

Decoding the Geo-Political and Economic Dimensions of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Navigating the Road Ahead

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To Cite this Article

B Dr. K.Stephen , Decoding the Geo-Political and Economic Dimensions of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict:Navigating the Road Ahead

”,*Journal of*

Science and Technology, Vol. 07, Issue 12,-September2022, pp017-34

Article Info

Received: 18-07-2022 Revised: 2-08-2022 Accepted: 10-9-2022 Published: 23-9-2022

Abstract:

Given the profound historical and cultural link between the two countries, it is hard to fathom the Soviet Empire functioning independently of Ukraine even as recently as a few decades ago. The continuing confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, which began in February of this year, has had far-reaching consequences. Russian officials said their country had to launch the invasion to stop the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) from expanding its territory to the east. The many aspects of conflict are attempted to be explored in the essay. In addition to the all-consuming energy crisis, food insecurity has been a problem in many regions of the world. Alternative energy sources are being sought after due to the oil embargo and the subsequent energy crisis. Institutional frameworks are chaotic, and the global order is changing all the time. What about a new rights order based on rules? Could it happen in the future? Big powers and their displays of power aren't always enough to alter the world. Is the moment coming when the middle powers intervene to change things up? As the world's geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, we look forward to see whether India can continue

to play a leading role in international affairs and help shape the future of global power dynamics.

Keywords: Wars, difficulties, geopolitical, navigating, middle powers, global order.

Restoring the Soviet Union's previous greatness has been President Putin's top priority, much like Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" (Zhomgguo meng)—which is based on the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people (Economy, 2018, p.12). The idea of building a "greater Russia" emerged in response to Russia's humiliation after the fall of the Soviet Union, which is only one of many reasons why tensions between Russia and the West are so high. When Russia annexed Crimea, it became quite clear. Actually, President Putin has been attempting to include the former Soviet republics in the Eurasian Economic Community, which is funded by Russia, for the last many years. In its pursuit of dominance in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Baltics, Russia has escalated its aggressive behaviour against its neighbours and across the region. The article was written by Davis and Slobodchikoff in 2018. As a result, several tiny and weak governments are competing to join NATO.

Many wonder if the fall of the Soviet Union necessitated the formation of a collective security alliance like NATO. But was there a danger that wanted it to spread eastward? The tensions between Russia and the West have persisted for almost 20 years. From 1997 until 2004, the 12 Understanding the Economic and Geopolitical Aspects of the Conflict Between Russia and Ukraine Even if Russia was opposed, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisations eventually welcomed nations who had been Communist in the past (Pandey, 2022). Anger between Russia and the United States over competing geopolitical rather than ideological worldviews has surfaced in the form of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Trajectory:

Sevastopol, the Russian Black Sea Fleet's headquarters, is located in the Ukrainian territory of Crimea, which was invaded and occupied by Russia in February 2014 (Hookway, & Trofimov, 2022). The fact that Russia has fought against NATO's eastward expansion is well-known.

The United States' strategy of backing regime change, or "colour revolutions," is something about which Russia has strong doubts. Yushchenko, who sought

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

deeper connections with the European Union, succeeded Viktor Yanukovich, who had been pro-Moscow, as president of Ukraine after the 2004 Orange Revolution. In early 2021, tensions rose when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the US president that he wanted his country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Hookway, & Trofimov, 2022). The United States threatened Russia with severe penalties in the event that Russia invaded Ukraine in response to Russia's rapid deployment of troops to the border area for spring training exercises. Attacking Ukraine is a clear indication of Russia's determination to stop the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation from expanding eastward and to stop Ukraine from joining. Finally, liberating the Donbas area and establishing a corridor to connect it to Crimea was Putin's geopolitical goal. The battle really began in earnest when President Putin issued an order in February formally recognising the independence of the rebel districts of Luhansk and Doneysk in eastern Ukraine. The United States and the European Union then announced monetary penalties on the two areas in response (Krishnakutty, 2022). Russia sent soldiers to eastern Ukraine as a peacekeeping action after claiming the republics were being shelled by the Ukrainian military, prompting the evacuation of civilians. The nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) supplied Ukraine with military weapons and encouraged the country to strengthen its military, which stoked the fires even more. Direct military operations on Ukrainian soil and air and missile attacks against Ukrainian military targets marked the beginning of the invasion on February 24, 2022. (Mohanty, 2022). Russia aimed to eliminate security risks provided by 'right-wing, anti-Russian and American-sponsored organisations' and by military sites supplied by the West in that nation (Gaur, 2022). Concern and outrage erupted throughout the globe in response to the Russian military operation.

International Response to the War

Vladimir Putin had called the attack a "special military operation" to protect civilians in eastern Ukraine from 'genocide.' This claim was strongly contested by the US, as being absurd and an excuse for invading Ukraine. (India Today. Associated Press, Moscow). Putin justified the invasion to the Russian public by stating his goal was to "demilitarise and de-Nazify Ukraine", to protect people subjected to what he called eight years of bullying and genocide by Ukraine's government and to ensure Ukraine's neutral status (kremlin.ru). International response to the war has been

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

extensive, bringing together a coalition of the United States, the European Union, and the G-7 nations to administer severe sanctions and provide military backing simultaneously. The West and Ukraine have been exchanging information in order to pinpoint Russian locations. Furthermore, the International Criminal Court is investigating and has initiated legal procedures against the Russian military for a string of war crimes and human rights violations in locations such as Kherson and Bucha in Ukraine (Kinetz, 2022). International leaders have strongly denounced Russia's behaviour.

Sanctions Implementation: People and businesses associated with Russia's conflict in Ukraine and the Russian economy have both been sanctioned. The Bank of Russia estimates that Russia's foreign currency reserves are 606.5 billion dollars, a figure that reflects the country's flagging economy. No one knows for sure how much longer they can keep Russia afloat. The West proceeded to freeze the foreign assets of the Central Bank as the conflict gathered steam. According to Hannon (2022), the Russian energy exporters were told to convert 80% of their foreign currency profits into roubles. Repayment in dollars has been challenging due to Russia's mainly frozen foreign currency reserves (Wearden, 2022). The West has successfully severed ties between Russia and international financial markets. Furthermore, Russian banks have been subjected to severe sanctions. Sberbank, the biggest bank in the nation, was booted off the Swift network for financial transactions. According to Norman (2022), the European Union has barred three of Russia's major broadcasters from doing business within the bloc. In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Union just authorised a sixth round of sanctions. An oil embargo would result, cutting off 90% of oil purchases until the end of the year. Russian revenues would take a hit, and the country would have a hard time attracting new oil trading partners willing to pay the prices Moscow demands.

Help for the Ukrainian Armed Forces: Ukraine has the necessary personnel, but its military hardware is unable to compete with Russia's. The West has provided extensive military aid to Ukraine in response to the Russian incursion. According to Asthana (2022), the United States has invested over \$54 billion in Ukraine. A lot of armament, including M777 155 mm howitzers and other light anti-tank and anti-aircraft weaponry, has been sent to the Ukrainian army. In response to the artillery threat from Russia, Ukraine has demanded that its Western partners quickly deploy air defence shields, high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS), and long range missiles. In addition to sending drones and other monitoring equipment, the United States Department of defence has now unveiled a \$400 million security aid package to Ukraine, which would include weaponry

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

and other defence hardware.

Along with the United States, Britain has supplied Ukraine with anti-ship missiles, armoured vehicles, and, as part of a concerted effort, would also send advanced medium-range rocket systems. Also, the M270 launchers, which the UK can provide, are capable of guiding missiles to a precise 80 km radius. So, can this cutting-edge weaponry alter the trajectory of conflict? According to Joshi (2022). Known as hybrid warfare in the West and nonlinear war in Russia, Russia's military activities have deliberately integrated information warfare, cyber-attacks, and psychological warfare into its war effort, in accordance with the Gerasimov doctrine (Galeotti, 2020).

The Impact of Inflation and Price-Rise

International crude oil prices have risen because to the intensifying war, which is impacting economies throughout the world. In addition, inflation has been sparked by the global increase in commodity prices. But compared to other South Asian nations, India is in a better situation. Fuel and food supplies have run out, plunging Sri Lanka into a catastrophic situation. The unrest in Sri Lanka began with the debt trap that China and commercial borrowing set up. There is no more money in the bank, and it can't repay its debts. As a result of inflation surpassing 7%, the Nepalese economy is also feeling the effects. The crisis has caused inflation and unemployment, and in certain regions, it has even destabilised the governments. Russia has cut off gas supplies to Poland and Bulgaria, further inflaming the already tense economic situation between Russia and the West. It has also requested that Finland and other nations pay for energy supply in Russian rubles. According to Boffey (2022), Oil and petrol prices skyrocketed in the first week of May, adding to inflation that has already skyrocketed in certain areas of the globe. As said by Norman in the year 2022.

Search for Alternatives

Despite the fact that Russia is a major supplier of oil and gas to several nations across the globe, the oil embargo remains a tactic used by the West to undermine Russia. Russia supplies Europe with approximately 40% of its natural gas and 30% of its oil. This is due to Russia's position as a key global energy provider and its proximity to the European Union. Amidst all of this, the bigger issue is: Is Russia the only option for Europe's energy future? Europe must immediately diversify its energy sources. Russian energy supplies account for one-third of Germany's total. By the year's conclusion, 27 EU leaders had decided to cut off all imports of petroleum products and oil from Russia, with the exception of oil

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

transported via pipelines. Hungarian and other nearby landlocked EU member states' interests were considered for implementing this partial prohibition. Non-pipeline sources account for 70% of Russia's oil imports. To avoid this, the European Union would have to wean itself off of Russian energy. Can Europe, even in concert with other nations, envision an energy future where it surpasses Russia? And does it possess the resources necessary to implement renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, to ensure a more environmentally friendly future? This opens up some crucial considerations and provides an opportunity for leaders, policymakers, and advocates of renewable energy to think critically. Despite being Europe's economic engine, Germany gets one-third of its energy from Russia. Robert Habeck, the country's minister of economics and energy, painted a terrifying picture: "If we flip a switch immediately, there will be supply shortages and blackouts, wherein people will not be able to heat their homes and will run out of petrol causing unemployment" (Wearden, 2022). Countries are shifting their focus away from Russia's fossil fuels and towards alternative energy sources as a result of sanctions imposed on the country. Situations in Africa, Algeria, Mozambique, Morocco, and the UAE are being closely monitored. Russia was the world's second-largest supplier of crude oil before the conflict in Ukraine broke out, with a daily export of 5 million barrels (Wearden, 2022). Everything has altered because of the conflict; a worldwide rush is possible and may affect the climatic situation. Climate disasters are already happening all across the globe, and to solve a problem of this scale, nations must work together. Certainly, the West's harsh sanctions on Russia are an element of its plan to strike where it hurts the most. However, what about the nations who are bearing the brunt of these sanctions?

The Importance of the Arctic

It is especially concerning because only a few of nations control over two-thirds of the world's energy resources, since this present standoff has affected their energy security systems. So, the topic of energy storage in the Arctic gets a lot of attention. "With an estimated 90 billion barrels of oil (16 percent of global total), 1,669 trillion cubic feet of gas (30 percent), and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids (38 percent)" (Nesheiwat, 2021). The Arctic is like a fresh "El Dorado" of still-attainable natural resources. A worldwide rush for energy, minerals, and natural resources will ensue as a result of the West and Europe's boycott of Russian oil and gas. This will heighten rivalry among Arctic and near-Arctic states for control of these resources. When it comes to proven deposits of natural gas, Russia is unrivalled. One third of Russia's total oil output is projected to come from resources in the Arctic shelf by 2050 (Kumar, 2022). Russia is well-

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aware of its energy card, and the world's leading countries are also cognizant of the Arctic's immense potential. Eventually, this will likely lead to a desire for power. Due to melting Greenland and sea ice, the Arctic is now more accessible and vulnerable to climate change. Additionally, the Arctic is a unique asset due to its status as a clean energy frontier. Since climate change is a serious problem, the world community needs to step up its efforts and put more resources into developing renewable energy sources. In a document titled "India and the Arctic: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development," India's Arctic Policy was unveiled on March 17th (Kumar, 2022).

Food Security at Stake

In the end, the crisis is about more than simply money, big business, or finance; it's also about food security. Also, behind China and India, the world's top two wheat exporters are Russia and Ukraine. When it comes to maize, they're in second place. Plus, they're responsible for making 80% of the sunflower oil in the globe. Because to Russia's blockade of the Black Sea ports, food prices have risen sharply, putting people in danger of going hungry in several countries (Singh & Bikhchandani, 2022). Conflict has turned grain and oil seeds into weaponry, with African nations bearing the brunt of the collateral damage. Moscow and Beijing have joined forces to restrict the export of fertiliser and its components. Reduced harvests are inevitable due to a lack of fertiliser. The scope and impact of this war extend well beyond Russia's invasion of Ukraine; it has also had a crucial impact on food security throughout the world. Its effects have spread over the Americas, Europe, Africa, and even certain regions of Asia.

According to David Beasley, the head of the United Nations Food Security programme, the number of people at risk of starving has increased dramatically over the last four years, from 80 million to 276 million. Additionally, 49 million individuals in 43 different nations are on the verge of starvation. According to The Economic Times (2022), the globe has been swept up in a series of crises, beginning with the deadly epidemic and continuing with the war in Ukraine.

Friends or Foes: Choices Governed by Compulsions

The obvious follow-up inquiry is: which nations are supporting Russia? The former superpower now has more enemies than allies; 141 out of 193 UN member states condemned Russia's invasion of its neighbour. Syria and North Korea were among the five nations that voted against the resolution. 35 nations include India, China, and the United Arab Emirates did not participate. Also, the resolution to denounce Russia's "aggression" against Ukraine had eleven of the

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

fifteen members of the UN Security Council support it, but it was unable to pass due to Russia's veto (Tanishka, 2022). India did not join the chorus of nations denouncing Russia's invasion of Ukraine at the United Nations on March 2, marking the third consecutive day without a vote (Mohan, 2022). A fractured globe and complex international relationships are also on display in the crisis in Ukraine. The Middle East, Israel, and Turkey are only a few examples. Russia has redeployed its forces to rehabilitate their deployment to Ukraine, making several locations vulnerable to external interference. In 2022, Chulov As a result of the Russians' retreat, a number of players have stepped into the void. The Middle East and Syria have seen an escalation of aggression from countries such as Turkey and Israel.

Additionally, Russia anticipates diplomatic backing from nations such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia at the United Nations. Russia would also like it if the Gulf energy producers, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia ignore the US and European demands to hurt Russia in the event that sanctions and hostilities against Russia are lifted. As a result, Russia may find itself cut off from access to some of its most important markets. Turkey and other member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation have shown their reluctance to impose penalties. Additionally, they are being careful not to provoke Russia. In a similar vein, Israel, which has strong relations to the United States, is emphatically opposed to sanctions. Its policies include maintaining objectivity and encouraging discussion. As with Israel and Turkey, the nationalist government of Hungary is on good terms with Moscow; the country would suffer economically and lose its "stable energy supply" if sanctions were imposed on Russia's energy exports. One of the countries that has emerged as a roadblock to the 27-member bloc's necessary unanimous backing is Hungary. Furthermore, the other two member nations of the European Union, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, are likewise against imposing the oil embargo all at once and want to phase out Russian oil gradually over a few years (The Indian Express, 2022). The battle is getting out of hand, and nations are feeling pressured to make their decisions public. For some, this battle marks the official start of the Cold battle. The fall of the Soviet Union did actually cause global alliances to become more complex and unstable.

Emerging Concerns

Many concerns have been highlighted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and no simple solutions have been proposed. Considerations should be given to the following: the invasion of Ukraine, the end of the road, or Is there more to Putin's plans than Ukraine? Is Putin planning to expand Russia's influence and change the

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rules of Europe to suit his own agenda? Putin may move on to Moldova, a country that is neither a member of the NATO nor immune to Russian aggression, if his military offensive in Ukraine fails. Given Russia's growing military capability and its backing for Ukraine, one would wonder whether the country will soon test the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's nuclear deterrent. The whole planet would be doomed if this happened. Negotiation amongst the warring factions is the way to proceed.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has highlighted the importance of international organisations such as the United Nations due to its size, scope, and global influence. It is undeniable that the United Nations agencies have made tremendous humanitarian efforts throughout this crisis.

finding a solution to the problem is becoming more challenging. All decisions must be approved by the P-5, which means that these nations have the power to reject any resolution that has any real impact. Change is necessary at the UN. In order for the Council to be better equipped to handle the increasingly complicated problems of the modern world, it is necessary to increase its membership (both permanent and non-permanent seats). According to *The Hindu* (2021), the same has been repeated by the G-4 nations: Japan, Germany, Brazil, and India.

The candidature of India for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council has been widely regarded as very competitive. As long as the Council's effectiveness is maintained and the veto mechanism remains unchanged or expanded, countries such as the US are in favour of a small increase. *The Print*, 2021. It would be wise for India to spearhead the fight for changes, in addition to the G-4 countries supporting each other's candidatures. The use of force and the impunity for violating international law are becoming the new standard, as the Russia-Ukraine conflict has shown. The Iraq War is a prime example; at the time, Iraq was not even defending itself when a coalition of governments led by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia invaded the country (*BBC NEWS*, 2016). Similarly, the United Kingdom has illegally maintained its claim to the Chagos Islands, which are its primary strategic asset in the Indian Ocean, in violation of international law. International tribunals for the law of the sea and the International Court of Justice have issued a verdict that affirms Mauritius's sovereignty over the Chagos islands (Wintour, 2021).

International law displays a double standard when it comes to acts such as annexation, boundary changes by force, war crimes, and human rights violations, as well as when it comes to invasions of neighbouring states.

The Shifting Geo-Political Landscape: India's Strategy and Role

Published by: Longman Publishers www.jst.org.in

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

Russia first said it was a military operation in Ukraine in February, but now it's clear they're launching a full-scale invasion that has killed and destroyed countless people. While it is premature to declare that a new global order is forming, geopolitical developments have occurred, and a third world war may be on the horizon. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is about to get two new members: Finland and Sweden. An issue of disagreement between the West and Eurasia is the imminent eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It is a fundamental tenet of international relations that national interests take precedence, and India is no exception. There has been a lack of criticism of Russia's conduct due to its unique connections with Moscow. Skillful diplomacy has undoubtedly been used by New Delhi. Considering the valid security interests of all sides, it seeks a peaceful conclusion to the issue. "The recent turn of events in Ukraine has deeply disturbed India, which stresses the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states." This was communicated by TS Tirmurti, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, at the UN Security Council discussion over Ukraine (Tanishka, 2022). However, it maintains a deliberate quiet over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Many nations have voiced their disapproval of India's weak reaction to the crisis. It is US policy that the Indian government should not buy oil or military weapons from Russia. India is not going to take a strong stance against Moscow's military aggressiveness or become a hero for Ukraine's interests. India must strike a balance in its foreign policy and ensure the continued availability of vital resources in its own area, as well as address security concerns.

stability along the axis of India, Russia, and China. Due to the availability of Russian oil and gas at prices that India can pay, India has begun importing these commodities. A month's worth of oil imports from India would have been enough to cover Europe's needs before sanctions were imposed (Kumar, 2022). The history of India and Russia's relationship spans decades. Russia supported India consistently, particularly in the military sector, notwithstanding India's nonalignment stance. One of Russia's assets is its advanced defensive technology and energy concerns; these aspects help India to maintain itself. Additionally, it is worth noting that Russia and China have a strong partnership, as seen during the joint statement between the two countries' leaders on February 4, 2022, when Putin and Xi Jinping declared that their friendship knows no bounds (Rajagopalan, 2022).

India is apprehensive about China due to its increasing proximity to Russia, its economic might, and its aggressive intentions. Russia and China are becoming closer, but there are still hidden tensions between the two countries. Russia sees

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

Central Asia and Europe as China's strong suits, but China has expanded its influence and pressure there. Only time will reveal how much longer Russia is content to remain in China's shadow. India should take advantage of this and include it into its larger strategy, keeping in mind that China's actions have been aggressive and unexpected from the beginning of the outbreak. "Pretend to be weak when you are strong and appear strong when you are weak," is a dictum from Sun Tzu that one might follow (Sawyer & Tzu, 1996).

To challenge the prevailing neoliberal system, China plans to showcase its growth model. Parallel to China's assertive ascent, the United States' influence is dwindling. Rising economic behemoths like Indonesia, India, and Australia, as well as the growing importance of Southeast Asia's developing economies, which serve as a platform for smaller states, make it impossible to dismiss this as a transfer of power to another state. This is why regional powers like China and the US often engage in environmental, anti-terrorism, and disaster management cooperation. These days, India is starting to make a big splash. India does not match the usual middle power status description because to its indomitable qualities, which include its rapidly expanding economic potential, technical prowess, cultural influence, global voice at many forums, and capacity to attract foreign investment. According to recent works on international relations, intermediate powers are unable to adequately reflect their interests onto important geopolitical problems. Their management, bridge-building, and peacekeeping duties are a result of their upbringing in the liberal rules-based society (Soeya, 2020).

By considering the collision course and these smaller regional powers, which either join forces or form alliances to keep the peace in the region, Gramme Allison's "Thucydides Trap" helps to explain the continuing power struggle between China and the United States (Hanania, 2021; Zafar, 2022). To avoid a simplistic reading of the Thucydides Trap, it may be necessary to go beyond it to other discourses and identify players like Japan, ASEAN, India, Australia, and Japan. In this age of competitive power politics, India is leading the charge for a "free and open Indo-Pacific" (QUAD), which helps to keep the area stable. India is a vital part of the Quad, and although it isn't a treaty ally, it has benefited economically and technologically from the Quad and has also made its position plain.

communication with aggressive China. A wide variety of topics are accessible to collaboration, such as COVID-19 vaccines, new technology, a rules-based system, a free and open Indo-Pacific, and the unity and centrality of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. By contrast, according to Glenn Snyder, an alliance is

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"formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership." According to Snyder (1997: 1). This year, Prime Minister Modi joined the presidents of the United States, Australia, and Japan for the Quad Summit in Tokyo, which took place from May 23 to May 25. The leaders debuted the "Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)" with "mitigation" and "adaptation" as its two pillars and announced the foundation of the "Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness" (IPMDA) (Bhattacharjee, Kallol & Peri, Dinnakar, 2022).

With its strategic participation in organisations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Shanghai Economic Cooperation Group (RIC), the Beijing Cooperation Organisation (BRICS), the Beijing Initiative for Mutual Support in Technology and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and the I2U2 (The West Asia Quad), India is able to collaborate with a number of regional nations. Starting in December 2022, India will also be the G-20 president. Its goal is to encourage middle-income nations to work together for the sake of global financial stability. Sixty percent of the world's population and eighty percent of the global GDP are located in these nations. (Annual Report of the Indian Express, 2022). By the way, India has been in the forefront of several global initiatives, including the worldwide solar alliance, the coalition for disaster resilience, climate change, and the "vaccine maitri" campaign that was launched during the pandemic. India stepped up to the plate and helped nations all across the world get vaccines and capacity building materials. More recently, India sent 1.8 million metric tonnes of wheat to nations in need that cannot rely on market forces to get supply, in response to the food crisis caused by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. And this is happening even though India's population is skyrocketing at 1.38 billion. Source: The Hindu, 2022. A demonstration of its strategic independence, India has taken a deft position on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and has continued to buy oil from Russia, even if this has caused it to clash with the West. Atma Nirbhar Bharat, or self-reliance, is important to India, but so is the country's growing awareness of its place in the global community.

The storyline continues with the political and economic destiny of Russia hanging in the balance. There is a split in public opinion on whether India should cut ties with Russia and let go of its ideological past. India is reconsidering its reliance on Russian military hardware due to this situation; this is not due to any pressure from the West or the US, but rather to concerns about the reliability and durability of Russian-made hardware, as well as delays and cost overruns. New Delhi might

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

be left exposed if the conflict causes additional delays in the transfer of new weapons and equipment to India and affects or cancels plans to update current systems (Raghuvanshi, 2022).

In response to Russia's actions in the conflict in Ukraine, the United States and Europe have joined forces. Unfortunately for India, this will also cause the United States to focus less on the Indo-Pacific and more on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. China will benefit because it will make Russia more reliant on it and allow it more freedom to move about in its area. Both of these considerations will be important for India. In a world characterised by multilateralism and multipolarity, it is in India's national interest to maintain cordial ties with the West, Europe, and ASEAN. When it comes to the second part, India could definitely improve.

Conclusion

The growth of China has been linked with shifting power balances in recent times. There has been an effort by China to reshape the regional security architecture by displacing the US from the first and second island chains and establishing Chinese dominance in the South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait.

Obviously, this is bad news for states that are medium to tiny in size. The world would be very concerned if China were to establish an international order.

Changes in power dynamics caused by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine have significantly impacted India's strategic calculations. "India cannot grant any other nation a veto on its policy options," acknowledged Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in his latest book, *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*. This is especially true in a scenario when all major actors are attempting to be equally vague with their own decisions. And there's no evidence that governments that are fundamentally in love with strength would reward India for keeping a low presence on the international stage (Jaishankar, 2020).

In response to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and its gradual expansion into Indian territory, the West has remained cautious. But the West began to complain and expected others to do the same when Russia invaded Ukraine. Now India has shown its diplomatic prowess with a cautious answer. These days, the Indo-Pacific is a flashpoint for wars and territorial disputes. It is a lofty goal for India to bring together various nations in a transparent rules-based regional system, where cooperation and mutual reinforcement are not only encouraged but also enforced, and where disputes on economics, politics, and security are arbitrated. The Quad is also an example of a minilateral effort, not a multilateral one. India must ensure it maintains ties with the dominant West while avoiding any potential alienation from Russia. Both international institutions and

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

the global order are precariously balanced at the moment. Could a new rights order based on rules arise in the future? Big powers and their displays of power aren't always enough to alter the world. At the military level, the United States is unrivalled. When compared to its most formidable rival, China, the United States no longer has the influence it had a few decades ago. The world is in awe of China right now because of the way it has intensified its rivalry with the US in pursuit of marine resources and its expanding military modernization. According to Southgate (2019). Given the current situation, OPEC is not inclined to reach a compromise. A divided foreign policy, institutional frameworks in chaos, and little influence in the Middle East and Afghanistan might spell the end of the American era. The United States' predicament has been further exacerbated by its confrontation with China and Russia, two major Asian countries. The problem of Taiwan, where escalating tensions have been building recently, follows closely after. As it happens, it's essential to US and Chinese foreign policy, with China's relationship with Taiwan being unresolved from years past.

What should India do next, given this backdrop of conflict narratives, interstate competitiveness, and a shifting geopolitical landscape? Choosing its own foreign policy and preserving its strategic independence

It's a good idea to consider policy solutions that align with the country's interests. Xi Jinping's "Belt and Road initiative" has faced opposition from a small number of countries, including India. No matter the issue—national security, trade terms, the widening gap between the developed and developing worlds on humanitarian concerns like vaccination or the climate agenda—the big powers invariably offer India advice, and India could certainly do without it. The continuing confrontation between Russia and Ukraine has global implications. There are a lot of moving parts here, including politics, economics, policy, tactics, and diplomatic obstacles. World attention has been captivated by the Russia-Ukraine situation, as if the epidemic weren't enough. There are a lot of problems, and they're piling up. In the next ten years, India's economy will grow to become the world's third biggest. India has ambitions to become a global power and dominate the global stage in the near and medium future. It plans to achieve this through its multilateral activism, proactive responses to regional challenges, skilled diplomacy, coalition building with like-minded actors, and liberal roots.

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Published by: Longman Publishers www.jst.org.in

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.46243/jst.2022.v7.i12.p17-34>

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