LOW	LOW	MODERATE
Flipping Transnistria	LOW	LOW	MODERATE

NOTE: For all the tables in this brief, high and low rankings for costs and risks are inverted in desirability from the rest of the table; i.e., low costs are good in the same way that a high likelihood of success is. Thus, a low cost is shaded in light orange while a low likelihood of success is shaded in dark orange. All assessments listed in the tables in this brief are based on analysis by the report's authors.

Air and Space/Nuclear Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Option 1: Changing air and space force posture and operations			
Reposture bombers	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Reposture fighters	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Deploy additional tactical nuclear weapons	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
Reposition U.S. and allied ballistic missile defense systems	LOW	LOW	MODERATE
Option 2: Increasing aerospace research and development (R&D)			
Invest more in low-observable aircraft	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Invest more in autonomous or remotely piloted aircraft	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
Invest more in long-range strike aircraft and missiles	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE
Invest more in longer-range high-speed antiradiation missiles (HARMs)	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE

Invest more in new electronic warfare technologies	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW
Focus on long-range, precision-guided conventional missiles (e.g., conventional prompt global strike)	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Focus on space-based weapons	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Focus on “spaceplanes”	LOW TO MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Focus on small satellites	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH

Option 3: Increasing air and missile components of the nuclear triad

Break out of the nuclear arms control regime	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
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NOTE: For all the tables in this brief, high and low rankings for costs and risks are inverted in desirability from the rest of the table; i.e., low costs are good in the same way that a high likelihood of success is. Thus, a low cost is shaded in light orange while a low likelihood of success is shaded in dark orange. All assessments listed in the tables in this brief are based on analysis by the report’s authors.

Maritime Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Increase U.S. and allied naval force posture and presence	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW
Increase naval R&D efforts	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Shift nuclear posture toward SSBNs	LOW	LOW	LOW
Check the Black Sea buildup	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE

NOTE: For all the tables in this brief, high and low rankings for costs and risks are inverted in desirability from the rest of the table; i.e., low costs are good in the same way that a high likelihood of success is. Thus, a low cost is shaded in light orange while a low likelihood of success is shaded in dark orange. All assessments listed in the tables in this brief are based on analysis by the report’s authors.

Land and Multidomain Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Option 1: Increasing U.S. and NATO land forces in Europe			
Increase U.S. forces in Europe	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Increase European NATO member ground capabilities	LOW	HIGH	LOW
Deploy large number of NATO forces on the Russian border	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Option 2: Increasing NATO exercises in Europe			
Increase the size of U.S participation	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE
Generate a mass mobilization of European NATO member forces	LOW	HIGH	MODERATE
Hold exercises on Russia's borders	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
Hold exercises practicing counterattack or offensive scenarios	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH

Land and Multidomain Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Option 3: Withdrawing from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty			
Fund a missile development program without withdrawing	MODERATE	LOW	MODERATE
Withdraw and build missiles but do not deploy to Europe	HIGH	LOW	MODERATE
Withdraw, build missiles, and deploy to Europe	HIGH	MODERATE	HIGH
Option 4: Investing in new capabilities to manipulate Russian risk perceptions			
Invest in incremental improvements in counter–anti-access and area denial capabilities (e.g., enhanced Army Tactical Missile Systems, advanced anti-radiation guided missiles)	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
Invest in revolutionary, swarm counter–anti-access and area denial capabilities	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Invest in incremental improvements in counter–ground forces/fires (e.g., enhanced Javelin)	LOW	LOW	LOW
Invest in revolutionary, unmanned ground forces/fires capabilities	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Invest in weapons based on “new physical principles” (e.g., directed-energy counter–air-defense weapons)	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH

NOTE: For all the tables in this brief, high and low rankings for costs and risks are inverted in desirability from the rest of the table; i.e., low costs are good in the same way that a high likelihood of success is. Thus, a low cost is shaded in light orange while a low likelihood of success is shaded in dark orange. All assessments listed in the tables in this brief are based on analysis by the report’s authors.

Most-Promising Cost-Imposing Options	Likelihood of Success in Extending Russia	Benefits	Costs and Risks
Expand U.S. energy production	HIGH	HIGH	LOW
Impose deeper trade and financial sanctions	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Increase U.S. and allied naval force posture and presence	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW
Reposture bombers	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Invest more in autonomous or remotely piloted aircraft	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
Invest more in long-range strike aircraft and missiles	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE
Invest more in longer-range HARMs	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
Invest more in new electronic warfare technologies	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW

NOTE: For all the tables in this brief, high and low rankings for costs and risks are inverted in desirability from the rest of the table; i.e., low costs are good in the same way that a high likelihood of success is. Thus, a low cost is shaded in light orange while a low likelihood of success is shaded in dark orange. All assessments listed in the tables in this brief are based on analysis by the report's authors.^{xlv}

“Were the 2004 and 2014 ‘revolutions’ in Ukraine coups against internationally recognized pro-Russian Ukrainian governments?”

In his 2007 book, *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union*, Mark MacKinnon, “writes, ‘with the Ukrainian opposition—jointly led by Tymoshenko and Viktor Yushchenko, the former central banker—signaling clearly at the end of 2003 that it wanted western help in overthrowing Kuchma...Washington had become unhappy with President Leonid Kuchma who was viewed as too independent. Kuchma [had] extended the lease for Russia’s Black Sea Fleet in Crimea...George Soros and the various groups funded by the National Endowment for Democracy went to work making it happen’...With the approval of the [Canadian] Prime Minister’s Office, Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj, a Canadian election observer, promised the deputy head of Ukraine’s Central Elections Commission, Yaroslav Davydovych, and his family safe passage to Canada if he did ‘the right thing’ by disputing the results showing Yanukovych winning by a mere 2.7 percentage points.”^{xlv}

The Guardian described the 2004 Ukrainian coup, the “Orange Revolution” to its sponsors, as “an American creation, a sophisticated and brilliantly conceived exercise in western branding and mass marketing...Funded and organised by the US government, deploying US consultancies, pollsters, diplomats, the two big American parties and US non-government organisations...”^{xlvii}

Viktor Yushchenko thus became president of Ukraine. “But Ukrainians soured quickly on Yushchenko’s neoliberal policies and his bickering with former ally Tymoshenko. Yanukovych’s [pro-Russian] Party of Regions won parliamentary elections in 2006 and he was elected president in 2010”.^{xlviii} In that second electoral contest between Yanukovych and Yushchenko, the West’s candidate, the latter received only five percent of the vote.

Yanukovych had been “elected in balloting that international observers considered reasonably free and fair—about the best standard one can hope for outside the mature Western democracies.”^{xlix} But in November 2013 when he “rejected an explicitly anti-Moscow EU

association agreement”ⁱ, accepting a Russian offer instead, a coup was orchestrated to remove him from office.

On March 1, 2013, as Eric Zuesse reported in 2018 in *Modern Diplomacy*, “the first ‘tech camp’ to train far-right Ukrainians how to organize online the mass-demonstrations against Yanukovych, was held inside the U.S. Embassy in Kiev on that day over nine months before the Maidan demonstrations to overthrow Ukraine’s democratically elected President started, on 20 November 2013.”^{li}

By December 2013, “Victoria Nuland, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, estimated...the United States had invested more than \$5 billion since 1991 to help Ukraine achieve ‘the future it deserves’. As part of that effort, the U.S. government has bankrolled the National Endowment for Democracy. The nonprofit foundation has funded more than 60 projects aimed at promoting civil society in Ukraine.”^{lii}

According to investigative reporter, Robert Parry, these projects created “a shadow political structure of media and activist groups that could be deployed to stir up unrest when the Ukrainian government didn’t act as desired.”^{liii}

Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy, called Ukraine “...‘the biggest prize.’ After Yanukovych won Ukraine’s presidential election in February 2010, the NED decided he was undermining its goals, and so it stepped up its efforts to support the opposition...When Russian leaders look at Western social engineering in Ukraine, they worry that their country might be next. And such fears are hardly groundless. In September 2013, Gershman wrote in *The Washington Post*, “Ukraine’s choice to join Europe will accelerate the demise of the ideology of Russian imperialism that Putin represents.” He added: “Russians, too, face a choice, and Putin may find himself on the losing end not just in the near abroad but within Russia itself.”^{liv}

In a 1991 article in *The Washington Times*, David Ignatius quoted Allen Weinstein, a senior official of the National Endowment for Democracy, admitting “A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA,”^{lv}

Of the 2014 coup, Professor John Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, wrote in *Foreign Affairs*, (September/October 2014): “On February 21, the government and the opposition struck a deal that allowed Yanukovych to stay in power until new elections were held. But it immediately fell apart, and Yanukovych fled to Russia the next day...it is clear that Washington backed the coup. [Obama’s Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, now Biden’s Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria] Nuland and Republican Senator John McCain participated in antigovernment demonstrations and Geoffrey Pyatt, the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, proclaimed after Yanukovych’s toppling that it was ‘a day for the history books.’ As a leaked telephone recording [January 27, 2014] revealed, Nuland had advocated regime change and wanted the Ukrainian politician Arseniy Yatsenyuk to become prime minister in the new government, which he did. No wonder Russians of all persuasions think the West played a role in Yanukovych’s ouster”^{lvi}

In his report, Eric Zuesse pointed out the phone call, during which Nuland quipped “Fuck the EU,”^{lvii} which was reported by Reuters,^{lviii} “occurred 24 days before Ukraine’s President Victor Yanukovych was overthrown on February 20th, and 30 days before the new person to head Ukraine’s Government, Yatsenyuk, became officially appointed to rule...”^{lix}

Then there was, as he noted, “the 26 February 2014 phone-conversation between the EU’s Foreign Minister Catherine Ashton and her agent in Ukraine investigating whether the overthrow had been a revolution or instead a coup; he was Estonia’s Foreign Minister, Urmas Paet, and he

told her that he found that it had been a coup and that ‘somebody from the new coalition’ had engineered it ...but they proceeded immediately to ignore that matter.”^{lx}

In *Foreign Policy*, March 18, 2014, Andrew Foxall and Oren Kessler acknowledged: “The uncomfortable truth is that a sizeable portion of Kiev’s current government — and the protesters who brought it to power — are, indeed, fascists.”^{lxi}

Several months later, in his analysis of the 2014 coup, Professor Mearsheimer corroborated this fact. Commenting on the composition of the new regime, he stated “The new government in Kiev was pro-Western and anti-Russian to the core, and it contained four high-ranking members who could legitimately be labelled neofascists.”^{lxii}

On September 1, 2014, seven months after the coup, Radio Liberty, “United States government funded organization that broadcasts and reports news, information, and analysis to countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Caucasus, and the Middle East”,^{lxiii} posted an online article by Dmytro Sinchenko -- “In anticipation of World War III. How the world will change.” The article called for the West to launch a war against Moscow for the purpose of completely dismembering Russia. It provided a map of a future Russia with all southern Russia east to the Caspian Sea going to Ukraine. (Map 15)

Map 15^{lxiv}



It asserted “The world powers, in fact, have only one option - war within Russia itself. People's uprising, democratic revolution, and national liberation wars of various republics. Putin will not fire nuclear weapons on his territory. There are many territories in Russia that would like to gain independence from Moscow, or even join another state. The collapse of Russia will finally put an end to the bipolar system of the world but will give birth to a multipolar system...Over time, the EU will include the states formed on the site of the European part of Russia.”^{lxv}

The official disclaimer at the end of the post simply read: “The views expressed [calling for World War III]...do not necessarily reflect the position of Radio Liberty.”^{lxvi}

“Do ‘Nazis’ have influence over the Ukrainian government?”

In a 2019 article for *The Nation*, Lev Golinkin wrote “There are neo-Nazi pogroms against the Roma, rampant attacks on feminists and LGBT groups, book bans, and state-sponsored glorification of Nazi collaborators. These stories of Ukraine’s dark nationalism aren’t coming out of Moscow; they’re being filed by Western media, including US-funded Radio Free Europe (RFE); Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress and the Simon Wiesenthal Center; and watchdogs like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Freedom House, which issued a joint report warning that Kiev is losing the monopoly on the use of force in the country as far-right gangs operate with impunity...”^{lxvii} In 2019, Kiev announced “the neo- Nazi unit [the National Squad] will be monitoring polls in next month’s presidential election.” ^{lxviii}

On April 13, 2022, in an interview with Ottawa Citizen, Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel said, “There is no question that there are neo-Nazis in different forms in Ukraine, whether they are in the Azov regiment or other organisations.” ...The Azov unit, sometimes known as a battalion or a regiment, has been formerly incorporated into the Ukrainian military.” [Of this incorporation, Lev Golinkin wrote “post-Maidan Ukraine is the world’s only nation to have a neo-Nazi formation in its armed forces.”^{lxix}]

But its connections to the far-right have long been recognized. In 2017, Canada’s Joint Task Force Ukraine produced a briefing on the Azov Battalion, acknowledging its links to Nazi ideology... In 2018, the U.S. Congress banned the use of U.S. funds to provide arms, training and other assistance to the Azov Battalion because of its links to the far-right and neo-Nazis. The UN and Amnesty International have accused the unit of human rights violations...”^{lxx}

Zuroff dismissed claims these ‘allegations’ are part of a Russian disinformation campaign. “It’s not Russian propaganda, far from it,” he explained. “These people are neo-Nazis...and it’s absurd to ignore it.”^{lxxi}

“Has ‘genocide’ been committed against ethnic Russians in Ukraine?”

Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide to include acts “(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.”^{lxxii}

On May 2, 2018, Stephen Cohen wrote in *The Nation*, “...the pogrom-like burning to death of ethnic Russians and others in Odessa shortly later in 2014 reawakened memories of Nazi extermination squads in Ukraine during World War II has been all but deleted from the American mainstream narrative...storm troop-like assaults on gays, Jews, elderly ethnic Russians, and other ‘impure’ citizens are widespread throughout Kiev-ruled Ukraine, along with torchlight marches reminiscent of those that eventually inflamed Germany in the late 1920s and 1930s. And that the police and official legal authorities do virtually nothing to prevent these neofascist acts or to prosecute them.” ^{lxxiii}

The Ukrainian government did not orchestrate such acts, which clearly violate Article II, section b of the Convention, but by not protecting the victims or prosecuting the perpetrators, they became complicit. An explanation for this behaviour by Ukrainian law enforcement was provided by Radio Free Europe.

On February 13, 2019, it reported “Across social media, Ukrainian police and law enforcement officials are apologizing for one officer's slur aimed at far-right ultranationalists and making it known: They, too, are “#Banderites.” Or, to be clear, supporters of militant Ukrainian nationalists who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. National Police chief Serhiy Knyazev says

he is one. So does Interior Ministry and National Police spokesman Artem Shevchenko. Interior Ministry adviser Zoryan Shkyryak is, too.”^{lxxiv}

“Did Ukraine renege on implementing the 2015 Minsk II agreement with Russia?”

The Minsk II agreement was signed in 2015 to end the civil war in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine that erupted in reaction to the 2014 coup in Kyiv. (Map 16)



The agreement, the result of negotiations among Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), France and Germany, “...consisted of a package of measures, including a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front line, release of prisoners of war, constitutional reform in the Ukraine granting self-government to certain areas of Donbas and restoring control of the state border to the Ukrainian government.” ^{lxxvi}

On April 18, 2022, independent journalist, Aaron Mate wrote, “The far-right threats to Zelensky undoubtedly thwarted a peace agreement [implementation of the 2015 Minsk II agreement] that could have prevented the Russian invasion. Just two weeks before Russian troops entered Ukraine, the *New York Times* noted that Zelensky ‘would be taking extreme political risks even to entertain a peace deal’ with Russia, as his government ‘could be rocked and possibly overthrown’ by far-right groups if he ‘agrees to a peace deal that in their minds gives too much to Moscow.’”

^{lxxvii}

The West apparently did nothing to protect Kyiv from the threat of a coup and ensure Ukraine implemented the Minsk II agreement. In *Responsible Statecraft*, April 9, 2022, Ted Snider wrote, “in the words of Richard Sakwa, Professor of Russian and European Politics at the University of Kent, ‘...neither the U.S. nor the EU put serious pressure on Kyiv to fulfil its part of the agreement...Instead, now the U.S. is clearly not interested in peace negotiations — it is waiting for a Russian defeat, however many Ukrainian lives are lost in the process.’ Though the U.S. officially endorsed Minsk, Anatol Lieven, senior research fellow on Russia and Europe at the

Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, told this writer, ‘they did nothing to push Ukraine into actually implementing it.’”^{lxxviii}

As Professor John Mearsheimer observed, “The Americans will side with the Ukrainian right ...Because the Americans, and the Ukrainian right, both do not want Zelensky cutting a deal with the Russians that makes it look like the Russians won.”^{lxxix}

According to Chas Freeman, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, “Everything we [U.S] are doing, rather than accelerate an end to the fighting and some compromise, seems to be aimed at prolonging the fighting,” ...they have pursued a policy of fighting Russia ‘to the last Ukrainian’ ... Noam Chomsky concurs that US policy amounts to a ‘death warrant’ for Ukraine”.^{lxxx}

To the West, Ukraine is only a pawn on Dr. Brzezinski’s Grand Chessboard of Realpolitik^{lxxxi}. As *The Washington Post* noted: “For some in NATO, it’s better for the Ukrainians to keep fighting, and dying, than to achieve a peace that comes too early or at too high a cost to Kyiv and the rest of Europe...there are limits to how many compromises some in NATO will support to win the peace.”^{lxxxii}

“Does the U.S. fund biological research laboratories in Ukraine?”

On March 11, 2022, the U.S. Defense Department released a Fact Sheet entitled “The Department of Defense’s Cooperative Threat Reduction Program - Biological Threat Reduction Program Activities in Ukraine”. It states, “The United States, through BTRP, has invested approximately \$200 million in Ukraine since 2005, supporting 46 Ukrainian laboratories, health facilities, and diagnostic sites...to reduce the risk posed by the former Soviet Union’s illegal biological weapons program...”^{lxxxiii}

According to the U.S. Embassy (Ukraine) website: “BTRP has upgraded many laboratories for the Ministry of Health and the State Food Safety and Consumer Protection Service of Ukraine, reaching Biosafety Level 2. In 2019, BTRP constructed two laboratories for the latter, one in Kyiv and one in Odesa.”^{lxxxiv}

Thirteen laboratories are listed on the U.S. Embassy (Ukraine) website as being funded by the U.S. Defense Department with a PDF “information summary” provided for each.

1. Dnipropetrovsk State Regional Diagnostic Veterinary Laboratory^{lxxxv}
2. IVM of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences^{lxxxvi}
3. Central Reference Laboratory^{lxxxvii}
4. Kherson Diagnostic Laboratory^{lxxxviii}
5. Ternopil Diagnostic Laboratory^{lxxxix}
6. Zakarpatska Diagnostic Laboratory^{xc}
7. Lviv Research Institute of Epidemiology and Hygiene^{xci}
8. Lviv Diagnostic Laboratory^{xcii}
9. Lviv Regional Diagnostic Veterinary Laboratory^{xciii}
10. Kharkiv Diagnostic Laboratory^{xciv}
11. Luhansk Regional Diagnostic Veterinary Laboratory^{xcv}
12. Dnipropetrovsk Diagnostic Laboratory^{xcvi}
13. Vinnytsia Diagnostic Laboratory^{xcvii}

Three of the facilities -- Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Kherson -- are near Russian territory. (Map 17)

Map 17^{xcviii}

If the purpose of the U.S. Defense Department's Biological Threat Reduction Program in Ukraine these past 17 years has been to reduce the threat of dangerous pathogens, why did Reuters report on March 11, 2022, "The World Health Organization advised Ukraine to destroy high-threat pathogens housed in the country's public health laboratories to prevent 'any potential spills' that would spread disease among the population..."^{xcix}

The U.S. Embassy (Ukraine) website provided the answer. "The U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program...accomplishes its bio-threat reduction mission through development of a bio-risk management culture; international research partnerships; and partner capacity for enhanced bio-security, bio-safety, and bio-surveillance measures."^c Its mission, therefore, is not the destruction of dangerous pathogens.

On the contrary. The U.S. Defense Department through "the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) competitively awarded Black & Veatch Special Projects Corp. (Black & Veatch) one of its Biological Threat Reduction Integrating Contracts (BTRIC) in 2008."^{ci} Black & Veatch is the integrating contractor for all thirteen Ukrainian biological research facilities funded by the U.S. Defense Department. In June 2010, "Black & Veatch completed Ukraine's first Biological Safety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory in Odessa...It is the first BSL-3 laboratory in the region..."^{cii}

According to the U.S. Department of Health, "BSL-3 laboratories are used to study infectious agents or toxins that may be transmitted through the air and cause potentially lethal infection through inhalation exposure."^{ciii} In 2020, the Ukrainian government revealed the country now had two BSL-3 biolabs.^{civ}

The Black & Veatch website states that "The BSL-3 laboratory was specifically designed and constructed to support work with especially dangerous pathogens that can be naturally occurring or introduced through a bioterrorism attack."^{cv} Its mission is to train "Ukrainian personnel in molecular diagnostics, biosafety, operations and maintenance, and laboratory management techniques. This training, along with three years of gradually decreasing sustainment and transition support, will provide Ukrainian scientists with the necessary resources to manage the BSL-3 laboratory."^{cvi} Until that is achieved, Black & Veatch, a U.S. company under contract to the

U.S. Department of Defense, is apparently responsible for operating and maintaining the most dangerous Ukrainian biological research facility.

The U.S. Defense Department's record at home for "enhanced bio-security, biosafety, and bio-surveillance measures" has been, at best, inadequate. "[A] report published on October 28, 2015 by the Blue-Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense, a bipartisan commission sponsored by the Hudson Institute and the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies [was the result of] the increasing evidence that 'the US government has mishandled extremely dangerous viruses and bacteria in some of its highest-level laboratories'. The report was indeed triggered by the discovery of hundreds of appalling lab mistakes, including vials of small-pox missed, lab mice (infected with deadly viruses) escaped, cattle infected in experiments sent to slaughter and their meat sold for human consumption, samples of live anthrax – instead of killed specimens – erroneously sent to labs across the US; and still others."^{cvi}

Three years later, "A report [Biological Select Agents and Toxins: Actions Needed to Improve Management of DOD's Biosafety and Biosecurity Program] yesterday [September 20, 2018], from the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) said the Department of Defense (DoD) has fallen short of meeting goals meant to improve the department's biosafety and biosecurity programs, leaving government labs still at risk. For 3 years, the DoD has been attempting to implement security reforms after reports revealed that an Army lab at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah accidentally sent 575 live samples of *Bacillus anthracis*, the bacterium that causes anthrax, to 194 labs over the course of a decade... the GAO said that while the Army had a clear 'concept' in mind for bolstering security at labs, it lacks concrete steps to ensure safety measures are implemented across the department."^{cvi}

The following year, 2019, "The lead U.S. military laboratory that studies some of the most dangerous pathogens has had to curtail its work because it failed a safety inspection last month. The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) in Frederick, Maryland, studies the highly regulated 'select agents' that cause Ebola, plague, tularemia, and other lethal diseases. An inspection in June by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta found USAMRIID had failed to properly recertify some workers in its biocontainment labs and also had a faulty wastewater decontamination system...A military spokesperson told the [The Frederick] News-Post that USAMRIID is attempting to rectify the problems..."^{cix}

In the case of Ukraine, after 17 years the stated policy of the U.S. Defense Department's Biological Threat Reduction Program to establish "enhanced bio-security, bio-safety, and bio- surveillance measures" for that country's biological research labs has not been met according to the July 31, 2019 decision of the Council of Europe.

"The Ukrainian legislation prohibiting biological weapons is detailed and comprehensive. However, a significant part of this legislation and regulation is outdated and fails to meet international norms and standards. It therefore requires urgent revision and updating to increase harmonisation with the respective world standards. There is no framework law on biosafety and biosecurity in Ukraine that outlines establishment of a biosafety and biosecurity system and its proper functioning (for example, which would legally identify the central executive body dealing with biosafety and biosecurity and carrying out expert and monitoring functions). Further, there is not currently comprehensive cooperation between all involved ministries, agencies and organizations for preventing and responding to emergency situations related to biological threats. Mechanisms for state control of adherence to biosecurity requirements during work with biological agents are also absent. There is no register of economic and non-economic actors working with hazardous biological agents in the territory of Ukraine. Furthermore, those actors that work with hazardous biological agents are not obliged by law to have relevant permits. In fact, elimination of the permit system resulted in a situation where there is no reporting and

control of adherence to the biosafety and biosecurity requirements in microbiological laboratories, the actual number of which is unknown.”^{cx}

In Ukraine, the goal of the U.S. Defense Department’s Biological Threat Reduction Program has been management of biological agent production.

But as the CIA acknowledged in “The Biological Chemical Warfare Threat,” released October 28, 2015 under a Freedom of Information Act request -- “Virtually all the equipment, technology, and materials needed for biological agent production are dual use. Therefore, very little distinguishes a vaccine plant from a BW [biological warfare] production facility ...Because of the dual-use nature of BW research and equipment, any BW program could be easily disguised as a legitimate enterprise. For example, known BW threat agents include the organisms that cause anthrax, botulism, tularemia, plague, and Q-fever; because these organisms represent a variety of clinical pathogens, extensive legitimate research is continually under way to eradicate or control them. Medical research or vaccine development, for example, requires production of such organisms on scales varying from laboratory to pilot and industrial levels. Agents that have been widely recognized as having military utility include pathogens-such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi-as well as toxins.”^{cxi}

One way to know what the U.S. funded biological research labs in Ukraine are doing is to have transparency. But Article VII, Sections 2, 3, and 4, of the 2005 Agreement between the Defense Department of the United States and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine Concerning Cooperation

in the Area of Prevention of Proliferation of Technology, Pathogens and Expertise that could be Used in the Development of Biological Weapons forbids public disclosure of their work.

Section 2A. “According to the laws and regulations of the United States of America, such information shall be treated as ‘sensitive information of a foreign government,’ and shall be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by the laws and regulations of the United States of America. Any such information transmitted by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine to the U.S. Department of Defense must be accompanied by a written declaration from the Government of Ukraine which states that it is withholding such information from public disclosure and that the information is provided to the Government of the United States of America on the condition that it not be released to the public without the approval of the Government of Ukraine. In this written declaration, the Government of Ukraine shall specify the date until which the information provided should be withheld from public disclosure by the Government of the United States of America. That date may be extended by the U.S. Department of Defense, to the extent permitted by the laws and regulations of the United States of America, in accordance with a request by the Government of Ukraine.”

Section 2B. “Information marked or designated by the U.S. Department of Defense as ‘sensitive’ should be withheld from public disclosure by the Government of Ukraine”.

Section 3. “The Parties shall minimize the number of persons who have access to information that is designated ‘sensitive’ or ‘restricted information’ in accordance with Paragraph 2 of this article.”

Section 4. “During implementation of this Agreement, access to certain information and technology considered ‘state secret of Ukraine’ may be provided to the U.S. Department of Defense in accordance with the provisions of the ‘Law of Ukraine on State Secret.’”^{cxii}

Why is such an agreement with the U.S. Defense Department and not the U.S. State Department or the Center for Disease Control and Prevention?

Testifying to Congress on March 11, 2022, Biden Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland, stated "Ukraine has biological research facilities, which, in fact, we are quite concerned Russian troops, Russian forces, may be seeking to gain control of, so we are working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces should they approach."^{cxiii}

As Senator Marco Rubio asked William J. Burns, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, "how there can be things in the lab that are dangerous, but they may not be weapons labs?"^{cxiv}

Perhaps more revealing was testimony from Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, who "told the Senate Intelligence Committee that Ukraine 'operates a little over a dozen' biolabs for biodefence and public health response."^{cxv}

According to the National Library on Medicine, "Biodefense uses medical measures to protect people against bioterrorism. This includes medicines and vaccinations."^{cxvi}

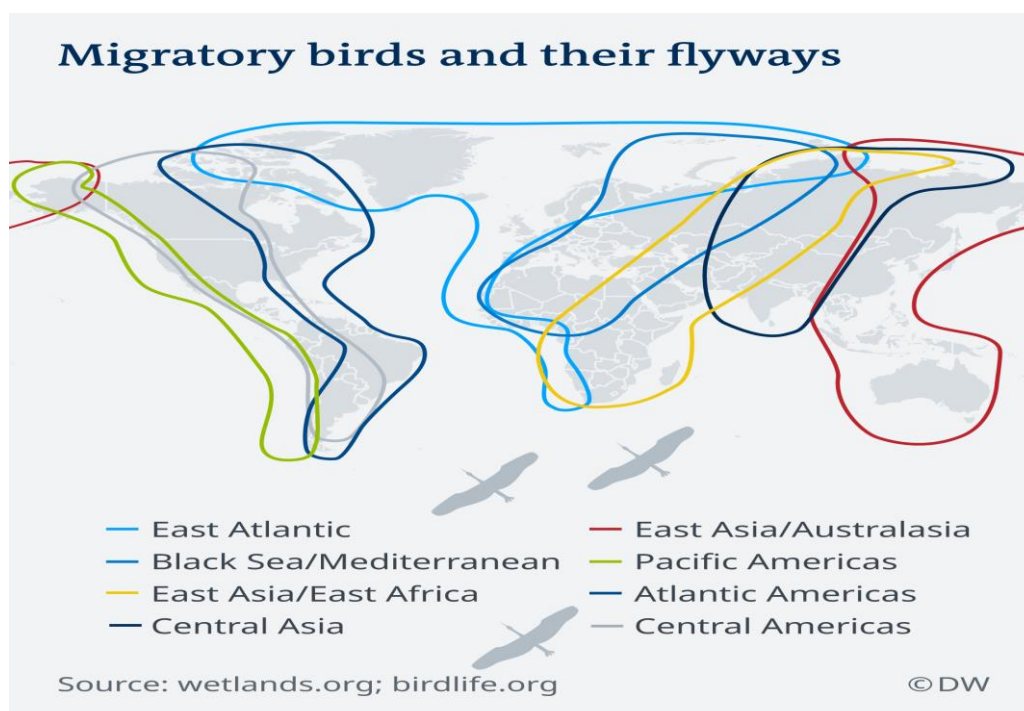
But as the CIA disclosed "very little distinguishes a vaccine plant from a BW [biological warfare] production facility."^{cxvii}

"Has the U.S. military sought to use migratory bird as biological weapons?"

The U S Embassy (Ukraine) website states its active research projects include: "Risk Assessment of Selected Avian EDPs [embryonic developmental period] Potentially Carried by Migratory Birds over Ukraine"^{cxviii}

According to the National Institute of Health, "Wild birds are important to public health because they carry emerging zoonotic pathogens, [an infectious disease that is transmitted between species from animals to humans] either as a reservoir host or by dispersing infected arthropod vectors. In addition, bird migration provides a mechanism for the establishment of new endemic foci of disease at great distances from where an infection was acquired."^{cxix} (Map 18)

Map 18^{cx}



Research on dangerous pathogens does not necessarily make such research a weapons project. As a 1998 working paper of the Center for Counterproliferation explained, "A biological agent is not necessarily a biological weapon. Only if there is a mechanism for spreading the agent is it transformed into a weapon. Thus, a pathogen growing on a petri dish is not a weapon, or even a threat, because it is unlikely to infect anyone...In some cases, the release method need not be very sophisticated. If the agent is highly contagious, infecting a single person or animal may be sufficient to start an epidemic." ^{cxxi}

Enter "Operation Starbrite," a secret U.S. military biological weapons program concealed in a private, ecological research project. From 1961 to 1970, the U.S. Defense Department funded the Smithsonian Institution's "Pacific Ocean Bird Project". As detailed in The Washington Post, May 12, 1985, it "spanned eight years, cost the Pentagon \$3 million, and involved dozens of Smithsonian staffers and Defense Department workers. From the first, the Smithsonian knew the contract was with the controversial Fort Detrick biological warfare research centre in Frederick, Md. And even that fact was classified secret. The Smithsonian was prohibited from divulging anything about its work without clearance from Fort Detrick." ^{cxxii}

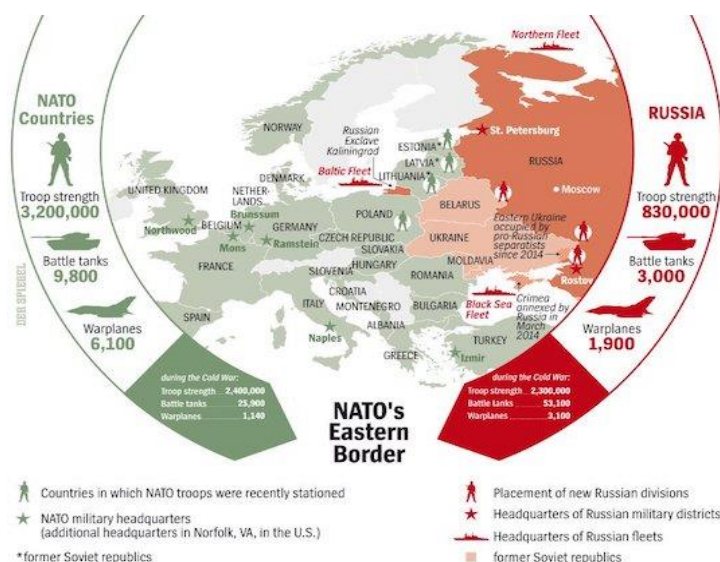
Just as the biological research labs in Ukraine funded by the U.S. Defense Department are prohibited from making any public disclosure about their work.

"The leaders of this scholarly band of curators and ecologists reported their findings to military scientists whose interest was not birds but biological weapons...to know if sea birds could be used as carriers of biological weapons, winging deadly disease across borders..." The Pentagon found: "Some Pacific oceanic birds...can 'migrate tremendous distances and reach target areas with about 97 percent accuracies' ...In military terms, birds could be 'avian vectors of disease.'" ^{cxxiii}

CONCLUSION

Twenty-four years ago, in a 1998 interview with The New York Times, George F. Kennan, former U.S. Ambassador to Stalin's Soviet Union and architect of the U.S. policy of Soviet containment, warned NATO expansion would be a "strategic blunder of potentially epic proportions...Of course, there is going to be a bad reaction from Russia, and then [the NATO expanders] will say that we always told you that is how the Russians are...I think it is a tragic mistake...There was no reason for this whatsoever. No one was threatening anybody else..." ^{cxxiv} Compare NATO's military strength to Russia's. (Map 19)

Map 19 ^{cxxv}



Kennan lamented, “I was particularly bothered by the references to Russia as a country dying to attack Western Europe. Don't people understand? Our differences in the cold war were with the Soviet Communist regime. And now we are turning our backs on the very people who mounted the greatest bloodless revolution in history to remove that Soviet regime.”

On March 7, 2022, two weeks after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ted Galen Carpenter of the Cato Institute wrote how “In his 2014 memoir, *Duty*, Robert M. Gates, who served as secretary of defense in both Bush’s administration and Barack Obama’s, conceded that ‘trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was truly overreaching.’ That initiative, he concluded, was a case of ‘recklessly ignoring what the Russians considered their own vital national interests.’”^{cxxvi}

Perception is reality. The answer to the eleven questions, answers which come from Western sources, is the perception of reality being acted upon by Moscow. Those answers make a negotiated peace in the near future seems unlikely.

This is an expanded version of the article, “Mad or bad? Behind President Putin’s justifications for war,” Defence Viewpoints from the UK Defence Forum, June 30, 2022

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Articles :

(1)UKRAINE AND RUSSIA CONFLICT: A SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

Like the present crisis in Ukraine, the crisis of 2014 also raised major concern for all countries of the world. It was stated after the crisis of 2014 that the recent Russian-Ukrainian dispute over Crimea attracted wide international attention.(Bebler,2015).The crisis in Ukraine since 2013 and its local, regional, and global ramifications indicates a return to the dynamics of violent state fragmentation prevalent in the early 1990s. (Malyarenkoa and Wolff, 2022).Since the time of World War II, the invasion of Russia on Ukraine is perhaps the biggest military mobilization in Europe. It has been rightly said that following the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022, it is the largest mobilization of forces Europe has seen since 1945.The so called attack on Ukraine by Russia may be termed as a potential onset of war in. It has been termed as Russia's behest for an end to NATO's expansion in the eastward direction. It has also been observed that the launch of invasion by Russia on Ukraine was started with air and missile assaults on Ukrainian military targets. This step was taken by Russia prior to the sending of troops and tanks across the country's northern, eastern, and southern borders. In spite of the fact, it has been observed that on many of the fronts, the Ukrainian military took adequate measures to extend fight back. After the attack by Russia on Ukraine was launched, there was a serious protest by the Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. In fact, in a video speech which was delivered on February 25, 2022, it was announced that by that time, a total number of 137 people were killed. It included troops and civilians. Apart from that hundreds more were seriously injured.

BACKGROUND OF THE ATTACK BY RUSSIA.

If we like to analyse the present attack on Ukraine by Russia, we have to look back. In fact, since the time of invasion of Crimea in the year of 2014, Ukraine had been under a fear psychosis of war from Russia's end for about a period of eight years. A cursory glance would reveal the fact that Russia and Ukraine have been at odds for quite a long period of time. In fact, it has been the persistent claim by Russia that Ukraine is a part of its country. In this regard, Russia has been relentlessly opposed Ukraine's developing ties to the West. The major aim of the Russian President Vladimir Putin has been to recapture the former Soviet Union Republic. In order to fulfill his objectives, President Putin extended a request to the Ukrainian military to put down their weapons. It needs to be mentioned that prior to its cessation in the

year of 1991, Russia and Ukraine were both parts of the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which consisted of 15 republics.

BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

Now let us look into the background of the conflict between Russia and that of Ukraine. After the disintegration of the then Soviet Union, Ukraine gained independence in the year of 1991. In this regard, we may note the following which are very significant in order to make a proper trace into the background of the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

1. Ukraine was a part/member of the then Soviet Union until the year 1991. In this year, Ukraine was disintegrated. But right from that time, Russia had been trying to bring the country in its orbit.
2. In the year of 2014, a separatist insurgency started in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, **Donetsk Basin**.
3. It had been a significant advantage on the part of Russia when it gained a maritime advantage in the region due to its invasion and annexation of Crimea.
4. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, both the US and the EU have pledged to safeguard the integrity of Ukraine's borders, perhaps to stop the aggressive nature of Russia.
5. Further, it had been a topmost interest of Russia to bring Ukraine under its fold because when the Soviet Union broke up in the early '90s, Ukraine, which was a former Soviet republic, had the third largest atomic arsenal in the world. As a matter of fact, both the United States and Russia had worked with Ukraine to denuclearize the country. In this regard, a series of diplomatic agreements were carried out. In the process, Kyiv gave its hundreds of nuclear warheads back to Russia in exchange for security assurances. After the disintegration of Ukraine, this step of Ukraine protected it from 1991 to 2014 from a potential Russian attack. But as a matter of fact, those assurances were put to the test in the year of 2014, when Russia invaded Ukraine. Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and backed a rebellion led by pro-Russia separatists in the eastern Donbas region. But, Russia's assault led to mass protests in Ukraine that toppled the country's pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich. During this period, the US diplomats paid their visit to pacify the demonstrations. Although it was symbolic gestures, but it had further agitated Putin to launch attack on Ukraine.

GENESIS OF THE CONFLICT:

Now let us turn our attention to the genesis of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It was on February 21, 2022, the Russian Federation officially recognized the independence of two non-government-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk. Just after the lapse of two days, Ukraine declared a nationwide state of emergency as a mark of protest against the undemocratic steps taken by Russia. But Russia also did not sit silently and on February 24, the Russian Federation announced a military operation on Ukraine in a massive scale. At this point, it is necessary to make a mention of the fact that none of these actions happened in a vacuum. As a matter of fact, an armed conflict in eastern Ukraine began in Crimea nearly eight years ago to the day following the February 21 recognition. An in depth analysis would reveal the fact that the heat and sensation between Russia and Ukraine which was a former Soviet republic, existed from a quite long period of time. In practice, the situation began to escalate at a faster rate and went out of control in early 2021. Taking this situation in a serious position, the Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, approached the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden, to allow Ukraine to join the NATO as early as in January, 2021. As it was seen that Russia was highly infuriated for launching attack on Ukraine. Russia started sending soldiers near the Ukrainian border for "training exercises" in the spring of last year and highly boosted the number of soldiers in the fall. It was seen that the US took side of the Ukraine and expressed deep concern regarding the deployment of Russian troops. In fact, the US had threatened Russia with heavy sanctions if Russia attacked Ukraine. We should also look to the other side of the premise. As of reality, Russia sincerely wanted a legally enforceable promise from that of the US that NATO forces will not conduct any military operations in Eastern Europe, especially in Ukraine. To Russia, US approach to Ukraine was not the major issue. Rather, according to the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, Ukraine is merely a puppet of the US and was never a real sovereign country in the first place. Therefore, Ukraine was definitely at the forefront but the real objective of Russia was to ask US to stop its influence in eastern Europe. Mr. Putin indicated that his ultimate goal is to capture Kyiv, topple Ukraine's democratically elected government, and subsume the country into Russia's orbit.

It is important to note in this connection that the present conflict between Russia and Ukraine was not the first one. Rather, it was seen that Russia had previously invaded Ukraine also in the year of 2014. The situation took place when pro-Putin separatists captured major swaths of eastern Ukraine and they have been fighting the Ukrainian army since the invasion. During this period of time, Russia also annexed Crimea. So far as Russia and Ukraine are concerned, it

should be said that Ukraine has a very deep social and cultural ties with that of Russia. Further, the Russian language is widely spoken in Ukraine. But as a matter of fact, those ties between Russia and Ukraine significantly deteriorated since Russia invaded Ukraine in the year of 2014. It is to be mentioned further that when the Ukraine's pro-Russian President lost in early 2014, Russia came to an offensive position. The war claimed more than 14,000 lives who died as a result of the continuous war between Russia and Ukraine. With the passage of time, in order to gain peace and to end the ongoing violent armed conflict which was going on in east Ukraine, including Donbas region, the Minsk peace agreement was signed between Russia and Ukraine. When there was an allegation against Russia, Russia said that it will be sending "peacekeepers" to the affected region.

Minsk II Agreement was a 13 point agreement that involved representatives from Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and was signed in 2015. The major aim of the agreement was to end the war in the Donbas region of Ukraine. The agreement intended to take a series of steps with regards to military and political reforms to establish peace in the disputed areas of Donetsk and Luhansk of Ukraine.

It should be mentioned that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine had far reaching ramifications. Again, the rising tension between Russia and Ukraine, which shares a border with the European Union, has ramifications for the European Union too. It is perhaps for this reason that the European Union joined the US in declaration of the penalties against Russian firms, the majority of which are the NATO members. It is to be said further that 'peace' have been the major concern of all the national leaders. For example, it may be referred that the French President Emmanuel Macron undertook a travel to Moscow with a view to meet the Russian President Vladimir Putin with the mission to insist the Russian President to make a halt in the process of the rising tensions. It is recorded that on February 24, 2022, Russia launched a military offensive against Ukraine. It resulted in the escalation of a long-simmering crisis with much deep and devastating effect. Within a span of two months, the conflict resulted in the displacement of nearly 30% of the country's population. It also stranded another 30% in conflict zones. The statistical figure is really alarming. As of April 29, 2022, the Russia Ukraine war resulted 5.3 million refugees, 7.7 million internally displaced people (IDPs) 13 million civilians were stranded in combat zones and unable to leave. Further, 15.7 million people were in dire need of humanitarian aid and 6,009 civilians have been victims of casualties and it has caused 2,829 civilian deaths.

If we consider the Russia Ukraine war from a humanitarian perspective, it would clearly reveal the fact that the Ukraine crisis is largely a refugee crisis. It has been estimated that in just the first week of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine, more than 1 million Ukrainians fled from their homeland leaving behind their belongings. The total number of refugees is really alarming. It has been reported that as of April 29, the number has shot to 5.3 million refugees, swiftly making Ukraine one of world's crises. It is also a matter of great concern that 7.7 million Ukrainians have been displaced internally within the territorial jurisdiction of the country. An estimate shows that in sum total, the conflict has resulted in the uprooting of more than 13 million Ukrainians, which is approximately 30% of the country's population. The estimate of the UNHCR also shown that 13 million Ukrainians have been stranded in the zones of conflict. In fact, they were unable to leave the epicentre due to heightened security risks, destruction of bridges and roads. The additional problem has been that they also lack the proper information as to where to find out a safe accommodation. So far as the refugees are concerned, it should be stated that Poland has been a good shelter for the Ukraine refugees. In fact, Poland has given shelter to nearly 3 million Ukrainian refugees. It may be said that many of the refugees had friends and family living in Poland before the escalation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. So far as statistics available, nearly 1.5 million Ukrainians lived in Poland at the beginning of 2022. This number suddenly shot to a very significant height. Just for example, if we take the case of Kraków alone, the city's population increased by over 20%. The Polish government reflected a very high friendly gesture. In March, 2022. The Polish government passed a law which allowed the Ukrainians to legally live in the territory of Poland and work in the country for a period of 18 months. This law also kept a provision of option to extend the period of stay in Poland. In sum total, Poland has shown a very generous attitude to the Ukraine refugees.

DIRECT IMPACT OF THE WAR

The war between Russia and Ukraine has left behind several impacts. Like the UK and many other nations worldwide, experts suggest that European nations will face higher rates of inflation and a supply chain disruption due to Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2022. (Mbah and Wasum, 2022). It has been estimated that nearly three-quarters of a million Ukrainians have been internally displaced. It may be attributed to the last eight years of instability that prevailed. Those living in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions which cover approximately 3.4 million people which also include 510,000 children have faced nearly a decade of insecurity and uncertainty. It has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, it has been said

that despite nearly a decade of conflict in eastern Ukraine, most of the Ukrainians and other European nationals in the surrounding area opened their lips to the press that they had never imagined that a full-scale military operation would take place. It was beyond the horizons of their imagination. In view of the potential war situation, many people began to formulate their own emergency plans in case a situation arises. It was done as early as in February, 2022. But, at the same time, a very few of them believed they would need to act on their emergency measures. In order to protect their lives, they had to explore city resources, like neighborhood bunkers and bomb shelters. All these were shared, but they were locked and residents had no clear idea as to who had the responsibility for opening them in case of an attack. During the tension periods of war between Russia and Ukraine, the residents in the cities like Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa, took shelter in underground subway stations. In view of the attack on Ukraine by Russia, thousands of people were deprived from electricity supply and most important of them had been the supply of drinking water at their home. It was due to the major damage inflicted on civilian infrastructure. More broadly, although the Russia-Ukraine war has gained global attention, little attention has been given to the associated mental health crisis for child and adolescent refugees. (Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 2022). As per reports of the WHO, the Ukrainians with chronic diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes or cancer) have been particularly vulnerable. As per figures available, among one-third of the families at least one member is a victim of chronic health condition. In the war situation, they were unable to get proper medications and treatments which they needed. Since the healthcare facilities have been the targets for attacks, many of the Ukrainians opted to stay home. Again, the most serious of all is that the expecting mothers and women who have recently given birth also faced risk for similar reasons. There is no denying the fact the war has unleashed a devastating humanitarian toll and has claimed thousands of innocent lives. Further, the war situation has also prompted more than three million people to flee from Ukraine. With the occurrence of the Russia-Ukraine war, as of early April 2022, millions of refugees have fled Ukraine into neighboring countries; approximately 80% are women and children, of which half are children and adolescents (Global Times, 2022). In view of this situation, spurring what the United Nations has called the fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II. The other side of the impact of the war should also be focused. Ukraine has been a leading agricultural exporter. Usually, Ukraine is described as “the breadbasket of Europe.” But due to the war situation and other consequential effects, the crop production in the country would decrease by as much as 50% this year due to halted planting seasons, crop and land losses, and fuel and fertilizer shortages. Naturally, it would lead to escalating food prices and massive food shortages. It is

not only in the case of Ukraine but also the States which are significantly dependent on Ukraine and Russia for staple grains, oil, and seed imports. Ultimately, people living in extreme poverty will bear the brunt of this. In reality, at the start of 2021, around 45 million people were at risk of catastrophic hunger.

A million dollar question has been posed as to why Russia is so much concerned about Ukraine. The answer may be found in the following lines.

Importance of Ukraine to Russia

1. As per record, Ukraine and Russia have shared cultural and linguistic ties for more than hundreds of years.
2. If we consider from the power context, Ukraine was the most powerful country in the Soviet Union after Russia.
3. One of the most important dimensions is that Ukraine has been a hub for commercial industries, factories and defence manufacturing. It is a most strategic key issue.
4. The geographical location of Ukraine also has been one of the key factors. Ukraine provides Russia with access to the Black Sea and crucial connectivity to the Mediterranean Sea.

Another question which has consumed much of the thought arena of the scholars in the field of international relations is that as to what are the other factors that led Russia to attack Ukraine. It has been pointed out that the chief reasons for Russian aggression are several economic factors.

They are:

1. Russia deeply took into account the economic significance of Ukraine and sought Ukraine's membership in the **Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC)**, which is a free trade agreement that came into being in 2015.
2. Since Ukraine has a huge market and advanced agriculture and industrial output, Ukraine was supposed to play an important role. But Ukraine refused to join the agreement which became a major concern for Russia.

Apart from the geographical factors, mention must be made of the Geo-Political and Strategic Factors.

It has been persistent claim of Russia that the eastward expansion by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which they call “**enlargement**”, has largely threatened Russia’s interests and accordingly, Russia has asked for written security guarantees from the NATO.

Further, the NATO, led by the U.S., has planned to install missile defence systems in Eastern Europe in countries like Poland and the Czech Republic to counter Russia’s intercontinental-range missiles. All these factors have been a major concern for Russia.

CONCLUSION

The 2022 Russia-Ukraine war can be summarized in the words of Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State as he stated, “it’s bigger than a conflict between two countries. It’s bigger than Russia and NATO. It’s a crisis with global consequences, and it requires global attention and action” (U.S. Department of State, 2022). The war in Ukraine represents a challenge for the global economy. (Liadze, et al. 2022). The Russia Ukraine war became a major concern of all countries of the world. Many of the commentators even termed it as the beginning of the third world war. At the conclusion it should be mentioned that several rounds of diplomatic talks between Russia and Ukraine have failed to stop the war. In order to put a strong pressure, the United States and the European Union mobilized to impose some of the toughest economic sanctions ever on Mr. Putin’s government. In actuality, several hundreds of Western businesses, manufacturers, oil companies, retailers and fast-food chains like the McDonald’s suspended operations in Russia, turning back the clock on the country’s opening to the west. This was, in the true sense of the term, a very significant step to stop or make a halt of the war situation. During the turmoil period, many of the experts who were close to the situation, from both a political and humanitarian perspective, agreed that there will not be a short road to peace. It was their clear feeling that if violence spreads or intensifies, it will undoubtedly continue to carry the harshest impact for Ukrainian civilians, both for those who remained in their country and for those who sought asylum abroad. The number of displaced persons continued to rise in an alarming rate. It definitely posed a serious problem for the neighbouring countries. It has been rightly contemplated that even after the treaties are signed and troops withdrawn, recovery efforts will definitely not be an easy task. The violent activities left a serious effect on the communication towers, schools, residential neighborhoods, water points, hospitals, and roads.

The primary task would be to make an arrangement to return the refugees. But the refugees who have lost everything will need maximum possible assistance to rebuild their lives, homes, and communities without facing cyclical poverty. Apart from that, millions of people would be in need of psychosocial support and protection. A special care has to be given to the women and the children, who make up most of Ukraine's refugees. It is so because they face added vulnerabilities, along with the people who are disabled, the elderly, and ethnic minorities. The invasion has already threatened to destabilize the already volatile post-Soviet region, with serious consequences for the security structure that has governed Europe since the 1990s. Mr. Putin has long lamented the loss of Ukraine and other republics when the Soviet Union broke apart. Now, diminishing the NATO, the military alliance that helped keep the Soviets in check, appears to be part of his mission keeping Ukraine on the face of it. Finally, if we take the world impact of the Russia – Ukraine war, it may be said that the Russian illegal war in Ukraine has accelerated a shift in the world order forcing a renewed balance of power. (Chenoy, 2022). Therefore, the situation is very grave and needs to be handled with utmost care and sincerity.

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(2) Basics of Russia-Ukraine War and Its Consequences

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Abstract

Ukraine, a country, having 603,628 kilometers of area is an integral part of Eastern Europe and also the second largest nation in size of the region after Russia which borders many other countries-Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, apart from coastlines of Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. After its declaration of Ukrainian People's Republic on 23 June 1917 in post- World War two phase it merged with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic but regained its independence in 1991 in the wake of dissolution of Soviet Union. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Soviet Russia maintained cordial relations and in 1994, Ukraine even abandoned its nuclear programme and signed the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances on the condition that all the three- Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States of America would assure its territorial guarantee and along with political independence and assurance against the use of force. All these commitments were further confirmed after five years when Russia became a signatory of the Charter for European Security under which each and every member who signed the treaty assumed to be free to choose and change its security arrangements. After being independent, Ukraine declared itself a neutral state and formed military partnership with Russia and joined other alliances including establishing relations with North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) in 1994, which annoyed Russia because while it was with USSR it was a part of Warsaw Pact and, traditionally it was considered as an area of Soviet influence. In line, for the first time, in 2008 Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke publicly against Ukraine's membership of NATO which was also criticized by the analysts of Romania who Russia for its mentality of 1980s and 1990s and linked the idea to Brezhnev Doctrine.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, NATO, European Union, National Security.

Background of Russia-Ukraine Relations

In fact, in case of Ukraine while Russia considered it an area of influence, other Western countries including the United States of America supposed it as a separate nation, totally free from Soviet Russia. Its inclinations towards the West and membership of NATO remained a matter of concern for Russia since 1994 and, as a result, over the years, the general public of the country divided into pro and anti-Russian groups. The people of eastern part Ukraine who used to speak Russian language remained loyal to Soviet Russia while its western portion of the nation continue to support European countries. It followed weeks of protests as part of the Euromaidan movement of 2013-2014 and pro- Russian President of the country, Viktor Yanukovich and Opposition leader of Ukrainian Parliament entered into an agreement with the then President on 21 February 2014 to call for an early election. The same day President of the nation fled away due to an impeachment motion against him which was to be tabled in the

House. In the general elections held in May 2014, an anti-Russian and pro-European President Petro Poroshenko won with over fifty percent of votes and took over the reign of Administration in Ukraine. The unrest in Ukraine did not stop here and months after the event a war broke out in Donetsk (April 2014), and with the active support of Soviet Russia two self-proclaimed republics-Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic came into existence leading to the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the same year. The continuing unrest in the country is not in its interest as Ukraine is a developing nation having 74th rank in Human Development Index (HDI), suffering from high poverty and severe corruption, but is one of the largest grain exporters in the world due to its extensive fertile farmlands and also maintains the third largest military in Europe after Russia and France.

The situation in Ukraine deteriorated further with the coming of an anti- Russian government on June 7, 2014, and it was the starting point of continued struggle between pro and anti-Russian people in the country, the eastern part aligning with Russia while its western region attached with sentiments of NATO and Western countries. The fear of Russian intervention was already a possible speculation in the background of annexation of Crimea in 2014 and creation of two republics with active support of Kremlin, which also made the whole environment Ukraine-conscious. Recently, on September 20, 2020, Volodymyr Zelensky, the President of the nation, approved a new security proposal which moved to a new and more strong relations with European countries and NATO members and, in line, on March 24, 2021 he signed a decree bearing no. 117/2021 which approved the strategy to occupy and reintegrate some parts of Crimea along with city of Sevastopol. The new emerging situations, especially in the part of Ukraine's ruler aggravated Russia as Western influences were on the rise in in the country and Russia viewed a security problem for itself in this development. In response, Russia, in July 2021, published a paper titled, On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainian, which clearly re-affirmed the dictum that the people of both nations are the same and should be considered 'one people'. The Russian views of Ukraine were criticized by many Western scholars and claimed it to be the idea of Putin's imperialism, revisionism which has distorted Ukraine and its history in modern times. However, the Russian paper said it clearly that Ukraine's increasing proximity with NATO and Western countries is a direct threat to Russian security.

The direct declared war between Russia and Ukraine is going on about for the last one fortnight causing an untold loss of resources- human as well as materials and as it was continuing on Ukraine's soil, it has left dozens of its cities/towns in a dilapidated position with no exception of schools and hospitals. The people across the world view their television and read newspapers and contact other social medias in the hope that it will bring some good news for the humanity regarding durable ceasefire or end of intense war, in return, they found nothing except indefinite running of war news and casualties on both sides. The both countries are acquainted with each other as before disintegration Ukraine was a part of undivided USSR and became independent in 1991 along with other republics of the present Soviet Federation and even after separation they maintained a good relation for decades, their differences on nuclear arsenal and signing of different agreements continue till date to aggravate the situation. In general, the Russian Federation remained dominant among erstwhile Soviet republics, but it was too hard for Ukraine to accept the reality. This conception led Ukraine to form a almost anti- Russian front called GUAM Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development in the year 2001 which include, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. In fact, practically, it was a challenge for Russian dominance especially in sphere of trade. The situation aggravated further by 2004 with the launch of Orange Revolution which resulted in installation of a pro-European regime in the country and by the time Ukraine began preferring European countries

and NATO in place of Russian Federation for future dependencies and security purposes against the Russia. Meanwhile, a pro- Russian government formed in Ukraine in 2010 wherein Russia found an opportunity to renew its several treaties/ agreements with Ukraine, it however pushed Ukraine to move towards European Union swiftly, making Russia more security-conscious. Ukraine's plan of drifting away from Russia implemented after 2014 when an anti-Russia regime took over in the country.

In post-2014 phase while Russian Federation wanted to have a good understanding with Ukraine, the later always tried to remain near the European Union and NATO, which the former considered a security threat for itself and in the period, Russia warned Ukraine several times not to move with Western countries and ignore Kremlin. From all points of view-economic, political, security, strategic, and diplomatic Ukraine became a concerned zone as Western influence in the country was on the rise and anti-Russian steps were in the pipeline. Even, the country itself was divided in pro-Russia and anti-Russian areas. The Russian-speaking regions of east and south Ukraine were sympathized with Kremlin and launched a separatist movement against the government of Ukraine with the full support of Russia, the rest part of the country was in favour of joining European Union and NATO to protect itself from authoritarian rule of Russian Federation. As a result, from 2016 onwards Russia began financing separatists of Ukraine who captured many buildings and other establishments to pave the way for an armed conflict between forces of Ukraine governments and Russian supported separatists. Earlier the Russian Federation had strengthened its position by annexing Crimea in 2014 which was a clear signal for Ukraine, and in following years, it speeded up the move to join European Union and become an active member of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). On the other hand, the separatists found huge support of armed forces and arms-ammunitions from Russian side for a long time till date, although Western powers, European Union and NATO were also active in Ukraine to stop the influence of Kremlin, perhaps, due to strategic significance of the country itself.

Outbreak of War and Its Effects

In the middle of military conflict, tension and chaos on both sides, in December 2019 Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President, the Chancellor of Germany and President of Ukraine met in Paris to resolve the crisis as more than 110 soldiers had been killed in the one year of conflict (2019) with the separatists. Now fear psychosis prevailed in both sides, and while Ukraine feared Russian annexation like Crimea any time, Russia apprehended Ukraine's joining European Union and its entry in the security network of NATO which is a clear threat to Russian sovereignty, security and territorial integrity in the present circumstances. It led Russia to move a large number of military personnel and armaments from western and central Russia by March-April 2021 and thousands of armed forces were deployed on several posts of Russia-Ukraine border. In response, in September 2021, Ukraine conducted military exercises with NATO forces. In the same month, the Russian Federation, apart from arranging a joint military exercise with Belorussia, warned Ukraine about its expanding military relations with NATO as it is crossing the "red lines". In line, in November 2021 Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed annoyance over increasing presence and deployment of NATO's long-range missile which is capable of targeting Moscow and its missile defence system.

From the early of the year 2022 all concerned parties remained involved as Russian military deployment continued to be on rise and it directly threatened the security of Ukraine and its nearby countries. Throughout the period the Russia had accused NATO of ignoring Kremlin's security considerations and as a last resort, on 22 February 2022, President Putin stated to speed up diplomatic efforts to solve the problem and charged Ukraine of supplying

sophisticated weaponry to Ukraine. Keeping in view the deteriorating situation president of the country announced 30 days emergency period for the whole of Ukraine on 23 February 2022. Ultimately, the Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered invasion on Ukraine because he considered modern/present Ukraine, a major security threat for Russian Federation and it is neither safe or secure until Ukraine is made free from impacts of European Union and NATO. Following the declaration of war Ukraine's airports, military headquarters, nuclear plants, hospitals, schools, dams and other establishments of public importance and government offices in the whole country were destroyed one by one and for more than a week, its capital Kyiv, is struggling hard to defend itself from Russian warheads ready to capture the capital, stationed in its surroundings.

The normal life of the people of Ukraine became harder on 24 February 2022 when, Russian Federation, a super power of the time attacked on its territory due to diplomatic/strategic reasons best known by all of us. It followed in daily routine an environment of fear and uncertainty continuing till today on account of lingering the war beyond Russian expectations and veiled support of Ukraine extended by NATO members including the United States of America. In the continuing war Ukraine suffered a lot as it was the largest military assault on a European State since World War two, although it was started in 2014 when an anti-Russian dispensation took over in the country and Russian -speaking people began helping Russia against the homeland government, dividing the nation in pro and anti-government factions. Even a part of the territory was captured by Russian-backed separatists and going a step further, Kremlin recognized the two republics-Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic as separate states managed and maintained by Russian supporters. On that very day, the Federation Council of Russia authorized Vladimir Putin to use military force abroad, and following the authorization, the Russian forces entered in these two states of Ukraine. As a result, in addition to heavy losses due to the ongoing war, more than one million Ukrainians left the country and took shelter in East European countries keeping in view their security and safety. Under a planned war strategy multi-pronged invasion were made on Ukraine where the latter proved helpless before the world community, although it got a lot of direct assistance from the NATO countries, especially the United States of America without being directly involved in the war. Thus, a group of anti-Russia sympathized and helped Ukraine to face massive and extended war on the part of Kremlin.

Most people and nations of the world are of the opinion that Russian Federation has fueled fire and is also responsible for not ending the war at the earliest and while Ukraine is fighting in its defense, Russia has attacked Ukraine in a offensive way to destroy as well as capture the country by force to end or minimize its leanings towards NATO and the Western countries including America. The Kremlin estimation in assessing Ukraine's real power has also went wrong because since 2014, the UK, US, EU and NATO have provided the country the non-lethal military aid to the country, making it a viable fighter against the power like Russia. In continuation these nations have also sold it varieties of war weapons and anti-tank missiles in 2018, 2019 and 2022 that made Ukraine capable to stand before Russia for such a long time (about 40 days). In the war even, foreign volunteers are frequently allowed to participate from Ukraine's side and in an order dated 1 March 2022, it also provisionally lifted visa restrictions for those volunteers who want to come and fight Ukraine's side as a little latter it was disclosed by the Ukraine's foreign minister that as of 6 March 2022 around 20,000 foreign nationals from 52 countries are fighting against the Russian attack. In fact, they came in response to the call given by its President Zelenskyy who earlier created the International Legion of Territorial Defence of Ukraine to which Russia opposed vehemently and began preparing to counter the front. Only because of claims and counterclaims, at the juncture, it is

not possible to know the authentic number of deaths of civilian and military forces/persons engaged in this war and even the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights considers the number of civilian casualties to be higher than they certify and announce.

Peace Efforts and Resolution

The Russian attack on Ukraine is a clear violation of international law, norms, and practices implemented since the end of Second World War but especially after formation of the United Nations Organisation (UNO). At the juncture while almost entire world community is against the Russian invasion on Ukraine as it had violated/distorted the very first stated purpose of the UN which says, 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind' and to have these dreams come true, it founded the organization called UN was established based on the sovereignty of states as mentioned in article 2 (1) of the Charter and also outlawed the use of force by one state against another (article 2 (4)). In the context, it is clear that sending armies across the border of a state without its consent or without authorization of the UN Security is an attack on one by another. In addition, the Kremlin also violated international law and norms by recognizing two republics of Ukraine as independent states, and it interfered in the sovereignty of an independent country. Hardly a week after the outbreak of the war on March 4, 2022 the Human Rights Council created a committee called International Commission of Inquiry by voting with 32 in favour, 2 in against and 13 abstentions. Amnesty International (AI), another UN institution, also remained active from the beginning of the war and it has clearly undermined the global image of Kremlin.

With the eruption of war on 24 February 2022, the first talk on ceasefire was held in Belarus between the two only after four days which proved fruitless as they both failed to achieve a consensus. It was mainly focused on ensuring humanitarian corridors for the safe routes for citizens and after three rounds of talks no deal was reached to handle the issue, however, on 5 March 2022 Russian Federation agreed to give a five- and-a- half hour ceasefire for evacuation of needy humans in some parts of the country, but the time was much less than it was required. As the war moved further its strategic side became clearer when Russia put three diplomatic-cum-strategic demands which include; 1. Ukraine's neutrality, 2. recognition of Crimea annexed by Russia in 2014 as Kremlin's territory, 3. recognition of the two newly self-proclaimed separatist republics of Ukraine, recently created by Russian support. With these proposals, Russia also expressed its good wishes and declared a temporary ceasefire in several places including its capital Kyiv. In the circumstances it was not possible for Ukraine to accept these in toto and, in response, its President Zelenskyy suggested for a direct meeting with Vladimir Putin to end the continuing war and also proposed a collective security agreement for Ukraine to ensure its safety and security. Despite the ongoing war between the two negotiation channels never blocked and, as earlier it took place on 10, 17, 20 and 22 March 2022 which has raised genuine hopes for ceasefire and ultimately the end of the war in the larger interest of humanity.

Viewed in context of wide gap between the two concerned countries/groups conflict appeared unavoidable and nations of the region and globe as well became anxious as Russian troops in large numbers gathered around the border while NATO and other Western countries were also began preparing to avoid escalation of war among them which could easily turned into world war at a time when in post-pandemic phase the world's economy and activities revived and inching towards improvement. In the context, viewing its security threat, Russia, announced its deployment of additional forces and large-scale exercises on the border, while the Ukraine's authorities followed crackdown on pro- Russian leaders of the country

with whom Vladimir Putin maintained good relations throughout the period. This apart, the accumulation of Russian arms, ammunitions and other war materials is also a security threat for Ukraine whose government often criticized Russian preparations around the border. It led a series of violence, and escalations in and around the region and the whole year, 2021, witnessed several incidents of killings and minor struggles among the groups identified as pro and anti- Russia. The closing days of the year 2021 became more violent and accusations from both sides and Ukraine claimed major offensive on the part of Russia by the end of January 2022, giving a new twist to the current tensed and war-like situation in the region and a general environment of third world war across the world, likely to be settled soon amicably.

(3) China's take on Russia's military intervention in Ukraine

Dr. Suvro Parui

Russia's military intervention in Ukraine on February 23, 2022, created a scope of responses from nations all through the world. Numerous legislatures and worldwide associations, especially European nations, the United States of America (USA), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO¹), upheld Ukraine in its contention with Russia. Albeit the states that met up against Russia didn't send their own warriors to battle in Ukraine, both military gear help and monetary approvals against Russia compellingly affected Moscow. Notwithstanding the response of the West, the eyes of the global public have been attracted to the methodology of China, one of Russia's primary partners, to the issue with regard to their quest for a multipolar world. As is notable, Sino-Russian ties further developed after the Cold War finished, and a few arrangements were arrived at between the two countries in the business, military, and strategic circles. China and Russia, who have much of the time conflicted and experienced line battles since forever ago, have chosen to cooperate to go against the Atlantic-focused unipolar framework. As it is to be noted that Sino-Russian ties further developed after the Cold War finished, and a few arrangements were arrived at between the two countries in the business, military, and strategic circles. China and Russia, who have much of the time conflicted and experienced line battles since forever ago, have chosen to cooperate to go against the Atlantic-focused unipolar framework; Similarly, the investment is necessary for Russia's economy that has become an opportunity for China's stockpiled foreign exchange to be converted into investment. These two Asian powers have created a solid collaboration for their primary purposes, in opposition to American hegemony. The connection between Russia and China has been put under scrutiny once again. The cycle that started with Russia's unlawful addition of Crimea in 2014 brought about the burden of various monetary approvals by Europe and the United States. While the in serious perusal in the ruble and the downturn in the economy because of the assent constrained Moscow; China has chosen to put more in this nation and has moderately diminished the impact of Western approvals. Sanctions forced by Europe and the United States both neglected to forestall the extension of Crimea and fortified Russia's relationship with China. As indicated by certain experts, the West's methodology was an essential slip-up. This analysis highlights arouse of Beijing-Moscow hub and more grounded from the emergency emerging from the extension of Crimea.

Russia's military intervention in Ukraine on February 23, 2022 generated a range of reactions from countries throughout the world. Many governments and international organizations, particularly European countries, the United States of America (USA), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), supported Ukraine in its conflict with Russia. Although the states that came together against Russia did not send their own soldiers to fight in Ukraine, both military equipment aid and economic sanctions against Russia had a compelling effect on Moscow. In addition to the reaction of the West, the eyes of the international public have been drawn to the approach of China, one of Russia's main allies, to the issue in the context of their search for a multipolar world.

As is well known, Sino-Russian ties improved after the Cold War ended, and several agreements were reached between the two nations in the commercial, military, and diplomatic spheres. China and Russia, who have frequently clashed and experienced border wars

throughout history, have decided to work together to oppose the Atlantic-centered unipolar system. The fact that the national strengths of the parties covered their weaknesses formed the basic dynamic of this relationship. For instance, the energy demand and geographical route required by China's export-based economic expansion, which began in the 1980s, had been assumed to be easy to satisfy by Russia. Similarly, the investment necessary for Russia's economy has become an opportunity for China's stockpiled foreign exchange to be converted into investment. These two Asian powers have created a solid collaboration for their primary purposes, in opposition to American hegemony.

The relationship between Russia and China has been put to the test at times. The process that began with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 resulted in the imposition of numerous economic sanctions by Europe and the United States. While the serious decline in the ruble and the recession in the economy as a result of the sanctions forced Moscow; China has decided to invest more in this country and has relatively reduced the effect of Western sanctions. Sanctions imposed by Europe and the United States both failed to prevent the annexation of Crimea and strengthened Russia's relationship with China. According to some analysts, the West's approach was a strategic mistake. In summary, the Beijing-Moscow axis emerged stronger from the crisis arising from Crimea's annexation. Another crisis, where the Russia and China relation were seriously tried and true, are the augmentation started from Russia and in light of Ukraine, as in 2014. Russia, which has been making a tactical development on the Ukrainian line for some time, has flagged that it will determine the issue by military means. Guessing that this activity would be condemned by people in general, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Beijing Olympics and made the picture that he had accepted the abetment of Beijing. Xi, on the other side, invited the visits due to agitation of some countries and who had remonstrated the Olympics. During this visit, Russia and China formally made a joint proclamation. The previously mentioned announcement focused on that the two countries' fortitude and participation developed, and the talk of solidarity against NATO and the USA came to the front in the text; hence, it's affirming that its relations with Russia had arrived at an essential level before the intercession, China offered expressions making sense of its help for Russia during and after the mediation. Nonetheless, instead of being an out-and-out Russian ally, Beijing's situation on the occupation has developed inside the setting of a viewpoint that calls for harmony and requests to all gatherings to tackle the issue.

It ought to be featured that in international relations, states keep their own interests in mind. In light of this, China, from a special point, looks for not to abandon its partner Russia in the worldwide field; then again, it dodges brutal proclamations that would set off a response from global general assessment. To put it plainly, China is offering expressions of help with a system that will shield itself from the authorizations that Russia² is presented. Moreover, Beijing's assertions for Moscow emulate its own plan. China votes for a UN Security Council goal proposed by Russia that would work with a philanthropic guide to Ukraine. The goal neither requires a finish to the contention nor condemns Russia's part in making the humanitarian crisis. It seems like the testing of responsibility of Chinese President Xi Jinping that a few months back to a "no restrictions" relationship with Putin, as the U.S. furthermore, its partners heap on approvals and press Beijing to take as stand against military animosity. Lately, Xi has encouraged Putin to seek after exchanges and China's United Nations minister went without, instead of restricting, a Security Council goal denouncing the assault. China, similar to Russia,

has been aggressively transforming its Soviet-style military and specialists say pioneer Xi Jinping will be cautiously parsing the shortcomings uncovered by the attack of Ukraine as they would apply to his own People's Liberation Army and his plans on representing the island of Taiwan. "The crux of the problem Xi and the PLA administration should request in light from Russian tasks in Ukraine is whether a tactical that has gone through broad change and modernization will actually want to execute tasks that are undeniably more complicated than those Russia has embraced during its intrusion of Ukraine," said M. Taylor Fravel, head of the security concentrates on program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Russia's military have gone through a broad course of change and venture for over 10 years, with examples learned in battle in Georgia, Chechnya, Syria and its extension of Crimea helping guide the cycle. The Ukrainian attack³, notwithstanding, has uncovered shortcomings starting from the top. Specialists have been by and large dazed that Russia attacked Ukraine with apparently little planning and absence of concentration — a mission along various, ineffectively organized tomahawks that has neglected to join air and land tasks successfully; warriors have been running out of food, and vehicles have been stalling. With misfortunes mounting, Moscow has pulled its bloodied powers from the capital, Kyiv, to refocus. Last week, the directed rocket cruiser Moskva sank after Ukraine said it hit the boat with rockets; Russia put the sinking on a fire ready. "It's exceptionally difficult to see a positive outcome at any level in the manner that Russia has arraigned the mission,⁴ " said Euan Graham, a senior individual at the International Institute for Strategic Studies situated in Singapore. Putin's choices bring up the issue of whether he was given precise appraisals of the advancement of military change and Ukrainian capacities, or was simply determined what he needed to hear.

Xi, likewise a tyrant chief who plays taken an individual part in China's tactical change, could now be pondering something very similar, Fravel said, "President Xi explicitly may likewise puzzle over whether he is getting precise reports about the PLA's logical viability in an extreme focus struggle," and China has had no new significant clash by which to measure its tactical ability, having battled its last huge commitment to 1979 against Vietnam. David Chen, a senior expert with CENTRA Technology, said, "The reminder for (China's) Central Military Commission is that there are more obscure variables associated with any such mission than they might have expected". On the other hand, the Ukraine experience could provoke China to speed up its plan on Taiwan with a more restricted assault, like holding onto a peripheral island, as its very own certifiable trial military, Chen said, "a reasonable course is experienced the PLA's joint foundations and systems through perpetually thorough activities⁵." "However, as the world has seen, a focal pioneer with a particular desire and a shortening course of events might cut off process in wild style."

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Intern's Corner:

(1) **Russia invasion of Ukraine: Indian perspective of Neutrality**

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Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 Feb 2022. As a result, multiple sanctions were imposed on Russia by the West to compel Russia to de-escalate the crisis. The next day, the Security Council rejected a draft resolution intended to end the Russian military offensive against Ukraine. The draft submitted by Albania and United States and gained support from 11 members. The draft was vetoed by the Russian Federation and abstained by China, the United Arab Emirates including India.

During the debate on resolution, Indian Permanent Representative to the UN called for dialogue, cessation of violence, and safety and safe exit and return of Indian nationals. Delhi has so far abstained from UN votes condemning Russia's actions.

In a clear allusion to Russia, the Indian diplomat also observed that “the contemporary global order is built on the United Nations Charter, international law and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States”.

Prior to the vote in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which has condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, European Union Ambassadors in New Delhi met senior Indian foreign ministry officials to press their government to take a stronger position in the war crisis.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had discussions with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, also had a conversation with Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Zelenskyy, both to seek his help in repatriating the thousands of Indian students stranded in Ukraine and to offer the humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

India has long maintained a non-aligned foreign policy, but Russia's invasion of Ukraine has placed pressure on New Delhi to pick a side. But India stood firm in its stand despite what appeared to be growing pressure from the US.

For many in the United States, including in President Joe Biden's administration, India's neutrality has been disappointing because it signalled a sharp divergence between Washington and New Delhi on a fundamental issue of global order.

The US has to understand that Delhi continued to promote dialogue to end the war. India has used strong words about the need of respect for the Sovereignty and resolution of disputes in a diplomatic manner.

Since the Independence from the British empire in 1947, the non-alignment movement became the pivot in India's foreign policy. This policy was adopted by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1961. The core principles of Nehru's non-aligned movements made India independent, sovereign, non-aligned with any superpower whether emerging or established. But to be friend with all countries. India can now see the benefits of non-alignment.

In a wider context, Surprisingly, then Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on March 20, in his speech praised India's historic "Independent foreign policy" because it benefits their people a rhetoric shift not heard of in years.

Despite facing criticism from the West, India is not backing down from buying Russian oil. India has taken advantage of discounted prices by importing oil from Russia when global energy prices have been skyrocketing.

Indian officials have confirmed that the country's central bank is in initial consultations with Moscow on a bilateral rupee-rouble exchange to maintain trade relations despite the West's sanctions, according to media reports.

As India is the world's third-largest oil importer, India is vulnerable to rising oil prices. Further, pressure is still growing on India Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reduce inflation for his 1.3 billion citizens.

The United States had urged India to reduce the imports of oil from Russia. The United States has pressurized many nations other than the west to reduce the dependency on Russian oil. Meanwhile, the West is dependent on Russian energy.

India has made a judgment that its national interest comes first by keeping oil prices in the best position that can play a vile role in the domestic economy instability.

Russia is now a second supplier of oil to India, replacing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, While Iraq continues to be the largest.

India External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar pointed out that less than one percent India's crude purchases are from Russia and the major buyers of Russian oil and gas are from Europe. He noted that Europe had brought more than 15 percent more oil and gas from Russia than India did in March. India Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has also clarified that India had already started buying oil from Russia and that in future India's overall national interests are what will be kept in mind highlighting the independent foreign policy.

Reasons for India's Neutrality:

India's neutrality in the Ukraine war has been described as " Strategic ambivalence".

It reflects New Delhi's deliberate choice-the decision not to condemn Russia.

India and Russia share a special and privileged strategic partnership and it has further deepened in recent years. Russia has been the chief defence supplier of India. Russia is one of the only two countries in the world (other than Japan) that has a mechanism for annual ministerial-level defense reviews with India. Russia and India share mutual bond and strong friendship.

However, the friendship between Russia and India is time -tested. Since the end of cold war both states have maintained deep , cooperative ties and defense items like aircrafts , fighter jets carriers and now S-400 system as well as nuclear power in energy sector are the backbone of defence relationship.

Furthermore, since the Soviet era, Russia has supported India in multiple Multilateral institutions, including in United Nations. In 1965, Soviet Union become a key successful mediator after Pakistan-India war . Soviet Union and India signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971.

India has abstained on votes condemning Soviet invasions of Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan in the past .

In 2000, India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed a declaration of strategic partnership with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia is positioned as special and privileged strategic partner.

Over 70 percent of India's defense inventory is attributed to Russia. For Moscow, Delhi is its largest importer of arms, and for India, Russia is the largest exporter when it comes to arms transfer. Between 2000 and 2020, Russia accounted for 66.5 percent of India's arms imports. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, between 2017–2021 Russia's share of India's defense imports was 46 percent and India received 28 percent of Russia's defense exports. Even without sanctions, Russia will divert arms from exports to the Ukraine war, making it harder for India to procure Russian equipment. To meet shortages, Russia is reported to have asked China for military equipment. If Russia's military supplies and technology transfers to India were halted without matching supplies from the West, the putative coalition to balance China will be put in jeopardy.

India is exploring ways to avoid a major disruption in the supply of Russian-made weaponry. India's public neutrality towards the Russian invasion of Ukraine is driven fundamentally by its concerns from neighboring China and Pakistan. New Delhi sees both nations as a threat, and it believes that preserving friendship with Moscow will help to maintain strategic balance. Both China and Pakistan desire closer ties with Russia. New Delhi aims to minimize Moscow's closeness to both of its rivals. A new alliance between Moscow and Islamabad, can undermine India's core interests

Conclusion :

In international relations, national interests are supreme and permanent. All the nations are engaged in the process of fulfilling or securing goals of their national interest. It is in the national interest of India to remain neutral over the crisis in Ukraine.

India is not a client state of any great power. India is not a member of any alliance system. And the Quad is a security dialogue, not an alliance.

Like majority of nations, India has chosen the right policy based on its core national interest & self-reliance. And the neutral position shows its strategic autonomy. India never supported any war. The U.S, India's most important strategic partner, does not seem to appreciate it . But it can't ignore the reality that there is a limit to which it can pressure India.

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(2) Ukraine Crisis-Indian Perspective

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Introduction

With the ongoing Russia Ukraine crisis, a significant reconstruction of the global security architecture seems to be underway. Russia launched a full-scale military attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. It is a very complicated, highly evolving situation. The root cause of this complex situation might be the security architecture and inter-state politics. The backdrop of this conflict began at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and led to the emergence of 15 independent states, including Russia and Ukraine. Since then, Russia succeeded the USSR by ramping up its global standing and emerging as a substantial military power. In contrast, Ukraine was drawn toward the West. The inception of this conflict began.

The Ukraine Crisis has upended the world order in terms of Infrastructure, global energy and financial systems. Since the Russia-Ukraine conflict began, Russia has been accused of aggression, human rights violations and war crimes in Ukraine (United Nations Human Rights, 2022). Russia is blaming the West for curating this crisis. Russia articulated that Ukraine's reinstating its membership in NATO will threaten Russia's territory and its national interests (Burdeau, 2022). Russia considers it to be its deterrence to launch a pre-emptive strike on Ukraine due to the growing eastward expansion of NATO.

While the kinetic war between Russia and Ukraine is still ongoing, US-led NATO is simultaneously fighting a non-Kinetic war in Russia's economic sanctions, information, and political and diplomatic domains (Lavoix, Information Warfare and the War in Ukraine, 2022).

Major players

US: The immediate response was the US President have condemned Russia's invasions and caused a threat to the peace, democracy, security and sovereignty of Ukraine. However, this crisis demonstrated to have a ripple effect. The US responded to Russia's further invasion by imposing expansive sanctions on Russia. The US imposed sanctions prohibiting the goods and services or technology importation or exportation from the Russian Federation (Welt, 2022).

The US imposed swift sanctions on Russia, which tightened Russia's financial and banking systems and blocked the use of SWIFT (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, 2022). SWIFT is a global messaging system which allows making banking transactions globally. To begin with, the sanctions on a major energy supplier led to an energy cost increase. The US may not replace the Russian supply and is not in a position to supply natural gas to the European countries, which are dependent on Russia, especially the pipeline gas (Garver, 2022). The sanction led to disruption in the supply chain management of essential commodities. The US sanctions were not desirable at a global level as they challenged and declined the US hegemonic status. The crisis has also led to immigrant concerns from the neighbouring countries. Few reports even claimed the decline of Dollar supremacy (SINGH, 2022).

Europe Union: EU (European Union) imposed several rounds of sanctions to diminish Russia's economic base and make it economically expensive for Russia to continue the conflict. Restrictions on imports (Till August 2022) and export ban to Russia. EU disconnected Russia's banking system from SWIFT, freezing assets and travel ban of Russian legislators and elites (An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta, 2022). The EU imposed temporary protection mechanisms to aid refugees, military assistance and others. This conflict provided room for strengthening EU-US relations regarding security and defence, energy and climate.

EU-US pledged to reduce the energy dependence on Russia. However, reports claim that even though the US might assist, The US-EU gas deal may not replace Russia's energy supply (Ng, 2022). Thus, Europe has been caught between the US and Russia. Many Eastern European countries like Poland, Austria and Slovakia are the largest importers of Russian gas; therefore, within Europe, there is a divergent view (UDASIN, 2022). The emigration of refugees from neighbouring countries also became a significant concern.

China: China's stance on this conflict needs to be adequately emphasised since China continues not to oppose Russia and not abandon Ukraine. China has got independent views on the conflict for its long-term strategy. Russia is a significant partner for China to establish an alternative world order and maintain its territorial integrity and national sovereignty, and It cannot leave Russia. China is cautious about the implications of the economic sanctions by the West.

Thus, bolstering transnational relations is crucial for China as future circumstances might lead the West to impose sanctions on China. Due to the ongoing crisis, there is also a threat to China's semiconductor industry as Ukraine exports 70% of neon gas globally and the emerging semiconductor dominance of Taiwan (Alper, 2022). Therefore, China's influence might get disrupted.

India's Response

India has decided to maintain a neutral stance in the ongoing Russia Ukraine Conflict. Maintaining strategic ambiguity serves the best interests of India's national interest and foreign policy. India's topmost priority was the safety, security and evacuation of Indian nationals, including students in Ukraine (Ministry of External Affairs, 2022).

After the success of 'Operation Devi Shakti,' India launched 'Operation Ganga' to safely evacuate and bring back the Indian nationals (citizens and students) from different cities across Ukraine. Operation Ganga brought back more than 20,000 Indian individuals and rescued Nepal and Pakistani nationals respecting India's 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' principle. The inter-ministerial coordination and special envoys to other nations made the operation successful. Indian students had to leave their studies midway from Ukraine to maintain the academic year and prevent dropouts. Russian universities accepted the Indian students showing the considerable success of Indian diplomacy (Ministry of External Affairs , 2022).

India has also extensively provided humanitarian aid and relief to the victims of the conflict. India has provided medicines, blankets, sleeping mats and others to Ukraine and its neighbouring countries. Today, India has stayed reliable and consistent with its stance both nationally and internationally (Ministry of External Affairs,, 2022). Within India, The opposition backed the ruling government's decision in the conflict. However, left-wing parties condemned the Russian military strike and defended Russia's decision to protect its sovereignty from the eastward expansion of NATO.

The mainstream Indian media continued to provide facts and update the developments of the conflict. Nevertheless, Western non-kinetic warfare's output is propaganda through social media disinformation (Lavoix, Information Warfare and the War in Ukraine, 2022).

The western narrative, for instance, labelled Russian President Vladimir Putin as a 'monster' and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a 'hero'; Russia's economy is collapsing due to western economic sanctions and others. Vikram Sood, former Chief of R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing), India's external intelligence agency, has emphasised the US global narrative. Mr Sood has identified three significant institutions, Bilderberg Group, Trilateral Commission, and The Council for Foreign relations, that have influenced the global narrative of various contemporary issues (Anand, 2022). However, Western media sources cannot be termed propaganda, yet many Indian netizens were influenced by Western social media propaganda.

Although India maintained its neutral stance, India believes Ukraine Conflict has significant economic implications and disruption in the global supply chain mechanism and can be solved peacefully. India, a non-permanent member of the UNSC, called for an immediate cessation of violence and all the hostilities. India advocated for an urgent ceasefire and solving the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue. India emphasises the UN Charter and international law to all member states of the UN and respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity will maintain peace and stability in the global order (Som & Ghosh, 2022).

Indian Perspective

India is maintaining a neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Unlike the West, India is not in a position to frankly condemn Russia. The former Soviet Union has repeatedly used veto power at UNSC in favour of India. USSR also provided political and economic aid to India during the post-independence period. Russia has been a reliable partner for India and has backed many times in favour of India. Russia is also a reliable defence and security partner and exports weapons to India. Russia and India frequently conduct joint military operations and have profound defence cooperation. The ongoing conflict is still evolving, and picking up the sides will create a division too early for India's strategic ambiguous position. Lastly, the China factor. If India picks any side, India will hamper relations with another side. Moreover, the West has been chiefly unreliable and inconsistent and inclining towards the West might bolster the Sino-Russian axis. Moreover, focusing solely on the Ukraine issue will allow China to advance into the Indo-Pacific region, a common threat for all the involved states.

India has been holding its strategic autonomy to keep its foreign policy independent and emerge as a superpower. India has abstained from voting on a UNSC resolution mandating Russia cease its invasion of Ukraine by bypassing the tag of supporting the Western-led coalition against Russia and at the same time diplomatically boycotting the Beijing Olympics on the grounds of sovereignty. India is trying to play a balancing act between the West and Russia while staying away from the Sino-Russian axis, which is glimpsing for alternative world order. Therefore, India is altering its proximity to the West and maintaining strategic autonomy that best suits India's national interest. Recently, Russia offered India crude oil at a discounted price and hence India imported oil from Russia after the Western-imposed economic sanctions on Russia. The import of Russian oil received a considerable backlash from Western countries (Staff, 2022). For instance, many US and European experts' condemned the actions and called it 'immoral', and Jen Psaki, White House spokesperson, asked India, "where you want to stand when the history books are written in this moment in

time". External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar responded to these backlashes, "India's total purchase of oil from Russia in a month is probably less than what Europe does in an afternoon" (Press Trust of India , 2022).

Moreover, reports have claimed that the US has increased imports by 43 per cent of Russian oil, getting 100,000 barrels per day during the ongoing conflict. Germany has been the largest importer of Russian fossil fuels in the past few months. However, the credibility of these reports is still uncertain (V, 2022). India is currently enhancing its alliance with US and Western countries and working on shared issues, Having Russia as a substantial strategic and defence partner and encountering territorial aggression from China. Thus, the current challenges are disrupting India's autonomy status. Therefore, the evolution of India's Foreign policy should promise a more comprehensive and independent approach to balancing the external influence and holding the pressure during conflicts.

India's Relations with Major players in the light of the Ukraine Crisis:

US: The US constantly pressured India to condemn Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. A few US 'specialists' discussed earlier criticised India for importing Russian oil. The ongoing conflict has brought stress on the India-US relations. India is challenged to maintain its strategic autonomy in the current conflict. The US is an important strategic partner for India in the Indo-Pacific, and the focus should remain on China, especially after the revival of QUAD. The US supports India's emergence as a leading global power in various multilateral dialogues. After the recent US-India 2+2 dialogue, much clarity has arrived on the stance on the conflict (Ministry of External Affairs , 2022). The US admitted that being the outcome of democracy, both the countries will have differences in their stance on different issues. The Ukrainian crisis should not allow the QUAD countries to take the focus away from China. Moreover, the US should acknowledge that India condemned the atrocities on non-combatants during the war and bid for a transparent and fair enquiry on the war crimes. India expressed it has chosen the side of peace.

Europe Union: Until now, Europe enjoyed the Unipolar world monopolised by the US. The current conflict is evolving more complex. The Russia-China axis during the war is compelling Europe to explore more alternatives in Asia. This statement has got some significance after the India and Japan visits by European Leaders. Europe is looking to strengthen its ties with India and Japan to counter China. Indo-Europe has got a lot of untapped potential. Recently in the Raisina Dialogue, the President of the European Commission has highlighted the EU's partnership with India is crucial for the upcoming decade and announced the establishment of an EU-India trade technology council to tackle the challenges (European Commission , 2022). India and Europe should aim to create an Independent EU-India partnership and reach their true potential, particularly after PM Modi's visit.

China: Russia and China have partnered up against the West in the recent Olympics summit. Russia attacking Ukraine and China, challenging the Indo-Pacific region, gave a glimpse of new world order. China has stayed close to Russia during the conflict and voted in favour of Russia in the UNSC, UNHRC and others. China's mouthpiece 'Global times' (Qing, 2022) defended India's stance on the conflict and prospected strengthening India-China relations. Recently, Wei Fenghe, Chinese Defence Minister General, said India and China should work peacefully on the LAC (Line of Actual Control) and called for peaceful norms for resolving territorial disputes (Mehrotra, 2022) a day after Lloyd James Austin, United States Defence Secretary, expressed that China is persisting in hardening its stance along the

LAC. However, China's remarks on Kashmir at the recent OIC (Saha, 2022)(Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) meet instigated India. India condemned the comments made by the Chinese Foreign Minister and stated China has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters (Media Centre MEA, 2022). India should be cautious about its contradicting ties with China. India's foreign policy has evolved and become more independent. India should continue achieving its national interests and should not get impacted by external influence.

Lessons for India

The Russia-Ukraine conflict made India realise that depending on foreign states will always be a long-term disadvantage. India's arms imports from Russia totalled US\$22.8 billion between 2011-2021 (BOMMAKANTI & PATIL, 2022). Therefore, India needs to enhance Defence modernisation through Indigenisation.

A question often raised within India is, 'Is the Indian military as powerful as depicted? Furthermore, 'Are we in a position to deter the territorial aggressions by our capable adversaries'. India is reasonably competent in deterring a more vulnerable adversary like Pakistan. However, the question lies in the case of more potent adversaries like China is concerned. The Chinese have been heavily spending on defence to compete with the US, which resulted in a capability gap between India and China. The Global Firepower Index 2022 reveals that even though India (0.0979) occupied number four next to China (0.0511), the gap in the score is substantial (GFP | ANNUAL RANKING, 2022).

Although India can give a solid resistance during border disputes and tactical combats in the latter case, to achieve an overall strategic military deterrence, India should primarily focus on military modernisation and improvement in capability development to extirpate the conventional or non-conventional external threats. The threat perception of India has been growing for the past decade, and China has consistently harmed India's interests. Recently, India asserted that relations with China are still "Not Normal." (Goswami, 2022) due to the recurring border dispute and China's bolstering ties with Pakistan. China's heavy investments in the so-called ambitious project of Pakistan, the 'CPEC', open multiple congruences among both states. Reports have also stated that China boosted Pakistan's military arsenal by aiding and supplying weapons. Military acquisition (Ticku, 2022) from China includes fighter jets, rocket launchers, nuclear-capable howitzers, drones, and others which might harm India's national security.

Way Forward

The ongoing conflict has raised concerns about strengthening internationalism. India should not get influenced by any external actors and should continue having an independent foreign policy to achieve its national interests and maintain strategic autonomy. India should persist in highlighting the principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' for normative world order. Self-reliance in defence manufacturing is proved to be a strategic imperative for India. Depending on a foreign state for defence imports makes the stake for India shaky. For instance, When USSR disintegrated, India's defence sector was left in ambiguity, harming national security due to India's dependence on the Soviet Union. Due to the Russo-Ukrainian crisis and Western sanctions on Russia, India might face difficulties procuring defence imports from Russia as Russia is an important defence partner for India.

To conclude, India needs to enhance Defence modernisation through Indigenisation. Therefore achieving Atma Nirbhar in defence manufacturing will make India less dependent on foreign nations and mitigate the conventional and non-conventional external threats due to changing dynamics of current geopolitics.

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(3) Ukraine Crisis:Indian Perspective

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The background of the conflict dates back to early 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea, which is officially a part of Ukraine. A year prior to this, protests were being held in the capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv, to overthrow president Viktor Yanukovich's government because of his idea of rejecting a very good deal that was giving Ukraine a chance for more financial integration with the European Union. Many protesters took to the streets and the state security forces had to suppress them with violent crackdown. The situation eventually worsened, and the president had to finally evacuate the country.

A month later to this incident, Russian President Vladimir Putin sought to protect the rights of the Russian speakers of the Crimean region of Ukraine. In March 2014, Crimea was taken control by the Russian troops, when in a local referendum, the Crimeans voted in for Crimea to be a part of the Russian state. Two months later, Luhansk and Donetsk region of Eastern Ukraine demanded independence from Ukraine as as heightened tensions and ethnic divisions started imposing sanctions on Russia to pull back its troops from the occupied areas. The sanctions included suspension of trade and investment deals with Russia and military cooperation, freezing of assets and visa restrictions by EU officials, European investment banks also suspended funding for Russian projects, heavy sanctions were also imposed on high-ranking Russian officials.

Russian intervention in Ukraine referred a UN resolution. The United Nations General Assembly demanded for a resolution to end this offensive in Ukraine. Eritrea, Russia, Syria, North Korea and Belarus voted against the resolution, and 35 countries abstained including India.

Most of the major democracies around the world condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as unscientific, illegal and not withstanding any strong claims that should justify Russian aggression.

India's national interests have led New Delhi to avoid criticizing Russia publicly, though it expressed dismay with Russian actions. In its documentation, India's foreign minister S. Jaishankar highlighted that there should be respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states and he also called for the immediate cessation of violence and recurring hostilities that was taking place.

As the war escalated, India's immediate concern was to evacuate and bring home all the 20,000 Indian students in Ukraine. This issue brought up all the potential opportunities as well as risks for India. At the same time, India was undergoing a series of elections, so successful evacuations had a potential for threat to India. So the need to abstain was to avoid offending either side.

Along with this, there was also a historical role which played part and made India abstain from voting. India was protected on several occasions by Russia such as the issue with Kashmir, and the 1971 war with Pakistan when Russia used its veto to protect India against these resolutions that would harm India's national interests. In return, India also abstained from voting on votes such as condemning the Soviet aggression of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the of Afghanistan a decade later.

Western engagement with India reflects a changed Western perception of India from the late 1990s when the West started viewing India as a potential trigger for nuclear conflict, an economic opportunity and a buffer or bulwark against China. But while India's outlook has certainly shifted over the last two or three decades, its membership of the Quad should not be taken as evidence that it is on some linear path to become part of a Western axis.

How will India's stance on abstaining would affect its ties with the United States, Russia, China and EU?

India has drawn closer to the West in recent decades but has its own compulsions when it comes to Russia. Russia is India's biggest weapon supplier and Moscow provides cover for the country at the UN should Pakistan or China raise Kashmir there. There are other reasons driving India's policy. Global corporations want to sell products and services in India, it is a big market for weapons manufacturers.

America's relationship with India stands on its own merits and has not been impacted by the ongoing tension with Russia, a top State Department official has said, days after India abstained from a procedural vote in the UN Security Council. India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador TS Tirumurti said in the Council that New Delhi has been closely following the evolving developments relating to Ukraine, including through ongoing high-level security talks between Russia and the United States.

India's vote on Ukraine thus becomes a sensibility-shifting moment for Washington and European allies, at least during Biden's term. Indian leaders have in the last two decades spoken of democracy as a uniting value in India-US ties, but this abstention will have demonstrated to Western policymakers that India will be agnostic on these matters.

India is pursuing what it views as its own interests, which are multiple but involve a real and ongoing effort to reduce its dependence on Russia. It is doing this while remaining wary of China, anxious to see Beijing's power counterbalanced in the Indo-Pacific, and continuing to handle other issues in the neighbourhood, such as its difficult relationship with Pakistan.

India has long looked at its relationship with Russia through the prism of the latter's capacity and willingness to balance China. But it will also increasingly take account of the costs as well as the benefits of its relationship with Russia, including its impact on the other partnerships India wishes to develop, such as with Europe and the United States.

Biden administration cannot at this moment separate American state interests from its own domestic survival as a political formation while it contends with Russia in this crisis. A country like India can thus offer all sound state-related reasons for refusing to condemn Russia, but it will not be able to mollify the Democratic party and administration that feels threatened because of Moscow's alleged campaigns.

Although China has also abstained from the vote, there is a sharp contrast between the explanation of the vote by India and Beijing. Both have supported Ukraine for sovereignty and territorial integrity, but China has virtually defended the Russian action.

The Chinese explanation given by Ambassador Zhang Jun stated: “ We believe that one country’s security cannot be at the expense of the security of others, and that regional security should not rely on muscling up or even expanding military blocs. The legitimate security concerns of all countries should be respected. Against the backdrop of five successive rounds of NATO’s eastward expansion, Russia’s legitimate security aspirations should be given attention and properly addressed.”

While the US, France and UK are expected to push this resolution before the UN General Assembly to ensure global condemnation for the Russian aggression, the situation in Kyiv is getting dire by the hour with the Red Army gaining ground in the capital of Ukraine.

According to a former foreign secretary, the Indian abstention reflected its national interest given its long strategic relationship with Russia and its ever-growing closeness with China and the client states of the middle kingdom. The expression that India was deeply disturbed by events in Ukraine in the explanation of vote reflected the Indian belief. In its explanation, India called upon all member states to honour the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, international law, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

India is pursuing what it views as its own interests, which are multiple but involve a real and ongoing effort to reduce its dependence on Russia. It is doing this while remaining wary of China, anxious to see Beijing’s power counterbalanced in the Indo-Pacific, and continuing to handle other issues in the neighbourhood, such as its difficult relationship with Pakistan.

But India’s position should not be confused for support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Nor should it be mistaken for a continuation of its cold war-era non-alignment policies.

The main logic underpinning India’s current stance on Ukraine derives from the intricacies of the relationship triangle between India, Russia, and China, and the evolution of the balance of power between them and the outside world. The key determinants of India’s relations with Russia are slowly losing their force, but those that remain are central to India’s security and provide Moscow with significant leverage in its dealings with New Delhi.

The principal influence on India’s Russia policy is the presence of China, its large neighbour in the Indo-Pacific region. Ever since the 1962 war between India and China, Indo-Soviet, and later Indo-Russian, relations always had an anti-Chinese dimension.

Even since the end of the Soviet Union, India has considered Russia an essential element of its balancing strategy regarding China, helping prevent Chinese hegemony in Asia, and as a provider of weapons systems. However, India gradually lost any illusion that Russia would come to its rescue should relations with China become too tense.

(4) India's Neutrality in the Ukraine -Russia Crisis - a new inroad to diplomacy

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A new way forward

India's refusal to condemn Russia coupled with an equivalent neutral stance on the Ukraine-Russia Issue has bought Indian diplomacy an all-new avenue. This stance relatively adds an altogether unique dimension to the Ukraine crisis that has been distinctive among most democracies and among U.S. strategic partners. While scholars differ in how effective this form of 'neutrality' has been, criticism has also been hurled against this diplomatic move. From calling India's stance "somewhat shaky" to calling India an 'essential partner' in the Indo-Pacific; today the world and its major leaders have calculatedly aimed at deciphering what this neutral stand could possibly lead to.

Swaran Singh, Professor of International Relations, Jawaharlal Nehru University in an interview with The Conversation, gave this diplomatic move a new name, "I call it proactive neutrality, which means India would not be comfortable taking any one of the sides in the conflict either to stand completely with Russia or the US." From abstaining from supporting resolutions that condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine coupled with continuous efforts in recusing Indians from Ukraine has given India a new political image that adds to the reputation that it has carried in its diplomatic proceedings all long.

Singh, claims that "India's proactive neutrality can be traced back to the cold war era of non-alignment. After its independence from the British empire in 1947, non-alignment became the pivot of India's foreign policy." However, it would be wrong to say that the neutrality that nonalignment entailed is absolutely similar to the neutrality that was made use of in the Ukraine crisis. The connotation of neutrality in diplomatic procedures has also progressed from a uni directional understanding. In this context, Singh offers a new perspective, "It has come to be recognized as an emerging nation and moved from being non-aligned to multi-aligned, which means it has tried to build partnerships with as many countries as possible. It has done a cost-benefit analysis of its foreign policy choices and decided that neutrality ensures maximum benefits with minimum costs." (Singh & Nehru, 2022).

Scholars are of the claim that Nehru's non-alignment indeed provided India and his prestige and respect in the global. It remained an important element of 'pragmatic idealism' that aided a third-world country to maneuver between the two major blocs, however, India's neutrality, in this case, is different. Scholarly view differentiates this neutral stance from Nehruvian non-alignment on the grounds that this present neutrality is rather '*passive*' and '*sustained by realpolitik*'.

What must be realized is that this neutrality was simply not taken up because India has always taken a balanced approach to international politics, the motives rather were essential for the needs of the hour. The Indian government had to keep the evacuation of thousands of Indian citizens in mind coupled with the issue of being diplomatically trapped between two good allies: the West and Moscow, with the former expecting India to condemn Russian conduct to be unjustified and the latter expecting India to uphold a neutral stand.

The history of India and the erstwhile Soviet Union also cannot be ignored in this regard. The Soviet in the past has stood by India in several circumstances, especially in supporting India's stance on Kashmir. Over the past few decades, Russia became not just a key supplier of defense technologies and equipment for India but also moved from licensed production in this field to joint research and development. Singh hence describes the neutral diplomatic stance as a counter-reaction not only on diplomatic lines but also necessary on historical and financial lines. He is of the view, "The share of Indian defense equipment procured from Russia came down from 70% in 2012-17 to below 50% in 2017-21. Instead, large numbers of new defense contracts have been signed with countries such as Israel, France, and the US. This diversification is part of India's engagement in the last two decades with the US and its allies. Both relationships are equally critical for India, and it has had to maintain a tough balancing act."

The quest to validate and justify

So India, not only had to substantiate to the global political arena that its neutrality was justified, reasonable, and essential but also had to make sure it did not come under the pressure of the West to take a side nevertheless. Krzysztof Iwanek, a renowned South Asian expert gives this view a significant footing. He claims that

"the West – Europe, North America, Australia – should not pressure India to condemn Russia. This, however, does not mean that I believe the West should do nothing about India-Russia relations. Many methods of weakening Russian power must be used, but they need to be wise ones. In the case of New Delhi, the West must recognize Indian interests and work them into the equation...Western governments should not simply tell India what to do. Instead, they should offer cooperation with India in fields of mutual interest." (Iwanek et al., 2022)

Hence the expectation that even academic scholars have seemingly offered is, that the West should not by any means tell India how its diplomatic stance should be. Rather some form of cooperative argument that implied alignment of interest should be taken up. Iwanek, in this context, offers a very interesting argument, which is essential to note. *"Before asking India to speak against Russia we, the West, must ask ourselves: Did we clearly stand on India's side during the India-Pakistan tensions – for instance, in 2019? No. Did we clearly stand on India's side during the India-Bhutan-China tensions in 2017 or India-China tensions in Ladakh in 2020? No."* This argument also brings us to a simple idea, that what is least expected of India is to go ahead with a take that the West would feel adequate. India has no reason whatsoever to take a stance that goes against Russia- the country does not pose any form of danger to India. Similarly, the West does not have sufficient reasons to take a stance that aligns with India. Scholar Iwanek, claims that *"Discussing issues is not the same as exerting diplomatic influence. Presenting one's perspective is not the same as telling another government what to do. The goal, thus, should be to come up with better offers for India. While the New Delhi government remains neutral, a*

considerable number of Indian media have used the word "invasion" to describe what Moscow has done."

However, this perspective on the neutrality of India's position has bought other political-diplomatic neutrality ultimately signifying what one Indian scholar has called "*a subtle pro-Moscow position.*" This seems particularly incongruous today because India stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in opposing Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific while at the same time appearing tolerant of the vastly more egregious Russian belligerence in Europe. (Tellis, 2022)

On the domestic front, a decision like this has bought some form of a 'rare consensus' that is particularly unique, since the country remains largely divided on most issues. Christopher Jaffrelot in a recently published article articulates that at the domestic level, the need for India to remain neutral was not objected to in the Indian Parliament, even the official spokesperson of the Indian National Congress (India's largest opposition party) unanimously agreed in the diplomatic stance. (Jaffrelot, 2022). He claims that domestically it is a matter of agreement that Russia is more than just India's defense supplier, he adds, "*From this perspective, a strong Russia is important because it adds a pillar to the multipolar world that New Delhi wants to see. This is all the more true as Russia is too far away from India geographically to pose any threat to the latter.*"

Happymon Jacob, an expert at the Council for Strategic and Defense Research (CSDR), a think tank explains that "*an aggressive Russia is a problem for the United States and the West, not for India.*" He adds that "*India's problem is China, and it needs both the United States/the West and Russia to deal with the China problem.*" This hence validates the argument that there existed absolutely no need for India to criticize Russia or to take sides or even abandon it for that matter. (Jacob, 2022)

The role of the West

Shiv Shankar Menon, a former diplomat who served as National Security Adviser to former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in a recently published article deliberated on the '*fantasy of the free world*' in the context of whether democracies were against Russian aggression. Menon upholds that the West has always pushed democracies like India to forcefully take a stance. The 'hypocrisy' that the West tends to hide away symbolizes disregard for their own regressive and aggressive actions. He adds, "*As shocked as Western policymakers profess to be by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, they might remember that such behavior is a violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity is something that Asia has seen and experienced in the past at the hands of major powers. The long list of outside interventions and invasions (including the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Vietnam War), ongoing proxy wars, and 'frozen' conflicts in which casualties mount daily, is proof that major powers are content to pay lip service to norms about sovereignty and territorial conflict even as those norms are repeatedly breached.*" (Menon et al., 2022)

Kanwal Sibal, a former Indian a former ambassador to Moscow in a recently published article in The Outlook gives a very interesting perspective in this regard that it is right to consider

President Putin as the inhibitor of the biggest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century. However, the West has completely done away with the narrative that there has been a train of events that has led to the present crises, with the issue simmering since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He says the West is guilty and in ways that the Western narrative needs to excessively remove. He adds, *"the separation of Ukraine - the historical core of the Slavic Russian state and its Orthodox character - has been traumatic for Russia.....the West is well aware of Russia's concerns and knows the potential dangers of keeping NATO's doors open to Ukraine's membership, but it has gambled on the Russian sense of its weakness"*. (Sibal, 2022)

Hence India has strongly pursued the role of not only keeping up with its diplomatic stance but also showing how effectively can the pressures of the West be navigated. Despite the prevalence of American cultures domestically in the country and the migration of Indian citizens to the West for educational opportunities, Biden's take on democracy vs autocracy seems irrelevant at the moment.

Conclusion

Japanese Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida in a recently held Quad Summit discussed India's neutral stance *"On the international situation, each country has its own historical developments as well as the geographical situation. Even amongst like-minded countries, the positions may not agree fully. That is only natural. But with that as a premise, to deepen mutual understanding and to spread the cooperation and collaboration would be crucial among the Quad members."*

Nevertheless, the context of India's stance still remains up for debate and criticism. Manish Tewari, a prominent leader of the Congress claims that India in its neutrality is losing the power it is enjoying in the international arena now. This pivotal position would work in its favor if India dropped its stance and took a side, essentially of the West, and brought several favors on its side.

He adds, *"a new iron curtain seems to be descending across the world. Unlike the iron curtain which had divided Europe between 1945 and 1989, this new iron curtain has the potential of actually dividing the world. Behind this iron curtain, may lie the great civilizations of Russia, China, Iran, and their myriad allies - Myanmar, Pakistan, Syria, and North Korea, to name a few. India does not have the luxury of sitting atop this new iron curtain as it did between 1946 and 1989 - the period between the First Asian Relations Conference and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It has to choose if it wants to be seen in the company of Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and Myanmar or on the side of Western democracies however imperfect and hypocritical they may be. Moreover, we have aligned our interests increasingly with Western powers since 1991 [when India's economy was liberalized]"*. (Tewari, 2022)

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(5) Russia- Ukraine Conflict

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The launch of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia started with air and missile assaults on Ukraine's military targets before sending tanks and troops across the country's borders. On many borders, the Ukrainian army fought back. The video speech delivered by Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy on February 25th, 2022, announced that 137 has been killed including troops and civilians and hundreds more have been injured.

The tension between Ukraine and Russia is primarily because of two reasons.

1. Ukraine is a matter of strategic importance to Russia
2. There is also territorial conflict between Ukraine and Russia

Currently, Russia is in control of Crimea and there are two regions in eastern Ukraine which are called Donetsk and Luhansk these together combine to become the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. Ukraine was once part of the Soviet Union after 1991, Ukraine became a separate country and declared itself an independent country on 24th August 1991. Ukraine shares a border with European Union and Russia. But as a former soviet republic, it has deep social and cultural ties with Russia and the Russian language is widely spoken especially on the eastern side of Ukraine. After the Ukrainian ethnicity group, the Russian ethnicity group is larger in Ukraine as is obvious due to the closed-knitted border and history. There is a strong Russian cultural influence in Russia, as Ukraine is a new country it is difficult to counter the Russian culture. Western liberal democracy is doing that job for Ukraine by giving ideological support to oppose Russian culture. There is an old saying you cannot defeat the culture, it takes hundreds and thousands of years to evolve it's practically impossible to change any culture overnight or in a few years. For the Ukrainian people, Ukraine is their own country, eastern Ukrainian groups who are pro-Russia are called rebels and separatists by the Ukrainian government.

To understand this conflict from a better perspective it is necessary to go back in time at least 10-15 years. The politics of Ukraine is categorized into three different parts, the first category can be the pro-western one they also support NATO and the European Union, they believe in the liberal democracy of western countries and they are also anti-Russian. The second category includes all political parties that are pro-Russia, they like the old soviet culture, are Eurosceptic and are often anti-American also not very liberal. The third category includes that only focuses on regional and local interests in political science there is a term for its ideology of regionalism and comparatively almost all the members in these political parties are new and are formed in the last 5-6 years.

The current President of the Ukraine Volodymyr Zolotskyy his political affiliation is with the servant of the people party which falls in the first category which is pro-western. Then the former President Petro Poroshenko belonged to the European solidarity party which also falls in the first category and the former President Viktor Yanukovych in the 80s was part of the communist party of the soviet union later he joined the Party of regions in 1997 which falls in the second category that is pro-Russian, eurosceptic.

Yanukovych won the election on February 25th 2010. His election was generally considered free and fair because he was quite popular at that time and one of the reasons for his popularity was to his predecessor's government it was not competent and was going through internal issues. As soon as he became the president in March 2010 the very same year he made a couple of mistakes or blunders. The Ukrainian public saw it as a blunder. In April 2010 his government signed the landmark agreement with the Russian government in the city of Kharkiv, at that time Dmitri Medvedev was the Russian president and the PM was Vladimir Putin as per this agreement Russia agreed to reduce the price of natural gas sold to Ukraine by 30% in return Russia wanted the Ukrainian government to extend the lease of Russian naval base in the Black Sea at Sevastopol in Ukraine for 25 years and this was the deal. This agreement was heavily criticized by the Ukrainian public, from Ukraine's point of view it was letting Russia control Crimea in exchange for low-cost gas. Even America was paying attention to Yanukovych's policies and they were not in favour of it. The United States always had an interest in Ukraine, when Ukraine got separated in 1991 U.S quickly recognized Ukraine and extended full support, in 1994 it helped Ukraine and Russia come to an agreement on the elimination of Soviet nuclear weapon systems in Ukraine and ensure security and safety for Ukraine. In 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster happened in Ukraine, America helped Ukraine in cleaning nuclear waste after the meltdown. The U.S and many other countries had donated a huge amount of money to control the situation, even India had contributed. After leaving the Soviet Union in 1991 in the following years Ukraine was added to the non-proliferation treaty by the United States and in 1997 Ukraine and NATO partnership began to develop. In 2003, Ukraine deployed thousands of troops in Iraq and supported the invasion of Iraq by the United States. The United States and Ukraine have always extended their hand to help each other whereas Russia was always against the United States and European Union's interference in Ukraine. In October 2010, Yanukovych amended the Ukrainian constitution and brought back certain provisions that existed before 2004. It changed article 111 of the Ukrainian constitution regarding the removal of the president this created a negative perception among the public. Then in the following years, he faced corruption charges many media claimed that his family members benefited from it. In 2012, his approval rating fell low, to save his image he did a few things like damage control, in the early months of 2013 he and his ministers were totally in favour of signing the European Union association agreement and there was significant support from the vast majority of the public, they promoted this deal before happening and created a massive hype but on 21st November 2013, the government went back on its promise and suspended the signing of European Union Ukraine Association agreement. That created civilian unrest in Ukraine, initially it was a protest then it turned into riots then civil disobedience and later into a movement this was also called the Euromaidan movement the purpose of the movement was to remove President Yanukovych. There was a massive protest in the capital city Kyiv protest and clashes went on till January 2014. In the following month, Yanukovych signed an

agreement on the settlement of a political crisis in Ukraine and then Yanukovych and his government officials fled from the country.

Petro Poroshenko was elected in 2014, he was a billionaire and head of opposition during protests. Eastern Ukraine protests began and political drama began while these were occurring in the city of Kyiv, Russia strategically invaded and took over the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine. Russian troops who were masked took over the supreme council that is the parliament of Crimea and installed their own pro-Russian Sergey Aksyonov government in Crimea. Russia even conducted the Crimean referendum and the majority of the people in Crimea voted in the favour of Russian federation 16th March 2014 was considered as Crimea's independence. From Ukraine's point of view, they condemn it. In September 2014, France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine came up with the ceasefire agreement through the Minsk agreement. The aim of this was to end the war in the Donbas region of Ukraine. Minsk is the capital of Belarus. On 5th September 2014 the head of all these four countries, France and Germany represented OSCE they all signed the agreement but then the agreement failed and there were many ceasefire violations in Donbas. Again a fresh agreement was set up it was called Minsk 2 which was signed on 12th February 2015 even though this failed.

It did fail because from Ukraine's perspective they want a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy Russian weaponry, and full Ukrainian government control throughout the conflict zone. From Russia's perspective, they want autonomy of the Donbas region, and the freedom of the Donbas region to govern itself and control its affairs. Donbas is a prosperous region and Russia is confident that they will get support from the Donbas region.

In 2019 president Volodymyr Zelenskyy was elected. He agreed to implement the formula which was proposed by the former German president Steinmeier. According to this formula, Ukraine has to grant self-governing status to the Donbas region but only after conducting local elections, the result will be final. Ukraine wanted the withdrawal of troops and weapons first and then an election to which Russia said autonomy and elections first then everything else. It was a big risk for Ukraine, by accepting Russia's terms it would have taken a huge risk of rebuilding and supporting the economy of an autonomous region whose vast political powers would have been under pro-Russian leadership, hypothetically anything could have happened. Russia will not move back they did whatever is in alignment with their self-interest and security.

India's response to this crisis is the condemnation of the killing with any name-calling and India has abstained from the UN votes and maintained neutrality. India called for a peaceful resolution of the situation through sustained diplomatic efforts for long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond.

An invasion of Russia has put India in a difficult situation, as Russia is important for national interests and many military and strategic agreements are present and it is one of the strongest alliances of India. Whereas the US is trying to pressurize India to join the western strategy in isolating Russia. There is a possibility of sanctions on India and there are many Indian citizens in Ukraine, threatening the lives of thousands of citizens.

It has been observed that India brought Oil from Russia for a cheaper cost and redistributed it to the other nations at a fairly high cost.

India has made the right decision to abstain. In war, nothing is black and white everything is grey, and every country is trying their best to support and earn from this conflict. At the end of the day, people are suffering and that is the greatest loss of all.

(6) Russia-Ukraine War: Indian Perspective

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Introduction

After the end of the second world war, the Russian invasion on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 is the biggest war on the European soil. The Russian side calls it a “special military operation” while the majority of the international community condemns it.

The war has caused great plight for the Ukrainian people and the world at large. The war led to huge loss of civilian lives, millions displaced, large-scale infrastructure destruction, cities like Bucha being destroyed, environmental destruction and a resultant humanitarian crisis has left the world questioning the established international order, territorial integrity and democratic values. Since the beginning of the war, more than 4000 civilians have been killed, 8 million Ukrainians internally displaced, 6.5 million people have migrated to neighbouring nations according to UNHCR reports. Infrastructural damage amounts to almost \$100 billion. The security of the Ukrainian people are at stake. The war has taken away people’s access to basic necessities like food and shelter. The women, children and people in the old age category remains the most vulnerable from the war. The war has also resulted in a severe energy crisis globally and inflation leading to increased food and fuel prices. The food crisis is due to the blocking of Ukrainian ports where around 22 million food is stuck on the ports.

Background of the War

Ukraine was once part of the Soviet Union until its disintegration in 1991. Since then Russia tried to keep Ukraine under check. The country is geopolitically and strategically significant for Russia. It is also because of the country’s tilt towards Russia’s ideological rival the capitalist western powers.

The Russian aggression on Ukraine began with Russia’s own security considerations, as Putin initially claimed, concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) eastward expansion. Ukraine’s possibility of joining NATO led to Russia’s military build-up along the Ukrainian border. However, the narrative evolved from taking over Kyiv to “liberation of Donbas”. Since 2014, the separatist insurgency already began in these areas by Russian proxy forces and Russia was able to seize almost a third of the area, which it now aiming for the whole lot.

Developments

In mid-May, the Russian troops took control of Mariupol when the last Ukrainian forces surrendered following a heroic battle. Weeks of indiscriminate Russian shelling and bombing have completely destroyed Mariupol, a predominantly Russian-speaking city with about half of its people being ethnic Russian.

The Russian military failed to capture the Ukrainian capital Kyiv and hence retreated. Russian soldiers have focussed on the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine after retreating from Kyiv and northern Ukraine. They have made some progress after six weeks, but at a high cost against tenacious Ukrainian defence.

Where Indian Stands

India-Russia relations could be understood from the colonial lens. India and Russia shares cordial relations since the time of Cold War. On the Russian aggression on Ukraine India has chosen to maintain neutrality while condemning incidents like in Bucha. India has abstained from votes on UNSC, Human Rights Council and other international platforms displaying a subtle tilt towards Moscow. Not siding with the West has brought in many criticisms on the Indian side. India's stand could be traced from historical ties with Moscow where even though India was non-aligned, it was tilted towards the Soviet Union. India both based on historical relations and present requirements is maintaining its diplomatic stature. India's stand on Russia is being called "strategic ambivalence" by Ashley J Fellis.

Russia is vital for India's security interests. After the end of Cold War, India and Russia aligned in aspirations for a multipolar world, to keep in check both China and Pakistan, Russia's reliability as a dependable partner in comparison to the Western allies and paramountcy for dependence on Russian military equipment. According to a SIPRI report, Russia is the largest arms supplier to India. During the period between 2016 till 2021, 50% of global arms purchase were exchanged between India and Russia. High level technological assistance from Russia and political assistance against rivals are the reasons why India is maintaining a neutral stand against Russia even though it sympathises with the humanitarian plight.

Russia acts as India's insurance policy against the West and its allies. Russia has supported India on several occasions. In terms of the scrapping of Article 370 in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Russia sided with India maintaining that it was India's internal matter. Another reason is Russia's support towards India as a bigger power in South Asia in comparison to the West who for most parts in history kept Pakistan as a priority for strategic reasons. Even though the West toned down its Pakistan orientation due to the terrorist activities taking place on the Pakistani soil, it will only remain so as long as their national interests align. The Western orientation towards Pakistan has also created the space for the China Pakistan strengthening relations which is a security concern for India. Therefore, Russia is India's security guarantor as well as balancer against China's regional and global aspirations.

However, it doesn't imply India drifting away from the West. India wants both Russia and the West as its allies for different objectives. India needs the Western support to balance China in the Indo-Pacific where it is a member of QUAD comprising of the US, Japan, Australia and India. India need to diversify its military dependency hence it needs the West. The current Biden administration in the US is willing to help India diversify its defence. India is focusing on indigenisation production as well. However, Russian arms supply still remains vital for India.

Even though India is silent on Russian aggression, it has been maintaining diplomatic interactions with both Putin and Zelenskyy and urged for an end to the violence. And

Ukraine wants aid diplomacy, infrastructure development and financial assistance from India in the post war scenario.

Indian Concerns

India's posture on Russia-Ukraine war brought in several criticisms from the West as mentioned earlier. There are other countries who aligns with Indian response but are not being questioned on their stand. The risk that comes from the neutral position is that India while reiterating a rules based order and emphasizing on democratic values is maintaining silence on the Russian aggression. This makes India less reliable among the international community as it questions India's support for the liberal international order which prohibits the use of force for territorial aggression. However, this brings us only to the realist notions of power, national interest and survival. A powerful nation will not remain silent. It will keep on seeking more power. And once national interest is at stake, a nation will shape its behaviour accordingly.

However, the international scenario has drastically changed for India since the times of Cold War. This century is termed as the Asian century with India being a rising power with global aspirations having more say in the international system. India and China are rivals in the same direction. However, the world supports India more than an aggressive China that frequently violates territorial restrictions and uses neo-colonisation against the developing world.

Due to the war, Russian industrial base is also being affected. And Indian posture on Russia also has the potential to deteriorate India-Ukraine relations. Ukraine is a major supplier for different weapons parts to India. In addition, India is being linked to the Russian leadership – Vladimir Putin more than Russia itself which deteriorates India's image among the democracies.

In addition, India has been affected the most in the Foreign Portfolio investments where more than Rs. 1 Lakh crore was withdrawn from the Indian markets. There is also the looming danger of potential Sino-Russian ties with increasing Chinese influence in Russia which might be a concern for India .

The Western criticism on India's position on Russian aggression, according to the S. Jaishankar, the EAM, however, will not remain for a longer period as he believes India has multiple options to maintain an independent stand in comparison to earlier times. As mentioned, the US needs India in the Indo-Pacific to balance China, as well as to reduce Russian military supply dependence.

India is also able to use the crisis as an opportunity to buy Russian oil at discounted prices, fertilizers and several other commodities as a result of Western sanctions. Russia wants access to more markets at the same time.

Conclusion

The Russia Ukraine war has affected the international order, and the international order is going to have lasting impact from the war. The crisis questions every established institutions of peace, rules based order and the highly acknowledged democratic peace theories. Russia may end up losing more while China may end up gaining more. Russian borders are going to be unstable and countries not directly involved in the war will also face challenges. In South Asia, the countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan which are already engulfed in economic and

political crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war has exacerbated these countries situation due to rising inflation adding to their woes. The crisis has also triggered energy crisis specially among the European countries where Russia is a major supplier of energy. While India maintains its diplomatic posture on Russia and it might pay off well in the near future, but ambiguity still remains.
