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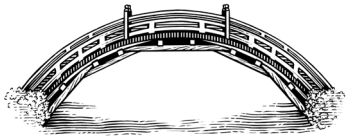
ROUNDTABLE

Regional Responses to the Russia-Ukraine War: What Lessons Have Been Learned?



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Introduction

After eight years of simmering conflict, Russia undertook a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022—an event that sent geopolitical shockwaves around the world. Beyond the immediate impact on how policy and military planners strategize about European security, the invasion has had wider implications for thinking about the stability of the international order and existing security arrangements, norms of sovereignty, the intertwined nature of security and economics, major-power relations, and the management and conduct of war. In this context, this *Asia Policy* roundtable examines the relevance of the Russia-Ukraine war to other regions outside the war zone, assesses the responses of countries in these regions to the war, and explores the lessons they have learned from the conflict so far. Notably, a clear line can be drawn between the northern regions, where the war has prompted close attention and strong reactions, and the southern regions, which have tended to view the war as a less pressing concern.

The roundtable opens with Michael Green's analysis of Northeast Asia, focusing on Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. He argues that, for Northeast Asian governments, "Russia's invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated that traditional national security toolkits really do matter and precisely which tools are most effective on the battlefield," and that these governments are applying these lessons to their defense procurement, planning, and policies, even if the timelines for actualizing capabilities are still over the horizon. Japan and Taiwan, which draw parallels between Russia's invasion and imagined future actions by China, have come out the strongest in support of Ukraine and the Western-led coalition backing Kyiv. Both have also stepped up plans for stronger national defenses and counterstrike capabilities. South Korea has ended its strategic ambiguity by clearly favoring the U.S. position on the conflict, albeit cautiously to mitigate any hostile response by China or Russia. And China, where all Northeast Asia's attention is focused, has chosen to align more closely, at least diplomatically, with Russia rather than remain neutral or reassure other states in the international system. As a result, the geopolitical divide in Northeast Asia between China and U.S. allies is only set to grow.

In Central Asia, Nargis Kassenova assesses that the Russia-Ukraine war is also highly destabilizing. As part of Russia's "near abroad," Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan see Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an existential threat because it "undermines the founding

principles of the post-Soviet security and political order—the mutual recognition of each other's sovereignty and the existing borders at the time of the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991." Kazakhstan, which shares a border with Russia and has sometimes been identified as "historical Russia," sees its sovereignty and national livelihood as particularly at risk. The Central Asian states, especially Kazakhstan, are thus forced to perform a delicate tightrope act as they attempt to deepen foreign and economic relations with other states, such as China, the United States, and Turkey, while not offending or alienating Russia, their powerful neighbor and historical supporter. Whether the Central Asian states can demonstrate unity and resilience in this regional balancing act remains to be seen.

Along with Central Asia, Europe most directly feels the repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine war. Pavel Baev argues that the invasion united Europe in a way that nothing else had:

> Although Russia…hoped to create confusion and discord among its neighbors, the European Union has risen to the challenge, recognizing the invasion of Ukraine as a direct threat to the security of all stakeholders in regional peace. The immediacy of this threat has brought together Europe's interest-based and value-based policies and focused them on the common goal of ending the war with a just peace, ensured by resolve to increase investments in collective security.

As united as it is now in its support for Ukraine, however, Europe will need to manage several thorny problems as it re-evaluates EU and NATO collective security over the longer term. These include adapting to a declining U.S. leadership role in the continent's security affairs; integrating (or not) the special case of Turkey, which walks a fine line between its NATO allies and Russia; and managing long-term support for Ukraine. But thorniest of all, Baev argues, will be the question of how to deal with rebuilding relations with a defeated Russia and reintegrating the country into the continent's—and the world's—future order.

Moving south, the Persian Gulf states (Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen) have benefited from the resurgence of interest in the region as an energy supplier and found navigating the complexity of major-power dynamics more complicated than ever. Yet, as Kristian Coates Ulrichsen notes, "none of the Arab Gulf states…have formally picked sides in the Russia-Ukraine war. As with much of the global South, it has become clear that states across the Middle East do not feel that Ukraine is 'their war.'" That said, these states are taking away lessons from the war, particularly the need to balance competing

relationships and avoid choosing sides in confrontations between external powers. States in the Persian Gulf are also paying close attention to how developments in the Russia-Ukraine war, such as the experience Iran gains from supplying drones to Russia, could come back to haunt them in their own neighborhood with its history of rivalries and conflicts.

In South Asia, the war has resulted in both increased economic pressure on scarce commodities, such as energy and food, and increased diplomatic pressure to take sides. Rajesh Rajagopalan explains that "while several South Asian states have felt the knock-on effects of the Russian invasion, especially on their already struggling economies, it is unclear that security planners in the region see any clear lessons to be drawn from the war." India, he notes, is the exception. The country has gained valuable information on planning and managing war and on self-sufficiency that it could usefully apply in potential armed conflicts with Pakistan or China. For India, however, the biggest consequence of the war might be the more bifurcated international security order that pits the West and its allies on one side and Russia and China on the other. This is a divide that will be "difficult for India to bridge entirely."

In Southeast Asia, rising pressure to take sides in the international order has also been a consequence of the war. Jeffery Reeves observes that "just as Southeast Asia has emerged as the center of gravity for the countries of the global West's respective Indo-Pacific strategies, so too has the region become a priority area for Western diplomacy on the Russia-Ukraine war." On the whole, however, Southeast Asian states are less interested in the war than are other regions, nor do they want to align with any one side. The reasons for this disinterest, and its degree, vary between countries. Singapore and the Philippines are more supportive of the Western position on Ukraine, whereas Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand are less inclined to buy into Western narratives of Russian aggression or limit economic ties with Russia. As Reeves notes, Southeast Asian states have been relatively successful so far in remaining detached and resisting pressure to take the West's side, which "speaks to their growing agency as strategic actors." Instead, most regional states have "actively developed alternative narratives that are more in line with their own foreign policy and security interests."

Looking at the United States, Matthew Kroenig and Clementine Starling argue that while the war is a tragedy, it has also been "a laboratory for understanding the future of warfare," with important lessons for policymakers and military planners in Washington. The need for a strategy

to manage the "two peer challenger" problem—one that is "designed to deter and, if necessary, defeat, Russia and China at the same time"—is at the crux of security matters facing the United States and its network of allies and partners. Kroenig and Starling propose a series of recommendations on how the United States can adapt and strengthen its military defenses, spending, armament capabilities, nuclear posture, and cooperation with allies and partners to respond to the new strategic environment in which it finds itself.

Taken together, the essays in this roundtable deepen understanding of how countries in Asia and beyond are responding to the Russia-Ukraine war, reinforcing the aphorism that "where you stand is where you sit." In examining how regions outside the war zone perceive the war and what lessons they have drawn from the first year of conflict, we can better see how the war is further dividing the international order. ◈

The Ukraine War and Northeast Asia

Michael J. Green

If we have learned anything about the international relations of Northeast Asia since the end of the Cold War, it is that exogenous shocks to the system can be highly disruptive to assumptions about the emerging regional order. Many scholars and governments expected an intensification of U.S.-China geopolitical rivalry in the early years of the George W. Bush administration, for example, but the events of September 11 shifted U.S. strategic priorities in a new direction. Rather than designating China as a "strategic competitor" as the Bush campaign had promised, the 2002 U.S. national security strategy declared that, while the United States would remain attentive to the possibilities for great-power rivalry, the common threat of terrorism gave an unprecedented opportunity "to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war."[1] The 2008–9 global financial crisis had an equally profound impact on China's assumptions about the emerging regional order, convincing leaders in Beijing that the Western democracies were incompetent and that the United States was entering a period of secular decline. This reignited greater geopolitical rivalry rather than cooperation. At first, the Covid-19 pandemic seemed to confirm Beijing's thesis that the East is rising and the West declining, but later phases of the pandemic undermined confidence in China's own secular rise while reinforcing U.S. strategies for technology decoupling from China and closer U.S. alignment with allies and partners.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is the fourth major exogenous shock to Northeast Asian order since the end of the Cold War. In terms of national security, it is likely to be the most profound. One is always tempted to draw such conclusions when in the midst of a crisis and lacking perspective,[2] but in this instance there are several reasons to expect that the impacts of

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1 White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C., September 2002) ⇝ https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nssintro.html.

2 Even the brilliant U.S. ambassador to London John Quincy Adams preemptively reported to Washington after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 that the world had profoundly changed to a Franco-centric system because he had seen reports from only the early fighting at Quatre Bras, which had gone Napoleon's way.

Putin's war in Ukraine on the international relations of Northeast Asia will be longer lasting than the effects of September 11, the global financial crisis, or the Covid-19 pandemic.

To begin with, these earlier disruptions were essentially transnational in nature. Some might point out that the global financial crisis originated in U.S. real estate markets or that the pandemic originated in China, but origin is not the same as intent. The United States did not intend to cause a global financial crisis, nor did Beijing likely intend to cause a global pandemic—even if we may find that Xi's government bears considerable responsibility for accidental release of the virus and the subsequent cover-up. In contrast, Vladmir Putin did intend to use brute force to subjugate and incorporate another sovereign state into his own—and for the first time by a major power since World War II. This shocking revelation occurred at a time of growing geopolitical rivalry with China and therefore confirmed familiar, if distant, memories of nation-state revanchism and belligerence that suddenly seemed very real and dangerous for Northeast Asia.

In addition, whereas earlier transnational disruptions confronted governments with questions about the utility of their traditional national security toolkits, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated that traditional national security toolkits really do matter and precisely which tools are most effective on the battlefield. Governments in Northeast Asia have internalized those lessons and are moving quickly to build war-winning capabilities, often with multiyear development and procurement timelines.

Finally, Beijing's ideational, diplomatic, and economic support and consideration of direct military assistance for Moscow all point to longer-lasting alignments and counter-alignments in the region that are being institutionalized in new agreements, treaties, and operational planning. These will not be undone or relaxed without a demonstrable change in China's own strategic trajectory, which few expect to occur under Xi.

As this essay shows, these effects are evident in the ways that Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea), and Taiwan, as well as China, are each assessing the geopolitical implications of the Ukraine war, their assumptions about the nature of conflict in Northeast Asia going forward, and the lessons they draw in terms of building their own national security toolkits. At the same time, earlier constraints have not entirely disappeared. Demographic and financial limitations, lingering historical issues, internal politics, and changes of leadership will all be disruptive to these new national security trends at the micro level. Even with the

shock of the Ukraine invasion, one would not expect the national security establishments of the United States' Northeast Asian friends and allies to deliver anything close to perfect solution sets. But they might just be good enough to preserve the peace.

And we do not yet know how this all ends, of course. While bloody stalemate seems the most likely near-term scenario in Ukraine, there are other plausible scenarios that range from Putin's sudden fall from power to the use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons to even the defeat of Ukraine, as unlikely as that seems today. Tokyo, Seoul, and Taipei will be watching to understand what the unfolding conflict says about Putin's success on the battlefield, Chinese intentions, and U.S. staying power.

Japan: Abe's Point Proven

Putin's invasion of Ukraine did not lead to discontinuity in Japan's grand strategy, with the exception of its policy toward Russia itself. If anything, the war proved the validity of the assumptions behind Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's seminal 2013 National Security Strategy, which set the context for increasing defense budgets, greater external balancing through the Quad, and revised interpretations of Japan's constitution to allow greater military integration with allies and expanded investment in a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." But if the Ukraine war has not changed the direction of the grand strategy set during the Abe years, it definitely has shifted its pursuit into high gear.

The first and most immediate question for Tokyo after Russia's invasion of Ukraine was diplomatic. As prime minister, Abe cultivated a relationship with Putin in the hopes of weaning Russia away from China and creating more leverage vis-à-vis Beijing. There were many skeptics of this strategy within the foreign ministry and certainly the business community, which had limited interest in the risky investments in the Russian Far East needed to lubricate any diplomatic settlement over the disputed Northern Territories and deliver the "Russia card" for Abe. The skeptics in the foreign ministry probably had the ear of then foreign minister Fumio Kishida, who, as current prime minister, determined in the wake of the invasion that Tokyo would abandon its earlier outreach to Moscow and stand squarely with Washington and the G-7. Front of mind for Kishida's government were the lessons Beijing would learn from the international community's response to Putin's actions and any success Russia enjoyed on the battlefield. As Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi

put it immediately after the invasion to explain why Japan would impose heavy sanctions on Russia, "China is watching."[3]

Japan's diplomatic stance has hewn closely with that of the United States and NATO ever since. Senior Japanese officials and cabinet members have condemned Russian attacks on civilian targets "in the strongest terms";[4] dismissed proposals for a peace agreement that keeps Russia in control of occupied territories as an "unjust peace" and a "terrible precedent for the rest of the planet";[5] and expressed particular alarm at Russia's dangerous reference to the use of nuclear weapons—an issue of national identity for Japan given its own history.[6] Particularly noteworthy was the participation of Kishida and other leaders from the "Asia-Pacific 4" (now referred to as the "Indo-Pacific 4"), U.S. allies Japan, Australia, South Korea, and New Zealand, in the June 2022 NATO Summit.[7]

This diplomatic stance generally reflects public sentiment—polls show that 89% of Japanese are closely following the war, compared to the global average of 70%; and 80% of Japanese respondents expressed concern about China in the wake of Putin's invasion (though that is not a significant uptick of concern about China, which was already high before the war).[8]

In terms of material support, Japan has been relatively less forthcoming than the NATO allies or Australia but more obliging than in any other international security crisis since September 11. In 2022, Japan provided

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3 Alastair Gale and Peter Landers, "Japan Calls for Tough Response on Ukraine, Saying China Is Watching," *Wall Street Journal*, February 15, 2022 ~ https://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-calls-for-tough-response-on-ukraine-saying-china-is-watching-11644923764.

4 At the G-20 India Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Japanese state minister for foreign affairs Kenji Yamada stated "Shimin ya juyo infura e no kogeki wa danjite yonin dekizu, Nihon wa mottomo tsuyoi kotoba de bokyo o hinan suru" (Attacks on civilians and critical infrastructure are absolutely unacceptable, and Japan condemns the outrage in the strongest terms). "'Mottomo tsuyoi kotoba' de Roshia hinan G-20 de Yamada gaimu fuku daijin" [At the G-20, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamada Condemned Russia in the "Strongest Possible Terms"], Jiji, March 3, 2023 ~ https://www.jiji.com/jc/article?k=2023030300457&g=pol.

5 Quoted from remarks Japanese foreign minister Hayashi gave at the UN General Assembly on February 24, 2023. "Japan's Foreign Minister Warns against 'Unjust Peace' in Ukraine War," *Japan Times*, February 24, 2023 ~ https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/02/24/national/yoshimasa-hayashi-ukraine-unjust-peace.

6 Japanese prime minister Kishida announced Japan's New National Security Strategy on December 16, 2022. "Press Conference by Prime Minister Kishida," Prime Minister's Office of Japan, December 16, 2022 ~ https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/101_kishida/statement/2022/1216kaiken.html. See also Tomohiko Satake, "How Japan's Russia Policy Changed after Ukraine," East Asia Forum, June 24, 2022 ~ https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/06/24/how-japans-russia-policy-changed-after-ukraine.

7 "On the Agenda Madrid Summit, 29–30 June 2022," NATO, June 23, 2022 ~ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196910.htm.

8 Nicholas Boyon, "Global Public Opinion about the War in Ukraine," Ipsos, April 19, 2022 ~ https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/war-in-ukraine-april-2022; and "Ro shinko de Taichu 'kenen' 8-wari cho" [Over 80% "Concerned" about China after Russia's Invasion], *Sankei News*, March 21, 2022 ~ https://www.sankei.com/article/20220321-MSD7WT2AQNN2HFUR3LJZXY4M5M.

$600 million in financial assistance and $700 million in humanitarian support consisting of nonlethal equipment such as bulletproof vests, helmets, communication equipment, and humanitarian airlift support, and Tokyo pledged in February 2023 to give another $5.5 billion.[9] In addition, as of this writing, Japan had accepted 2,314 displaced Ukrainians, which is low by comparison with Europe but high by Japan's historical standards.[10] For a time, the most conspicuous lagging indicator was the fact that Prime Minister Kishida remained the only G-7 leader to not visit Ukraine. Though Presidents Joe Biden and Emmanuel Macron received a domestic boost for doing so, the Japanese public opposed a visit on balance (45% were opposed compared to 39% in favor).[11] However, this did not deter Kishida, who made a surprise but high-profile visit to meet with President Zelensky in Kyiv on March 21, 2023. The prime minister's timing and venue were rich with geopolitical symbolism. He arrived the day after Chinese president Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow, which allowed Kishida the opportunity to dismiss Xi's supposed peace proposal as a one-sided play to Russian interests in consolidating gains from the war. Moreover, Kishida visited Bucha, the site of the Russian forces' most egregious war crimes against Ukrainian civilians. This deliberate foray by a Japanese prime minister into the geopolitical narrative was almost unprecedented, as was the clear identification of Kishida with values of democracy and human rights.

Despite polls against the visit, Kishida knew he was on solid political ground at home because of the Japanese public's recognition that the catastrophe meted on Ukraine and Europe could also happen to them in Northeast Asia. Polls conducted by the Cabinet Office after Russia's invasion of Ukraine revealed that the number of Japanese citizens interested in defense issues increased to 78.2%, the highest number on record, while those who said there was a danger of Japan being involved in a war increased 0.7 percentage points to 86.2%—a small increase but in a question without much room for upward movement. As a result, those arguing that

9 Government of Japan, "Japan Stands with Ukraine," Prime Minister's Office of Japan, February 24, 2023 ~ https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/pdf/jp_stands_with_ukraine_eng.pdf.

10 Immigration Services Agency of Japan, "Information on Ukrainian Refugees," March 1, 2023 ~ https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/publications/materials/01_00234.html.

11 "Kokumin wa misukashite iru Kishida shusho no gaiko-ryoku seronchosa 'Ukuraina homon shinai ho ga yoi' 45-pasento" [The Public Sees Through Prime Minister Kishida's Diplomatic Skills Poll: "He Should Not Visit Ukraine" 45%], *Nikkan gendai*, March 7, 2023 ~ https://www.nikkan-gendai.com/articles/view/life/319679.

the defense forces should be strengthened increased to 41.5%, the highest result ever recorded.[12]

The Kishida government had been preparing the way for an increase in defense spending to support Abe's strategy in the wake of China's assertive military posture even before the war began. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) issued a strategy paper in April 2021 calling for an increase in defense spending to 2% of GDP (from a current nominal level of about 1%, or about 1.25% by NATO standards).[13] What political leaders in Tokyo could not quite judge was the actual level of public support for the increase, which would have to come from one of three unattractive options: increased deficit spending, increased taxes, or cuts in social welfare spending. When polls were taken on the 2% figure after Kishida officially announced it in Japan's new 2022 National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and (five-year) Defense Buildup Program, polls showed that a majority of the public supported the goal.[14] While the assassination of Abe in July 2022 spurred the LDP leadership to push for the increased defense spending, the Ukraine invasion most likely drove public support because of the reminder it sent about the danger of major-power war. Japan's new defense plan also introduced the possession of counterstrike capabilities to preempt attacks—a new role for Japan, which has traditionally defined its mission as being the "shield" to the U.S. "spear." The Kishida administration's preview of the new defense plan in late February 2023 made it clear that Japan plans to spend significantly on procuring 400 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the United States, a significant number of surface-to-surface missiles whose utility (at shorter ranges) has been proven on the battlefield in Ukraine.[15]

However, there are also headwinds facing this effort to build more deterrent capabilities. While the public supports increased spending in

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12 "Jieitai ni kanshin 'aru' ga 78.2%, Kako saiko ni naikaku-fu seronchosa" [78.2% of Respondents "Are" Interested in the Self-Defense Forces, a Record High], *Mainichi shimbun*, March 7, 2023 ~ https://mainichi.jp/articles/20230307/k00/00m/010/128000c.

13 Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP), "Aratana kokka anzen hosho senryaku-to no sakutei ni muketa teigen – Yori shinkoku-ka suru kokusai josei-ka ni okeru wagakuni oyobi kokusai shakai no heiwa to anzen o kakuho suru tame no boei-ryoku no bappon-teki kyoka no jitsugen ni mukete–" [The Recommendations for the Formulation of a New National Security Strategy, etc. – Toward the Realization of a Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan and the International Community in an Increasingly Severe International Situation–], April 26, 2022, 4 ~ https://www.jimin.jp/news/policy/203401.html.

14 "Kishida naikaku shiji 36-pasento boei-hi-zo sansei 51-pasento" [36% in Favor of Kishida Cabinet, 51% in Favor of Increasing Defense Spending], NHK, December 13, 2022 ~ https://www.nhk.or.jp/kaisetsu-blog/700/477346.html.

15 "Tomahoku konyu 400-patsu yotei, shusho ga teiji Beikoku-sei misairu" [Plans to Purchase 400 Tomahawks, Prime Minister Presents U.S.-Made Missiles], *Nikkei shimbun*, February 27, 2023 ~ https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUA2745K0X20C23A2000000.

principle, it is divided on how to pay for this spending, with no clear majority favoring any one method—34% think the defense budget should come from the reduction of other budget items, 15% support the issuance of government bonds, and only 9% support a tax increase.[16] Given that the powerful Ministry of Finance is adamant that there should be no further deficit spending, this sets up a major bureaucratic and political battle in Tokyo. At the same time, the goal of introducing a greater strike capability in Japan is colliding with an unprecedented demand for missile production for Ukraine, NATO, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and the U.S. Army and Marine Corps. Estimates are that U.S. manufacturers are years behind demand, and the prospect of Japanese production coming online is even longer-term.

Nevertheless, the direction of Japan's increased defense effort is now irreversible. The collapse of Putin's regime or his military in Ukraine might send a cautionary signal to Beijing, but few Japanese officials expect that it would change China's coercive military strategy, even if it does sensitize the Central Military Commission to the risk of war with the West and Moscow's shortcomings as an ally. Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons in the Ukraine war, coupled with North Korea's growing pace of missile tests and China's pursuit of nuclear parity with the United States over the next decade, will keep pressure on the United States to engage in "nuclear sharing" with Japan to provide greater confidence in the credibility of extended deterrence. Should Russia actually use nuclear weapons, this would be an even greater shock to Japan than the war itself and would spur greater debate about dual-keyed U.S. nuclear weapons in Japan, if not independent Japanese nuclear weapons (opposition to nuclear weapons is close to 80% in Japanese polling). In short, the degree to which the Ukraine war spurs Japan to develop its defense capabilities remains to be seen, but it will certainly be more and not less.

South Korea: An End to Strategic Ambiguity

When Putin's forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Moon Jae-in was in his fifth and final year as the ROK's president. Moon's government was still stubbornly adhering to a diplomatic approach characterized by what was unofficially labeled "strategic ambiguity" in the emerging

16 "Boei-hi-zo zaigen 'ta yosan no sakugen' 34-pasento kokusai 15%, zozei 9-pasento" [Increase in Defense Spending "Reduction of Other Budgets" 34%, Government Bonds 15%, Tax Increase 9%], *Nikkei shimbun*, October 31, 2022 ~ https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUA282P80Y2A021C2000000.

geopolitical competition with China and a myopic preoccupation with accommodating North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in pursuit of a peace agreement or peace mechanism for the Korean Peninsula. The political ground beneath the Moon government on those issues had already begun to shift dramatically, however, with the South Korean public approaching Japanese levels of distrust of China—83% of South Koreans say they have no confidence in Chinese president Xi—and broad skepticism about Pyongyang's intentions.[17] Moon did mention the importance of stability in the Taiwan Strait in his first summit with Biden in May 2021,[18] but consistent with his government's approach to North Korea, the statement was interpreted as a transactional effort to win the new U.S. administration's support for a more accommodating approach to Pyongyang, something that was not forthcoming from Washington.

To his credit, Moon did take a stance aligning closely with the United States and NATO after the attack on Ukraine, telling President Volodymyr Zelensky that "Ukraine's sovereignty and territory should be preserved."[19] However, he steered slightly away from the U.S. or Japanese position by echoing Beijing's line that "Korea supports peaceful efforts through dialogue" and subsequently focusing in his domestic messaging on the war's impact on the ROK economy rather than the implications for the international system—where the implications were obviously detrimental to his government's vision for diplomacy toward Pyongyang and Beijing.[20]

Moon's successor, President Yoon Suk-yeol, set a tone that has been better received in Washington, Tokyo, Canberra, and NATO capitals. Yoon's government has been more explicit about the connection between the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and the geopolitical competition unfolding in Asia. This reflects his conservative party's stronger affinity for the U.S.-ROK alliance and suspicion of Chinese intentions on the Korean Peninsula and in Asia more broadly. This more robust vision of Seoul's ability

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17 Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries," Pew Research Center, October 6, 2020 ~ https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries. See also Chung Min Lee, "South Korea Is Caught Between China and the United States," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 21, 2020 ~ https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/10/21/south-korea-is-caught-between-china-and-united-states-pub-83019.

18 "U.S.-ROK Leaders Joint Statement," White House, May 21, 2021 ~ https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/05/21/u-s-rok-leaders-joint-statement.

19 Shin Ji-hye, "Moon Says Ukraine's Sovereignty Must Be Respected," *Korea Herald*, February 22, 2022 ~ https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220222000718; and Shin Ji-hye, "Korea to Be with Ukraine, Moon Tells Zelenskyy," *Korea Herald*, March 3, 2022 ~ https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220303000993.

20 Shin, "Moon Says Ukraine's Sovereignty Must Be Respected."

to shape the regional environment and its rejection of strategic ambiguity was captured in the Yoon government's December 2022 Indo-Pacific strategy[21] and subsequent efforts at reconciliation with Japan. And it has trended with emerging public opinion after the Ukraine invasion as well. According to Ipsos polling, 78% of South Koreans support sanctions on Russia despite the pain for the ROK economy, and Pew polls show a 25% jump to 83% of South Koreans considering the United States a "reliable partner."[22] In a world where major war is now a visible reality, the security guarantee of the United States has become seen as both essential and reliable.

Yet, how reliable is also a nagging question. In the wake of Pyongyang's unceasing escalation of ballistic missile tests and (secondarily) Putin's nuclear saber-rattling, the ROK public's interest in independent nuclear weapons development exploded—Gallup polling in February 2023 showed 78% of respondents in favor and 73% thinking Seoul has the ability to do so on its own.[23] In reality, an independent nuclear weapons program in South Korea would likely trigger international sanctions and thus prove technologically and diplomatically challenging, if not entirely counterproductive, since it would undermine extended U.S. deterrence and cut off the ROK from the Nuclear Suppliers Group. However, the political pressures are significant enough that Washington has been forced to broaden its official dialogue with Seoul about nuclear weapons and the role of extended deterrence in bilateral strategic planning.[24] This is primarily the result of North Korean actions, but the Ukraine war has added additional pressure.

In terms of material support for Ukraine, South Korea provided the third-most robust package from the Asia-Pacific after Australia and Japan, with $130 million in 2023 and the provision of bulletproof vests, helmets, medical supplies, and ready-to-eat meals.[25] The lack of lethal aid to Ukraine has stood out, however, since South Korea has far fewer legal, policy, or

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21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ROK), "Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region," December 28, 2022 ⇝ https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=322133.

22 Boyon, "Global Public Opinion about the War in Ukraine"; and Richard Wike, Janell Fetterolf, Moira Fagan, and Sneha Gubbala, "International Attitudes toward the U.S., NATO and Russia in a Time of Crisis," Pew Research Center, June 22, 2022 ⇝ https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/06/22/international-attitudes-toward-the-u-s-nato-and-russia-in-a-time-of-crisis.

23 Nam Kyung-don, "7 out of 10 S. Koreans Support Independent Development of Nuclear Weapons: Poll," *Korea Herald*, February 1, 2023 ⇝ https://m.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230131000809&ACE_SEARCH=1.

24 Choi Si-young, "S. Korea, U.S. Vow Action on N. Korea Amid Push for New Ties," *Korea Herald*, February 5, 2023 ⇝ https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230205000091&ACE_SEARCH=1.

25 "MOFA Spokesperson's Statement on 1-Year Mark of Ukrainian War," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ROK), February 24, 2023 ⇝ https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=322155; and "S. Korea to Send Additional Non-Lethal Aid to Ukraine: Source," Yonhap News Agency, April 13, 2022 ⇝ https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220413000800325.

cultural constraints on arms exports and yet is only supplying nonlethal supplies similar to those coming from Japan. In fact, ROK military aid has been important but below the radar. South Korea has emerged as a major exporter of weapons to Eastern Europe, and, in March 2023, Seoul revealed that it would allow the re-export of weapons from Poland to Ukraine, even if many of the howitzers and other weapons in question are still in delivery to Warsaw.[26] U.S. ammunition supplied to Ukraine also draws on purchases from South Korea, which has excellent production facilities given the immediate threat from the North. Still, direct support to Ukraine's military pales in comparison with that from U.S. ally Australia (although Australians may feel a stronger connection to Europe). In addition, the constraints on freedom of action that the Moon government exaggerated—namely concern about China's reaction—are not completely absent for Yoon. Any government in Seoul needs to be careful not to trigger Chinese or Russian countermoves, such as arming North Korea or obstructing diplomacy with Pyongyang. The Yoon government's below-the-radar support for Ukraine is a reminder of the constraints posed by the threat from the North.

Taiwan: Rushing to Become a Trusted Porcupine

Taiwan's worldview has been most profoundly shaken by the war in Ukraine, given the obvious parallels between the two outgunned democracies facing dangerous authoritarian leaders who covet their territory. Ukrainian flags adorned Taipei after the invasion, and President Tsai Ing-wen used social media to show strong affinity and support for Ukraine.[27] Taiwan also pledged $56 million in 2023 for Ukrainian infrastructure support and donated 700 tons of humanitarian relief and 27 tons of medical supplies in the war's first year.[28]

When this author was sent to Taipei in early March 2022 by the Biden administration as part of a bipartisan, nonofficial delegation of former officials, it was clear that President Tsai and her senior officials had been

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26 John Smith and Joyce Lee, "Exclusive: Seoul Approved Poland's Export of Howitzers with S. Korean Parts to Ukraine," Reuters, March 9, 2023 ~ https://www.reuters.com/world/seoul-approved-polands-export-howitzers-with-skorean-parts-ukraine-official-says-2023-03-08.

27 See, for example, Tsai Ing-wen, Twitter, February 24, 2023 ~ https://twitter.com/iingwen/status/1629068538135875586?cxt=HHwWhMDUpYnNzpstAAAA.

28 "On Russia-Ukraine War Anniversary, MOFA Condemns Russia's Illegal Invasion and Fully Supports Ukrainian People in Rebuilding Homeland," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan), Press Release, February 24, 2023 ~ https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1329&s=99724.

reflecting deeply on the implications of the Ukraine war for Taiwan.[29] The lessons they appeared to have gleaned are threefold.

First, Taiwan must strengthen its military capabilities to become a "porcupine" that would be too difficult for China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to swallow. This means moving beyond a reliance on expensive platforms such as submarines and fighter jets to develop asymmetrical capabilities as the United States has been urging for years. The military, dominated by the Kuomintang (KMT), had resisted the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) leadership's push in this direction, and the DPP itself lacked sufficient defense expertise to make the case convincingly. But in 2022, Ukraine's military made it for them: large platforms make for large targets, while small mobile units armed with drones and tactical surface-to-surface missiles like the Javelin anti-tank system can decimate invading columns from a larger adversary. The challenge for Taiwan's military—which after the Ukraine invasion purchased $619 million in missiles from the United States—is that U.S. production is backlogged from rising demand.[30] Nevertheless, the Ukraine war proved decisive in Taipei's debate over platforms versus asymmetrical capabilities. Tsai's government also concluded, and the KMT leadership agreed, that Taiwan's four-month conscription period is insufficient to prepare citizens to defend their territory in wartime, and, in late December 2022, Taiwan officially extended compulsory military service to one year.[31]

The second lesson is diplomatic. For decades, governments in Taipei directed their diplomatic resources first at Washington and second at Tokyo, or at the small number of Pacific Island and Central American nations that recognized Taiwan rather than China. Tsai's government had been looking at a broader landscape for engagement with the world, led initially by the capable foreign minister David Dawei Lee and his New Southbound Policy for economic and social connectivity with South

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29 Amy B. Wang, "Biden Sending Delegation to Taiwan to Reaffirm Commitment amid Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *Washington Post*, February 28, 2022 ~ https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/02/28/biden-delegation-taiwan-commitment-russia-invasion-ukraine; and Michael Martina and David Brunnstrom, "Exclusive: Biden Sends Former Top Defense Officials to Taiwan in Show of Support," Reuters, March 1, 2022 ~ https://www.reuters.com/world/china/exclusive-biden-sends-former-top-defense-officials-taiwan-show-support-2022-02-28.

30 "U.S. Government Officially Notifies Taiwan of Latest Arms Sale," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan), March 2, 2023 ~ https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1328&sms=273&s=99804.

31 Yimou Lee, and Ann Wang, "Taiwan to Extend Conscription to One Year, Citing Rising China Threat," Reuters, December 27, 2022 ~ https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-extend-compulsory-military-service-official-media-2022-12-27.

and Southeast Asia.[32] When the United States mobilized the advanced industrial economies to impose sanctions on Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, it struck leaders in Taipei that connectivity with Europe, Australia, and Canada is far more important to deterrence and dissuasion than earlier appreciated. The Biden administration's successful inclusion of references to stability in the Taiwan Strait in joint statements with NATO, the European Union, the ROK, and other allies and partners has sent an important signal of global solidarity to Beijing. Even if few of these nations would actually provide military assistance to Taiwan in a contingency, the precedent set by Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrates that they might impose other significant costs on Beijing for aggression.

Finally, the example of Zelensky for Tsai herself has been powerful. Tsai served as head of the Mainland Affairs Council and as premier under former president Chen Shui-bian, and she saw how her boss's push for independence-leaning policies isolated Taipei from even close supporters in Washington, not to mention the major democracies in Europe and Asia. The peril demonstrated by the Ukraine war and a growing operational tempo by the PLA around Taiwan would lend little latitude for playing independence themes that might resonate with the more strongly identifying DPP support base, the so-called deep greens. In a crisis, Tsai would need to be Zelensky—the principled and democratic victim—and not the *casus belli* that many in Washington, Tokyo, and Brussels feared Chen might have been. This aim to connect better with the major powers will ultimately contribute to greater stability in the Taiwan Strait, not only because of the dissuasion signal it might send to Beijing but also because it will reinforce Taipei's prudence on cross-strait issues.

Taiwan faces challenges in implementing this new strategic approach, however. Tsai's narrative about standing with Ukraine and Taiwan's embeddedness in the democratic camp was blunted domestically by pro-Beijing social media campaigns, including from the so-called deep-blue base of the KMT, that raised doubts about whether the United States would actually defend Taiwan, given that there are no U.S. "boots on the ground" in Ukraine. Taiwan officials worried that this social media assault was gaining momentum as the war progressed, despite the Taiwanese people's natural affinity for the Ukrainian people. The pro-DPP media has fought back against this narrative, arguing as the *Taipei Times* did, for

[32] "The New Southbound Policy: Deepening Taiwan's Integration," Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2019 ~https://southbound.csis.org.

example, in February 2023, that "Taiwan is not Ukraine. Taiwan is more significant to the global community...Taiwan is technologically more crucial than Ukraine, as it is an IT center and plays an indispensable role in the global supply chain of semiconductors."[33] U.S. legislation authorizing $10 billion in lending arrangements to expedite arms purchases and other measures from Washington helped reinforce U.S. support for Taiwan. By the time of writing, public opinion had grown more optimistic, with 42% of respondents believing that the United States would respond militarily to an attack on Taiwan from the mainland—a significant increase over the previous year when large majorities were doubtful about the prospects of U.S. intervention. Yet those who did not believe that the United States would respond militarily still have the edge with 46.5% of respondents.[34] In any crisis in the Taiwan Strait, Beijing will seek to attack the resolve of the people on Taiwan, and these numbers indicate a continued vulnerability in the true center of gravity in cross-strait relations.

Beijing's Lessons and Alignment of the Democracies

The three variables that will most impact the future strategic direction of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan after the Ukraine war are battlefield results in Ukraine—which we cannot yet know for certain; U.S. staying power—which appears solid enough for now; and China's own reading of the implications of the Ukraine war.

The last of these three variables is also the clearest. China under former president Hu Jintao might have read the alignment of global democracies against Russia as an indication that restraint and reassurance by Beijing are necessary to prevent further counterbalancing against China. But that does not appear to be the lesson Xi's China is drawing. The "no limits" partnership Xi and Putin announced just before the invasion in 2022 has had limits only with respect to visible arms transfers from China to Russia. In economic, diplomatic, and propaganda terms, Beijing is clearly aligning more closely with Russia rather than establishing distance or seeking to reassure other states in the international system. And, as U.S. secretary of state Antony Blinken's remarks in early March 2023 indicate, there is a constant danger that Beijing might cross the line and provide lethal equipment directly

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33 "Editorial: Learning from a Year-Long Invasion," *Taipei Times*, February 24, 2023 ~ https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2023/02/24/2003794931.

34 Lin Ching-yin and Evelyn Kao, "Public Increasingly Optimistic about U.S. Troops Coming to Taiwan's Aid: Poll," Focus Taiwan, February 21, 2023 ~ https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/202302210026.

to Moscow.[35] For Tokyo, Seoul, and other U.S. allies and partners, there appears to be little prospect for a wedge strategy that would separate Moscow and Beijing. Putin is prepared to become the junior partner in Asia in pursuit of his revanchist vision for Europe, and Xi is prepared to accept the liability of Russian actions in Europe as he seeks to undermine the U.S. strategic position on China's periphery. This reality will keep propelling the United States' allies and partners in Northeast Asia down the path of greater counterstrike capability and geopolitical alignment with both Washington and each other.

Beijing also appears to be drawing military lessons from the battlefield. While Chinese analysts reassure themselves that the PLA is better prepared for combat than Russia, the reality is that the PLA has not experienced actual combat for over forty years. Russia's reversals add caution to any PLA plans that assume invasion scenarios would be successful against Taiwan. But Chinese military analysts are also drawing conclusions about how to defeat the asymmetrical advantages Ukrainian forces have demonstrated on the battlefield. Experts in China are particularly fixated on defeating Starlink and other commercial or dual-use satellites that have allowed Ukrainian forces to locate and destroy Russian tank formations.[36] Having tested an anti-satellite missile in 2007 (causing dangerous space debris in the process), Beijing appears poised to expand the threat to both military and commercial use of space, which will in turn accelerate U.S. allies' focus on defense in that domain. Also dangerous for the United States and its allies would be any conclusion by Beijing that it should reduce the warning time before an attack. Putin telegraphed his intentions for a long time in advance, allowing the United States, NATO, and Ukraine to build international solidarity and battlefield advantages. A minimal warning *coup de main* would be a dangerous temptation for Beijing and would likely force the United States and its allies to tighten joint readiness. (The U.S.-Korea joint and combined command relationship was necessitated in large part by the need to "fight tonight" without warning on the Korean Peninsula.)

In short, the global chess game started in Ukraine is not yet over. And, for Asia, the most important next moves might be China's. ◈

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35 "Secretary Antony J. Blinken at a Press Availability," U.S. Department of State, Press Release, March 2, 2023 ~ https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-press-availability-30.

36 Eduardo Baptista and Greg Torode, "Studying Ukraine War, China's Military Minds Fret over U.S. Missiles, Starlink," Reuters, March 8, 2023 ~ https://www.reuters.com/world/studying-ukraine-war-chinas-military-minds-fret-over-us-missiles-starlink-2023-03-08.

Central Asia's Balancing Act

Nargis Kassenova

Central Asia is the Asian subregion most directly affected by Russia's war against Ukraine. It is part of Russia's "near abroad," and Moscow feels a special attachment and entitlement to this post-Soviet space. For the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), the Kremlin's denial of Ukraine's sovereignty and Russia's incorporation of Ukrainian territories is very bad news because it undermines the founding principles of the post-Soviet security and political order—the mutual recognition of each other's sovereignty and the existing borders at the time of the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. Will the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Central Asian states be respected by Russia? Kazakhstan is particularly concerned since it shares a long border with Russia, and its northern regions are sometimes claimed to be part of "historical Russia."

This essay examines the position of the Central Asian states relative to the Russia-Ukraine war and the delicate balancing act these states are undertaking between Russia and their other partners. It first looks at how Russia has upset its long-held arrangements with the Central Asian states before turning to assess four policy trends within the region. It then focuses on Kazakhstan, which shares similarities (as well as differences) with Ukraine and has been the most wary and proactive in response to the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Shattering of the Post-Soviet Order

Apart from the hypothetical threat of Russia's imperialist designs in Central Asia, the shattering of the post-Soviet order has created several immediate challenges and dilemmas. Central Asian governments need to understand whether and to what extent they can continue to rely on Russia as a regional security provider. These states question whether Moscow's approach to the region is changing. Is it still interested in stability in Central Asia or might it see value in instrumentalizing local conflicts and rivalries,

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similar to what has been happening in the South Caucasus? Recurrent armed conflicts on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border could potentially give Russia such leverage.

If the assumption that Russia remains interested in the stability and security of the region proves correct, then the question of its credibility as a security provider arises. This credibility is already low. Since the end of the Tajik Civil War (1992–97), the Russian leadership has not been keen on intervening in Central Asia. When, in 2010, interethnic clashes broke out in southern Kyrgyzstan, for example, the interim government pled to Moscow for help, but the latter refused. In fact, the only intervention carried out by the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) in its twenty-year history took place in Kazakhstan in January 2022 when, over a two-week period, CSTO troops guarded infrastructure objects. Moscow did not undertake any active measures during the 2021 and 2022 border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, two CSTO member states that host Russian bases. Nevertheless, Central Asian states are used to relying on Russia and drawing on its resources. They are tied to Russia through multiple security treaties and cooperation agreements, joint military exercises, weapons purchases and donations, and shared military education platforms.

Now, as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war, these capacities and resources are dwindling. In 2022, 1,000–1,500 troops were pulled from the Russian military base in Tajikistan, and 90 troops from the airbase in Kyrgyzstan.[1] These moves weaken the security of the Central Asian borders with Afghanistan. Russian weapon transfers to the region have also been affected. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's arms trade database, in 2022, Russia exported 3 million trend-indicator values (TIVs) of arms to Central Asian states (all to Tajikistan), a sharp decrease from 134 million TIVs in 2021 (85 million to Kazakhstan, 47 million to Uzbekistan, and 2 million to Turkmenistan).[2] It is expected that Russia's own needs, spiked by the Russia-Ukraine war

1 "'Up to 1,500,' Russian Troops Redeployed to Ukraine from Tajik Base, Investigation Reveals," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 14, 2022 ~ https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-troops-tajik-base-redeployed-ukraine/32033791.html.

2 The TIV is a unit devised by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) to measure the military capability of an item rather than its financial value. According to SIPRI, "this common unit can be used to measure trends in the flow of arms between particular countries and regions over time—in effect, [it permits] a military capability price index." SIPRI, "Importer-Exporter TIV Tables," Arms Trade Database ~ https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php; and Paul Holtom, Mark Bromley, and Verena Simmel, "Measuring International Arms Transfers," SIPRI, SIPRI Fact Sheet, December 2012 ~ https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/FS/SIPRIFS1212.pdf.

and made more acute by the imposed trade sanctions, will further hamper Russia's exports.

The problem of dwindling resources is part of the bigger question facing Central Asian governments—to what extent can Russia remain the core regional power? It is clear that the war is changing the geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape of Central Asia. With Russia turning into an international pariah, and its economy becoming toxic as a result of strong sanctions imposed by the West, its gravitas in Central Asia is declining, even as Russia's attention to the region and diplomatic efforts there increase. Semi-isolated, Russia needs Central Asia more than before, whereas Central Asians see an opportunity to partially distance themselves from their northern neighbor. However, this latter adjustment needs to be prudent and well calibrated.

Since independence, Central Asian governments have carefully and respectfully dealt with Moscow, while at the same time pursuing a multivector foreign policy approach aimed at balancing Russia and preventing the return of its dominance of the region. There was a brief period when Uzbekistan, under President Islam Karimov, in pursuit of more autonomy, pronounced a pro-Western tilt and, together with Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, formed an association (GUAM) aimed at counterbalancing Russia. However, even during that period, Tashkent maintained good working relations with Moscow. Thus, there is a certain "strategic culture" accumulated in the region that is helping the governments to steer a new course.

Four Policy Trends

Under the new circumstances, given the uncertainties of the war and the unpredictability of Russia's behavior, Central Asian states must be more careful and more decisive than ever. They cannot afford to anger Moscow too much, and they do not want to follow Belarus and "sink" together with Russia. In the aftermath of the invasion, four policy trends charted by the governments of the region can be identified so far.

The first one is upholding the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Central Asian states have not recognized the incorporation of any Ukrainian provinces into Russia. Despite Russia's pressure and displeasure, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan consistently abstain in the UN General Assembly votes on Ukraine's territorial integrity, and Turkmenistan does not vote. This leaves their big neighbor in the questionable

company of outcasts like North Korea and Syria. Given the multiple and across-the-board vulnerabilities of the Central Asian states vis-à-vis Russia, abstaining and not voting should be interpreted as disapproval and a lack of support. As smaller states, the Central Asian countries are strongly committed to this fundamental norm of international law.

The second trend is maintaining good relations with Russia. If anything, the invasion of Ukraine strengthened the belief among Central Asian elites of the correctness of carefully handling relations with Russia. In the face of dramatic changes, Central Asian governments are doing their best to keep up a pretense of normalcy and business as usual in their relations with Moscow. Russian and Central Asian senior officials at the highest levels meet on a regular basis and sign new agreements, noting the bright prospects of bilateral cooperation.

Multilateral organizations are also proceeding with their usual business. In October 2022, the CSTO held military exercises in Kazakhstan involving over 6,500 people and 850 units of military and special equipment.[3] It is not all smooth sailing, though. Kyrgyzstan refused to host an annual CSTO military exercise, Unbreakable Brotherhood, that was to take place after another exercise in Kazakhstan. Bishkek did not give an official explanation of the cancellation, but it was likely a reaction to Vladimir Putin awarding Tajik president Emomali Rahmon—less than a month after the armed clashes on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border—with the "Order of Merit for the Fatherland" for "a great personal contribution to strengthening the strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as to ensuring regional stability and security."[4] However, Kyrgyzstan agreed to host it this year. The CSTO also continues to supervise joint military education. In July 2022, Chief of the Joint Staff Anatoly Sidorov said that 2,600 officers from CSTO member states studied each year in 58 military schools located in Russia, Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.[5]

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3 "V Kazahstane dan start aktivnoi fase komandno-shtabnogo ucheniya KSOR ODKB 'Vzaimodeistvie-2022,' spetsialnyh ucheniy 'Poisk-2022' i 'Eshelon-2022'" [In Kazakhstan, the Active Phase of the CSTO CRRF Command and Staff Exercise "Interaction-2022," Special Exercises "Poisk-2022" and "Echelon-2022" Was Launched], Collective Security Treaty Organization, October 3, 2022 ~ https://odkb-csto.org/training/trainings2022/v-kazakhstane-dan-start-aktivnoy-faze-komandno-shtabnogo-ucheniya-ksor-odkb-vzaimodeystvie-2022-spets/#loaded.

4 "Putin Awarded Emomali Rahmon with the 'Order of Merit for the Fatherland' of the Third Degree," Asia-Plus, October 5, 2022 ~ https://asiaplustj.info/en/news/tajikistan/politics/20221005/putin-awarded-emomali-rahmon-with-the-order-of-merit-for-the-fatherland-of-the-third-degree.

5 "Voennosluzhashiye stran-chlenov ODKB obuchayutsya po 750 spetsialnostyam" [Military from CSTO Member-States Are Trained in 750 Specialties], Officers of Russia, July 13, 2022 ~ https://www.oficery.ru/2022/07/13/voennosluzhashhie-stran-chlenov-odkb-obuchayutsya-po-750-speczialnostyam.

The third trend is a stronger push for diversification of security and economic ties. As noted, since their independence, the Central Asian countries have pursued relations with external powers to the west, east, and south—resulting in the formation of their multivector foreign policies. The war in Ukraine has made the need for Central Asian states to break free from isolation and diversify their diplomatic and economic ties beyond Russia even more acute.

In the area of security cooperation, China and Turkey have become particularly attractive partners. Even prior to the war, these two states already had strong positions in the region. China is able to foster security cooperation with the governments of the region both under the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and on a bilateral basis. In particular, Beijing provides military assistance, including equipment and training, and holds joint exercises with militaries in Central Asia.[6] In the aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Beijing has signaled the special importance of the region for China. In April 2022, Chinese defense minister Wei Fenghe visited Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to step up military cooperation.

Turkey's security cooperation with Central Asian states had also risen prior to 2022. Such cooperation dates back to 1992, when Turkish military academies started training officers from the region as part of Ankara's agenda to unify the Turkic world. Turkey can also develop stronger ties with Central Asian states under the umbrella of the NATO Partnership for Peace program. As an example, over the past several years, as Turkey has grown more assertive in Eurasia, bilateral security dialogues and joint miliary drills have become more frequent and arms sales more prominent. More recently, Central Asian governments have grown particularly interested in the acquisition of Turkish drones after being impressed by their performance during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. The cooperation between Central Asia and Turkey has only intensified since the beginning of the Ukraine war.[7]

Economic security concerns also weigh heavily on the minds of the Central Asian governments. While both the Russian and regional economies proved to be more resilient than expected, disruptions of international

6 Niva Yau Tsz Yan, "China's Security Management towards Central Asia," Foreign Policy Research Institute, April 1, 2022 ⇝ https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/04/chinas-security-management-towards-central-asia.

7 "Turkey and Central Asian Military Cooperation More than Just Drones," Blue Domes, May 25, 2022 ⇝ https://bluedomes.net/2022/05/25/turkey-and-central-asian-military-cooperation-more-than-just-drones.

trade flows via Russia and rising inflation have hampered the gradual post-pandemic recovery.[8] To mitigate the negative impact of the growing geopolitical and geoeconomic divisions, the governments of Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, have made greater efforts to expedite the development of transport corridors that would allow them to decrease their dependence on Russian imports. Kazakhstan is eager to upgrade and increase the capacity of the Trans-Caspian corridor that connects it to European markets via the South Caucasus and Turkey. Uzbekistan also is exploring the possibilities of the western corridor but has been mainly focusing on transport routes connecting it to China and to Afghanistan, with further access to South Asia.

The fourth trend is one of budding regional cooperation. Despite shared legacies and infrastructure inherited from the Soviet era, the five Central Asian countries do not constitute a well-connected and functioning region. The efforts to create a Central Asian Union in the mid-1990s failed, and since then the countries have grown apart more than together. However, the 2016 change of leadership in Uzbekistan began to turn the tide. Tashkent improved relations with its neighbors and partnered with Astana to promote regional cooperation. In 2018, the heads of the five countries met in Astana for the first consultative meeting of the Central Asian heads of state. At their fourth consultative meeting in July 2022 in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, the leaders discussed food security, energy cooperation, and transport corridors and signed several promising agreements, including the Roadmap for the Development of Regional Cooperation 2022–24 and the Regional Green Agenda Program for Central Asia. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan also signed a treaty of friendship, good neighborliness, and cooperation. Although Tajikistan and Turkmenistan did not accede, they pledged to do so in the future after completion of procedures at the national level.[9]

While these four trends apply to all five Central Asian countries, the extent to which they manifest themselves in each varies. Each country has its own set of vulnerabilities, capacities, and opportunities, and each government has developed its own strategic culture over the years since

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8 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Weathering Economic Storms in Central Asia: Initial Impacts of the War in Ukraine* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022) ~ https://doi.org/10.1787/83348924-en.

9 "Fourth Consultative Summit of the Leaders of Central Asian States Laid Out a Joint Vision and Multiple Initiatives on Better Regional Aligning Against External Shocks," News Central Asia, July 22, 2022 ~ https://www.newscentralasia.net/2022/07/22/fourth-consultative-summit-of-the-leaders-of-central-asian-states-in-kyrgyzstan-laid-out-a-joint-vision-and-multiple-initiatives-on-better-regional-aligning-against-external-shocks.

independence. Among them, Kazakhstan needs to think hardest about the implications of the war for its security, and, at the same time, it has considerable capacity and opportunity to address the challenge.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's situation and development path have similarities and differences with those of Ukraine. It is a well-endowed country that is adjacent to Russia and therefore of considerable importance to the latter. Its lands were incorporated into the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union, and during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Kazakhstan received massive waves of migration from the north. As a result, at the time of independence, ethnic Russians constituted about the same share of the population as Kazakhs (37.8% versus 39.7%), and they were the majority in northern regions of the country.[10] This allowed Russian nationalists, including Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn, to claim that these territories are part of "historical Russia."[11] Such rhetoric never fully subsided, keeping the Kazakh government and society watchful, despite all the eternal friendship pledges and strategic alliance assurances coming from both capitals. Astana grew extremely worried when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and when Putin launched a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 under absurd pretexts, it became clear that the Kremlin's view on post-Soviet boundaries had shifted.

Thus, it is not surprising that Kazakhstan's position regarding the war is the most clearly articulated among the Central Asian states. After the war's outbreak, top government officials made statements reaffirming the territorial integrity of Ukraine. In June 2022, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, sitting next to President Putin, stated that Kazakhstan had no intention of recognizing the independence of the quasi-state territories of Luhansk and Donetsk.[12] The country has abstained in the UN General Assembly votes on the matter, as it has consistently done in similar situations, including votes on Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008 and on

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10 USSR State Committee for Statistics, *Vsesoyuznaya perepis naseleniya 1989 goda* [All Union Census of 1989] (Moscow, 1990).

11 Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "Kak nam obustroit Rossiyu" [How to Rebuild Russia], *Komsomolskaya pravda*, September 18, 1990.

12 Vusala Abbasova, "President Tokayev Says Kazakhstan Will Not Recognize Donetsk, Luhansk as Independent States," Caspian News, July 20, 2022 ~ https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/president-tokayev-says-kazakhstan-will-not-recognize-donetsk-lugansk-as-independent-states-2022-6-20-0.

Crimea in 2014. Kazakhstan's stance might have come as a surprise to those who expected Tokayev's more loyal attitude toward Moscow in the aftermath of the January unrest and the CSTO mission; however, the staunch position on territorial integrity is nonnegotiable for Kazakhstan.[13]

Astana has also taken a clear and firm stance of sanction compliance, due to the economic and political importance of maintaining its connections with Europe. Kazakhstan relies on European investments and markets, particularly in the energy sector, as well as investments from the United States and other states that imposed sanctions on Russia. Partnerships with the European Union and European countries have also been an important facet of Kazakhstan's integration into the international community and modernization. It was the first Central Asian state to join the Bologna Process to create common standards in higher-education qualifications and the first to sign the next-generation Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU.[14] Unlike Ukraine, Kazakhstan does not have ambitions to join the EU, since doing so was never an option.

Like Ukraine, Kazakhstan has been part of an energy triangle between the EU and Russia. While oil shipped from Russia to the EU transits Ukraine, oil from Kazakhstan to the EU transits Russia. Around 80% of Kazakhstan's oil is transported via the Caspian Pipeline Consortium to the Russian port Novorossiysk. In 2022, this flow was interrupted four times, pushing Astana to look for alternatives and prompting Tokayev to order the government to prioritize the development of the trans-Caspian corridor for Kazakhstan's oil export. However, scaling up the corridor's capacity will require considerable investment and time, and in the foreseeable future this corridor will not be a substitute for the northern route via Russia, which means that the vulnerabilities will remain.

As already mentioned, Astana has also pursued diversification in security relations, and China and Turkey are its key partners in this area. In April 2022, Tokayev met the Chinese state councilor and minister of national defense, Wei Fenghe, and they expressed readiness to step up bilateral cooperation in peacekeeping operations, joint exercises, personnel

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13 Nargis Kassenova, "Why Kazakhstan Will Not Be Returning to Russia's Fold," *Washington Post*, January 13, 2022 ~ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/13/why-kazakhstan-will-not-be-returning-russias-fold.

14 Alberto Turkstra, "Kazakhstan and European Union: Three Decades of Partnership, Cooperation and Friendship," *Astana Times*, January 31, 2023 ~ https://astanatimes.com/2023/01/kazakhstan-and-european-union-three-decades-of-partnership-cooperation-and-friendship.

training, military technology, and other fields.[15] Overall, Russia's behavior is pushing the Kazakh government to lean more on China. It was important to Astana, for example, that President Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan on the way to the SCO summit in September 2022 and voiced "resolute support" for Kazakhstan's "independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity."[16]

Kazakhstan-Turkey security cooperation had already been blossoming for years, but in the aftermath of the invasion, it received a new boost. In May 2022, Tokayev visited Ankara, and the two presidents inked a joint statement on their enhanced strategic partnership, confirming their agreement to enhance cooperation and coordination in the field of defense and security and to consider "the establishment of joint production to deepen cooperation in the defense industry."[17] During the visit, it was also confirmed that Kazakhstan would be producing Anka drones, which were developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries.[18]

The United States has always been an attractive security cooperation partner for Kazakhstan (it was joint work on nuclear nonproliferation that jumpstarted bilateral relations in the first place). However, in light of the increased animosity between the United States and Russia, actively pursuing this cooperation has not been a good option—the suspension of the annual Steppe Eagle military exercise seems to be one of the sacrifices Astana has had to make. However, low-key cooperation continues. In August 2022, Kazakh officers participated in the annual military exercise Regional Cooperation 22 in Tajikistan, run by U.S. National Guards from Arizona, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Nevada, and in January 2023, the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the National Guard of Kazakhstan carried out a "nuclear security levels of force" training course in eastern Kazakhstan.[19]

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15 "Kazakhstan, China Agree to Strengthen Military Cooperation," Xinhua, April 26, 2022 ~ https://www.chinadailyhk.com/article/269149.

16 Paul Bartlett, "Xi Vows to Back Kazakhstan's Sovereignty in Central Asian Power Play," *Nikkei Asia*, September 14, 2022 ~ https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Xi-vows-to-back-Kazakh-sovereignty-in-Central-Asia-power-play.

17 "Joint Statement of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and President of the Republic of Tűrkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Enhanced Strategic Partnership," Official Website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, May 10, 2022 ~ https://www.akorda.kz/en/joint-statement-of-president-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-and-president-of-the-republic-of-trkiye-recep-tayyip-erdoan-on-enhanced-strategic-partnership-104238.

18 "Turkey and Central Asian Military Cooperation More than Just Drones."

19 Terra Gatti, "National Guardsmen Participate in Regional Cooperation 22," U.S. Army, August 12, 2022 ~ https://www.army.mil/article/259290/national_guardsmen_participate_in_regional_cooperation_22; and U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Kazakhstan, "National Guard Levels of Force Training," February 9, 2023 ~ https://kz.usembassy.gov/national-guard-levels-of-force-training.

Developing and deepening relations with various powers is the core of Kazakhstan's strategy. The Ukraine war motivates Kazakhstan to redouble its efforts to maintain a careful balancing act toward Russia. It also adds incentive to Astana's attempts to foster regional cooperation to bolster the country's security and development. The newly forged axis between Astana and Tashkent gives good hope in this regard. The key lesson for Kazakhstan of the ongoing war is that sovereignty should not be taken for granted and needs to be strengthened in all ways possible. There may be regrets in the corridors of power that the government did not make a greater effort earlier to diversify energy routes and build up national capacity independent from Russia. It remains to be seen how well these lessons are learned.

The success or failure of Kazakhstan to maintain its balancing act will be of crucial importance for the fortunes of Central Asia, since it physically "shields" the rest of the region from Russia, provides a corridor to the West, and plays the role of the economic and cooperation locomotive. And to be successful, Astana needs its neighbors on board to show resilience to Moscow's pressure and to work closer together in prioritizing unity and shared agendas over narrower and shorter-term interests. ◈

Europe Reinvents Its Security System—for the Short Term

Pavel K. Baev

It would be a platitude to state that the Russia-Ukraine war has had a massive impact on the European security system, but it is essential to emphasize that the fast and profound reconstruction of this traditionally well-structured system addresses primarily the most immediate security challenges, while mid- and long-term problems remain clouded in uncertainty. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, unleashed on February 24, 2022, after eight years of violent conflict, produced a painful shock for most European politicians and publics. Although Russia, through its invasion of Ukraine, hoped to create confusion and discord among its neighbors, the European Union has risen to the challenge, recognizing the invasion of Ukraine as a direct threat to the security of all stakeholders in regional peace. The immediacy of this threat has brought together Europe's interest-based and value-based policies and focused them on the common goal of ending the war with a just peace, ensured by resolve to increase investments in collective security. Europe has sustained its remarkable unity behind the commitment to ensure Russia's defeat, as the proceedings of the 2023 Munich Security Conference confirm.[1] Impressive as these efforts have been, however, perhaps inevitably they deal only with the foreseeable future, the horizon of which may turn out to be very close indeed.

U.S. Leadership Is Too Good to Last

The onset of Russian aggression toward Ukraine not only severely distorted European designs for cooperative architecture and plans for resource allocation; it also called into question the basic tenets of European security philosophy. The belief that profitable economic engagement makes Russia a conflict-averse, even if difficult, partner was ingrained

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NOTE: The author would like to thank the Norwegian Ministry of Defence for its support of his research on the impact of the Ukraine war on the security situation in East Asia.

[1] Addressing the conference, President Volodymyr Zelensky emphasized the factor of time. For one useful reflection, see Kurt Volker, "Urgency Must Replace Complacency in West's Ukraine Policy," Center for European Policy Analysis, February 20, 2023 ⇝ https://cepa.org/article/urgency-must-replace-complacency-in-wests-ukraine-policy.

in traditional German *Ostpolitik* as well as in French preferences for cultivating dialogue with Moscow, Italian eagerness to turn a blind eye to the smoldering conflict in eastern Ukraine, and many other self-deceptive policies. The break with these illusions was swift and radical, and the German term *Zeitenwende* (historical turning point) is applicable to many decisive turns in European policymaking all the way from Finland and Sweden down to Greece and Cyprus.[2]

One prominent feature in this war-driven revision of European security thinking is the broad acceptance of and increased demand for U.S. leadership, so that the long-running, even if not particularly productive, debates on security autonomy have been momentarily reduced to irrelevance.[3] U.S. president Joe Biden has succeeded in alleviating the worries about the reliability of the U.S. security commitment that were generated by the policies of his predecessor, and he has delivered on the promise to build an alliance of democracies capable of withstanding the pressure from revisionist autocracies. The U.S. initiative that established the Ramstein format for coordinating the supply of arms to Ukraine has been crucial in making every difficult decision—from the delivery of mid-range strike weapon systems (such as the M142 HIMARS) to forming the "tank coalition" designed to empower the Ukrainian army to make a new counteroffensive breakthrough.[4]

The states that have embraced re-energized U.S. leadership, like Poland, have found their role in the new war-centric security system strongly reinforced, despite their infractions of core European democratic values and tensions with influential neighbors, such as Germany.[5] This reconfiguration of the security structure around U.S. leadership remains key to the goal of ensuring Ukraine's capacity to restore its territorial integrity, but it will become incongruous after this victory is achieved. The issue is not only that

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2 Constanze Stelzenmüller makes the apt comparison of *Zeitenwende* in German security policy to Schrodinger's proverbial cat, which simultaneously does and does not exist. Constanze Stelzenmüller, "Germany's Policy Shift Is Real but Still Falls Short," *Financial Times*, February 13, 2023 ~ https://www.ft.com/content/cd19430d-8506-4e16-9c43-c341accc6547.

3 One re-evaluation of these debates is Judy Dempsey et al., "Judy Asks: Is European Security Autonomy Over?" Carnegie Europe, January 19, 2023 ~ https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/88838.

4 The Ramstein group, so-called because of its first meeting at the Ramstein U.S. Air Force Base in Germany, comprises 30 NATO members and 24 other countries that support Ukraine in the war by supplying it with military equipment. On the importance of main battle tanks, see Jonathan Beale, "How Tanks from Germany, U.S. and UK Could Change the Ukraine War," BBC News, January 28, 2023 ~ https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64422568.

5 On Poland, see Piotr Buras, "East Side Story: Poland's New Role in the European Union," European Council on Foreign Relations, Commentary, February 16, 2023 ~ https://ecfr.eu/article/east-side-story-polands-new-role-in-the-european-union.

the United States needs to direct more attention to its domestic agenda and more resources to the competition with China in the Indo-Pacific theater, both of which will necessitate a significant reduction of its engagement in European affairs from the moment of Ukrainian triumph; no less important is that there has been a strong increase in the EU security profile, which is currently overshadowed by the focus on combat operations and is not fully comprehended even in Brussels.[6] While NATO persists with the argument that it is not at war with Russia (even if Moscow is firmly set on this proposition), the EU, for all intents and purposes, is executing a nonkinetic war campaign against an aggressor state, in which sanctions are only but one instrument. In the immediate aftermath of the war, it will be up to the EU to take the lead in the massive task of reconstructing Ukraine and to redesign its own security system accordingly.

The Special Case of Turkey

In the fast-progressing reconceptualization and reorganization of the European security system, one important distortion—and perhaps even weakness—pertains to the present and future role of Turkey. Its membership in NATO is valued by the alliance members and supported by their publics, but while Ankara was fully engaged in the development of NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept (approved at the Madrid Summit in June 2022), its objections to the accession of Finland (lifted only in March) and, particularly, Sweden illuminate the scope of problems in its commitment.[7] Turkey's relationship with the EU is tense despite extensive economic ties, and Turkish public opinion is skeptical of the prospect for eventual Turkish EU membership and the sincerity of EU policy.[8] Paradoxically, the stronger Kyiv's push to fast-track Ukraine's bid to join the EU, the more distant Turkey's own long-awaited claim for membership becomes.

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6 One thoughtful assessment is Jan Zielonka, "The European Union at War," *International Politics and Society*, February 23, 2023 ⇝ https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/foreign-and-security-policy/the-european-union-at-war-6530. See also Henry Foy, "Arming Ukraine: How War Forced the EU to Rewrite Defence Policy," *Financial Times*, February 27, 2023 ⇝ https://www.ft.com/content/1b762ff1-2c7f-40a1-aee9-d218c6ef6e37.

7 A useful evaluation of this issue is Alper Coşkun, "Sweden's NATO Problem Is Also Turkey's NATO Problem," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 1, 2023 ⇝ https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/01/sweden-s-nato-problem-is-also-turkey-s-nato-problem-pub-88929.

8 Detailed opinion polls conducted by Kadir Has University show that, in 2022, hopes for EU accession declined compared with 2021, while support for NATO increased. Mustafa Aydin et al., "Quantitative Research Report: Public Perception on Turkish Foreign Policy 2022," Kadir Has University, Global Academy, and Akademetre, September 2022 ⇝ https://www.khas.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TDP_2022_ENG_FINAL_07.09.22.pdf.

What makes Turkey's position in the U.S.-led Western alliance special is Ankara's persistence in maintaining its controversial and mutually profitable partnership with Russia. This partnership survived the test of the emotionally charged crisis in 2014–15 caused by the downing of a Russian bomber by a Turkish fighter in Syria and remains on track in the current war. Moscow prefers to turn a blind eye to Turkey's expanding supply of weapons to Ukraine (including the famous Bayraktar TB2 strike drones), calculating that Turkey's nonparticipation in the West's sanctions regime is more significant than its "unfriendly" transactions, and so has exempted Turkey from its long list of "hostile" states. For the Western leaders, Ankara's key role in negotiating the "grain deal" with Moscow confirms the usefulness of Turkey's relationship with Russia and its potential to facilitate peace talks when the timing is right. The downside is that public opinion in Germany and France, not to mention Sweden, sees Turkey as an unreliable ally.[9] High-intensity personal communication between Russian president Vladimir Putin and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan constitutes a key element in this partnership, which makes Moscow's proactive interference in the upcoming Turkish elections in May 2023 seem inevitable.

Multiple combat operations in the maritime flank of the Russia-Ukraine war complicate, but far from abolish, Turkey's ambition to achieve dominance in the Black Sea theater.[10] The instant closure of the Bosporus Strait to the Russian Navy in February 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine provided an impetus to these ambitions, and Ankara has also managed to impress upon the United States and other allies that deployments of NATO naval platforms into the Black Sea, either for reassuring Bulgaria and Romania or for protecting the grain convoys from Odesa, would be undesirable. In the meanwhile, Turkey is expanding its influence in the Caucasus at the expense of war-preoccupied Russia and gaining new skills in conflict manipulation, focusing particularly on Nagorno-Karabakh. Western responses to Turkish maneuvering have been typical in their reactive and immediate character. As for the midterm, little thinking has been aimed to date at assessing Tukey's increasingly

9 German Marshall Fund of the United States et al., "Transatlantic Trends 2022—Public Opinion in Times of Geopolitical Turmoil," September 29, 2022 ~ https://www.kas.de/en/web/tuerkei/single-title/-/content/transatlantic-trends-2022-die-oeffentliche-meinung-in-zeiten-geopolitischer-unruhen.

10 For a competent examination, see Luke Coffey and Can Kasparoğlu, "A New Black Sea Strategy for a New Black Sea Reality," *Eurasia Review*, February 23, 2023 ~ https://www.eurasiareview.com/23022023-a-new-black-sea-strategy-for-a-new-black-sea-reality-analysis.

odd position in NATO, which promotes itself as a value-based alliance, or planning Turkish relations with the EU under its upgraded security profile.[11]

Cutting the Long War Short

Most Western policy planning efforts have accepted the prospect that combat operations in Ukraine will be part of a protracted war that continues for years rather than months as the middle-of-the-road scenario. Strategic analyses underpinning this potential scenario are balanced and solid, but politicians who subscribe to them, asserting the imperative to prepare for hard work "for as long as it takes," may not be entirely sincere.[12] In the bureaucratic perspective, a steady continuation of present-day developments is never the worst-case option, and indeed it is much easier to plan resource allocation on the assumption of "more of the same." This propensity for extrapolation syncs remarkably with Putin's discourse, which increasingly emphasizes protracted confrontation and is vague in defining what victory might look like.

Putin was wrong in expecting a quick victory, and he may be proved wrong again in assuming that Russia is bracing for an indefinite struggle with the allegedly hostile West and defiant Ukraine. His inability to mobilize Russian society for a sustained effort toward an incomprehensible goal is on par with his incompetence in directing military operations, and the urge to prove that he is in control of warmaking translates into persistent and costly attempts to gain ground in Donbas, which has opened counteroffensive opportunities for the quickly modernizing Ukrainian forces.[13] Had Russian troops been ordered to fortify the defensive lines, the war could very well have become a positional deadlock; the exhausting attacks, however, have created a fluid battlefield in which a minor Ukrainian tactical breakthrough could generate a major rout.[14] A rearmed, retrained, and highly motivated Ukrainian army is capable

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11 For a beginning of such thinking, see Galip Dalay, "Turkey Gains Much from NATO, but a Rocky Road Lies Ahead," Chatham House, July 22, 2022 ~ https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/07/turkey-gains-much-nato-rocky-road-lies-ahead.

12 For one example of such analysis, see Ivo H. Daalder and James Goldgeier, "The Long War in Ukraine," *Foreign Affairs*, January 9, 2023 ~ https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/long-war-ukraine-russia-protracted-conflict.

13 This interplay is examined in Michael Kofman and Ryan Evans, "Unfolding Offensives and Counter-Offensives in Ukraine," War on the Rocks, February 7, 2023 ~ https://warontherocks.com/2023/02/unfolding-offensives-and-counter-offensives-in-ukraine.

14 For a competent evaluation of the range of options for spring 2023, see Lawrence Freedman, "One Step at a Time: The Stages of War," Comment Is Freed, February 26, 2023 ~ https://samf.substack.com/p/one-step-at-a-time-the-stages-of.

of achieving decisive strategic success during the second year of the war, disproving both the unfeasible plans of Russian high command and the cautious forecasts of Western policy planners.

Looking ahead, the prospect of Ukrainian success may appear as unduly optimistic, but it is in fact in line with the commitment of the U.S.-led coalition, although beyond the ongoing reformatting of the European security system. A Ukrainian victory against Russia, therefore, will require a new revision of the political formats that are presently under construction, with the immediate task certain to be the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Ukraine. The scope of these efforts was evaluated at the 2023 World Economic Forum, and it is far from clear how the costs—roughly estimated as $540 billion (three times as much as the Marshall Plan adjusted for inflation)—could be covered.[15] Ukraine might well succeed in its intention to join NATO, but this achievement will be less relevant to the central task of economic revival, and Ukraine's desire to get on the fast-track to EU accession could be frustrated.[16] With the end of high-intensity hostilities, U.S. leadership will likely opt for reducing its European engagement to focus on domestic affairs and competition with China. At the same time, the EU may find that taking the place of the United States as the central element of the new European security system is too burdensome.

Containing and Engaging with a Defeated Russia

Difficult as the task of rebuilding war-ravaged Ukraine is certain to be, it is far more positive in nature and discernible in key parameters than the problem of designing an appropriate pattern of relations with a defeated Russia. The gravity of this latter problem is much greater than just whether Russia, in the midterm, could again become a major natural gas supplier to Europe. (And this particular question can perhaps begin to be answered by the fact that Russia continued to export gas to Europe through the Ukrainian pipeline system even during the first year of war.[17]) Important as the matter of energy supply is, the security risks and opportunities emanating from a Russia that will struggle to internalize its defeat and accept responsibility

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15 See John Letzing, "What Would a 'Marshall Plan' for Ukraine Look Like?" World Economic Forum, February 3, 2023 ~ https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/02/marshall-plan-for-ukraine.

16 This procrastination is spelled out in "Ukraine Is Not About to Join the EU," *Economist*, February 3, 2023 ~ https://www.economist.com/europe/2023/02/03/ukraine-is-not-about-to-join-the-eu.

17 See Nina Chestney, "Russian Gas to Europe via Ukraine Rises," Reuters, February 1, 2023 ~ https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russian-gas-europe-via-ukraine-transit-rises-2023-02-01.

for war crimes are certain to demand decisions that are more consequential than the present generation of Western leaders could have ever imagined.[18]

The ongoing transformation of the European security system makes Europe much better suited for the task of containing military threats from Russia than it was on the eve of the war, but the complexity of this task may in fact diminish because it will inevitably take Russia many years to rebuild its decimated army, providing that Moscow indeed sets this goal for itself.[19] The parameters of a new containment strategy can be established without any stretch of strategic imagination. The emphasis on threat management, however, narrows the range of options and shapes the fluid situation in such a way that the policy choices are indeed reduced to deterring new aggressive impulses from a Russia fixated on revanche.[20] The perception of Russia as an inherently imperialist and inconvertibly militaristic state is strongly reinforced by the ongoing war, but future policymaking informed by this assumption could generate confrontation according to familiar patterns that are not necessarily optimal for the new situation.

The capacity of Putin's autocratic regime to survive a forthcoming defeat is as doubtful as its ability to mobilize sufficient forces for a spring offensive. The Russian track record of military failures suggests that a strong drive for reform could emerge from the shock of losing Crimea, for example. French president Emmanuel Macron is often criticized for his past efforts to keep the dialogue with Putin going, but his argument that the future European security system can only be stable if it is built with Russia and not against it makes plenty of sense.[21] A new Russian collective leadership would probably be unstable and oscillate between tapping into societal feelings of resentment and trying to minimize the damage inflicted by the defeat.[22]

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18 For an earlier attempt to raise this issue, see Pavel K. Baev, "Time for the West to Think About How to Engage with Defeated Russia," Brookings Institution, Talbott Paper on Implications of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine, November 15, 2022 ~ https://www.brookings.edu/articles/time-for-the-west-to-think-about-how-to-engage-with-defeated-russia.

19 One competent expert assessment is Pavel Luzin, "Doomed to Failure—Russia's Effort to Restore Its Military Muscle," Center for European Policy Analysis, November 15, 2022 ~ https://cepa.org/article/doomed-to-failure-russias-efforts-to-restore-its-military-muscle.

20 A thoughtful contemplation on this choice is Alexander Vershbow, "Russia Policy After the War: A New Strategy of Containment," Atlantic Council, New Atlanticist, February 22, 2023 ~ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/russia-policy-after-the-war-a-new-strategy-of-containment.

21 A sharp evaluation of this argument is Mark Galeotti, "Macron Is Right about the Danger of Russia after Putin," *Spectator*, February 20, 2023 ~ https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/macron-is-right-about-the-danger-of-russia-after-putin.

22 Grigory Yudin explains the exploitability of resentment in an interview with Margarita Liutova. See Grigory Yudin, "'Russia Ends Nowhere,' They Say," interview by Margarita Liutova, abridged trans. by Emily Laskin, Meduza, February 25, 2023 ~ https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/02/25/russia-ends-nowhere-they-say.

The European security system, reconfigured for the purpose of defeating Russia, will need to move beyond the easy option of deterrence and develop the means of engaging with its troubled and troublesome neighbor. Suspicions regarding Russia's deep-rooted authoritarian tendencies are well-justified, but the opinion expressed by Adam Michnik, a veteran of the Polish Solidarity movement, about a possible democratic transformation by Russia deserves attention as well.[23] It will be up to the multiple European stakeholders in a new security architecture, as well as Ukraine, to grant Russia a new chance at reinventing itself as a responsible power.

Conclusion: Lessons from Europe to East Asia

The profound reconstruction and urgent reconceptualization of the European security system together are producing strong impacts on the transformation of the world order, which has proved remarkably resilient against Russian attempts to break it down. The global South may remain ambivalent, but it is in East Asia that the Russia-Ukraine war resonates the strongest and that the U.S.-led efforts to build a coalition of democracies in support of Ukraine will yield the most consequential results. Joining the sanctions regime against Russia was just the first step for Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore in reckoning with and contributing to the new energy of a strongly united West. These countries also discovered new urgency and more value in building mutual security ties, in addition to the bilateral ties they each have with the United States. Combined with the upgraded security cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, these connections increasingly resemble the dense multilateral commitments composing the European security system.

The main driver of East Asian security cooperation is the imperative to deter the aggressive ambitions of China. As Xi Jinping's autocratic regime becomes more rigid and repressive, as its ability to deliver prosperity weakens due to China's worsening economic performance, the country's external behavior turns more assertive and less predictable. Beijing certainly does not want to see a defeat and collapse of Putin's regime, but it is becoming more aware of the sources of strength underpinning the Western alliance. Much the same way that a newly reformatted European security system will have to deal with the grave challenges of engaging

[23] See Adam Michnik, "Putin Must Not Win," interview by Irena Grudzinska Gross, Project Syndicate, October 17, 2022 ~ https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/west-must-resist-russia-nuclear-threat-by-adam-michnik-and-irena-grudzinska-gross-2022-10.

with a defeated Russia, the democracies of East Asia will need to focus their collective efforts on managing the consequences of turmoil that the Ukraine war will generate across Russia's vast territory, and in particular in its exposed interface with Asia. ◈

The Russia-Ukraine War and the Impact on the Persian Gulf States

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

The Russia-Ukraine war has had a variable impact on security dynamics in the Persian Gulf region, encompassing Iran, the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (the "Arab Gulf" states—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, or UAE), and Yemen, the seventh state on the Arabian Peninsula. Record or near-record oil and gas revenues have returned budgets in Arab Gulf states to surplus after years of deficits after oil prices crashed in 2014. Europe's pivot away from Russian energy has restated the Arab Gulf states' centrality in energy security considerations and lessened, for the moment at least, pressures that had been building before 2022 around climate action and the energy transition. Conversely, it has become more difficult for Arab Gulf states to balance international relationships in an era of growing great-power competition and strategic rivalry, while Iran's supply of drones to Russia has awakened concerns about their potential use on battlefields closer to home.

This essay has three sections. It begins with an overview of regional reactions to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the first year of the war. Political responses were far from uniform and largely ran along existing fault lines rooted in different calculations of strategic, security, and defense interests. A second section examines how the Russia-Ukraine war has changed the ways that states in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula view questions of regional interest. Here, again, there is no regionwide consensus, and one impact of the conflict has been to reinforce divergent policy trajectories. The essay ends with a final section that looks ahead to assess how the war may affect perceptions of (in)security and conflict in key regional states moving forward.

Diverging Reactions

The Russia-Ukraine war has exacerbated economic divisions within the Middle East and widened the already-significant gaps between energy-rich and energy-poor states in the region. Prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, numerous states were heavily reliant on

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agricultural imports from Russia and/or Ukraine. These included Sudan, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, and Syria, all countries whose resilience had been weakened by internal conflict (and exacerbated by regional geopolitical competition) in the decade that followed the Arab Spring upheaval of 2011.[1] Higher food and commodity prices placed significant strain on societies, which faced cost-of-living increases, and on governments, which struggled to meet the rising cost of imports eating into foreign reserves and piling pressure on currencies.[2] In addition to the abovementioned conflict-afflicted states, Egypt and Turkey have also faced severe economic pressures arising from the disruptive impact of the war in Ukraine.[3]

In the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula subregion of the Middle East, the Russia-Ukraine war began against the backdrop of four contextual factors. The first was the recent conclusion of the longest and deepest fracture ever seen in intra–Arab Gulf politics, as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, and Egypt placed Qatar under political and economic blockade from June 2017 until January 2021 on the pretext that Qatar was too close to Iran and supported extremist groups in the region, allegations Doha denied and that were never substantiated.[4] The second was the impact of the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, which served to reinforce perceptions in several Arab Gulf capitals of the apparent unreliability of the United States as a security partner.[5] The third was the ongoing Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen against the Houthis, which entered its seventh year in 2022.[6] The fourth was the breakdown in talks

1 Caitlin Walsh, "The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa," testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee, May 18, 2022 ~ https://www.csis.org/analysis/impact-russias-invasion-ukraine-middle-east-and-north-africa.

2 Jihad Azour, Jeta Menkulasi, and Rodrigo Garcia-Verdu, "Middle East and North Africa's Commodity Importers Hit by Higher Prices," International Monetary Fund, IMF Blog, May 24, 2022 ~ https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/05/24/blog-mena-commodity-importers-hit-by-higher-prices.

3 Michaël Tanchum, "The Russia-Ukraine War Has Turned Egypt's Food Crisis into an Existential Threat to the Economy," Middle East Institute, March 3, 2022 ~ https://www.mei.edu/publications/russia-ukraine-war-has-turned-egypts-food-crisis-existential-threat-economy; and M. Murat Kubilay, "The Ukraine War Has Upended Turkey's Plans to Stabilize the Economy," Middle East Institute, March 23, 2022 ~ https://www.mei.edu/publications/ukraine-war-has-upended-turkeys-plans-stabilize-economy.

4 Patrick Theros and Dania Thafer, "What the Al-Ula Summit Has (and Has Not) Accomplished," Gulf International Forum, January 11, 2021 ~ https://gulfif.org/what-the-al-ula-gcc-summit-has-and-has-not-accomplished.

5 Mohammad Barhouma, "The Reverberation of the American Withdrawal from Afghanistan in the Arabian Gulf," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 17, 2021 ~ https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/85367.

6 Aziz El Yaakoubi, "'How to End a War You Didn't Win': Yemen's Houthis Seek Saudi Concessions," Reuters, March 19, 2021 ~ https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-usa/how-to-end-a-war-you-didnt-win-yemens-houthis-seek-saudi-concessions-idUSKBN2BB1NF.

between Iranian and P5+1 negotiators to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) following the Trump administration's unilateral withdrawal in 2018 and Iran's subsequent decision to end compliance with key terms of the agreement it had signed in 2015.[7]

At a macro level, an immediate impact of the buildup to and aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was a sustained rise in oil and gas prices that returned budgets in Arab Gulf states to surplus in 2022 after years of deficits. This was especially the case in the four major energy producers—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE (oil), and Qatar (gas)—but high prices throughout 2022 also provided relief from what had been mounting fiscal pressures on the far smaller producers of Oman and Bahrain as well.[8] For Saudi Arabia, the primarily Western-led attempt to isolate Russia had the practical effect of ending Mohammed bin Salman's own diplomatic isolation after fallout from the 2018 assassination of Saudi columnist Jamal Khashoggi. The U.S. intelligence community assessed that the crown prince and de facto leader of Saudi Arabia had approved the operation to capture or kill Khashoggi, and President Joe Biden had taken office determined to deal only with his father, King Salman.[9] However, in July 2022, Biden met Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah in an attempt to secure an increase in oil production to bring prices down, and multiple European leaders also engaged directly with the crown prince for the same reason.[10]

Arab Gulf states' stances toward the February 2022 invasion fell along a spectrum that ranged from Qatar aligning most with Ukraine (and the United States' position on the war) and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE leaning more closely toward Russia, with Kuwait and Oman falling in between. These three "blocs" mirrored those that emerged during the Qatar blockade and suggest that, for the Qatari leadership, the sight of a larger power threatening and ultimately invading a far smaller neighbor

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7 Riccardo Alcaro, "Four Scenarios for the Iran Nuclear Deal," Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), IAI Commentaries, November 29, 2021 ~ https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/four-scenarios-iran-nuclear-deal.

8 Li-Chen Sim, "The Gulf States: Beneficiaries of the Russia-Europe Energy War?" Middle East Institute, January 12, 2023 ~ https://www.mei.edu/publications/gulf-states-beneficiaries-russia-europe-energy-war.

9 Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "[Redacted] Assessing the Saudi Government's Role in the Killing of Jamal Khashoggi," February 11, 2021 ~ https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/Assessment-Saudi-Gov-Role-in-JK-Death-20210226v2.pdf; and Natasha Turak, "Biden's Snub of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Is a 'Warning' Signaling a Relationship Downgrade," CNBC, February 17, 2021 ~ https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/17/bidens-snub-of-saudi-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman-is-a-warning.html.

10 Emile Hokayem, "Fraught Relations: Saudi Ambition and American Anger," *Survival* 64, no. 6 (2022): 7–22.

had deep resonance. Kuwaiti officials were also vocal in calling out the invasion, prompted by their own memories of occupation by Iraq in 1990 and their liberation by a multinational coalition led by the United States in 1991.[11] In contrast, Mohammed bin Salman and his Emirati counterpart, President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, maintained regular contact with Russian president Vladimir Putin and adopted policies, within OPEC+ and by providing a haven for Russian capital flight from Europe, that were seen by many to favor the Russian position and undermine Western-led pressure.[12]

Evolving Considerations

A little more than six months separated the fall of Kabul to resurgent Taliban forces on August 15, 2021, and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The Biden administration's close coordination of policy (and intelligence) with allies and partners should have come as a relief to Arab Gulf states after their concern at the manner of the U.S. departure from Afghanistan. Leaders in regional capitals had, for different reasons, begun to question the reliability of the United States as a long-term security partner during the Obama and Trump years and now also the Biden administration. However, their policy responses to the newfound uncertainty over U.S. "staying power" in the Middle East differed markedly and have affected their decision-making vis-à-vis the Russia-Ukraine war.

The leadership in Qatar was shocked by Donald Trump's initial backing of the Saudi- and Emirati-led blockade in June 2017. Its response was to invest heavily in repairing and strengthening the bilateral relationship with the United States at every level. Policymakers in Doha worked with U.S. officials to facilitate the withdrawal from Afghanistan, and in January 2022 Biden designated Qatar a "major non-NATO ally."[13] For Saudi

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11 Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "What the Russian Invasion of Ukraine Means for Small States," *Doha News*, March 12, 2022 ~ https://dohanews.co/what-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-means-for-small-states.

12 OPEC+ is a coalition of the thirteen members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and eleven non-OPEC oil-exporting states (including Russia). Summer Said et al., "Saudi Arabia Defied U.S. Warnings Ahead of OPEC+ Production Cut," *Wall Street Journal*, October 11, 2022 ~ https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-defied-u-s-warnings-ahead-of-opec-production-cut-11665504230; and Sam Fleming et al., "West Presses UAE to Clamp Down on Suspected Russia Sanctions Busting," *Financial Times*, March 1, 2023 ~ https://www.ft.com/content/fca1878e-9198-4500-b888-24b17043c507.

13 R. Clarke Cooper, "As Qatar Becomes a Non-NATO Ally, Greater Responsibility Conveys with the Status," Atlantic Council, March 3, 2022 ~ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/as-qatar-becomes-a-non-nato-ally-greater-responsibility-coveys-with-the-status.

Arabia and the UAE, their moment of reckoning came in 2019 when the Trump administration chose not to respond to attacks on maritime and energy targets in the two countries that many attributed, though without conclusive proof, to Iran or Iranian-linked groups.[14] However, the response in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi was not to redouble ties with the United States, as Doha had done, but to diversify their defense and security relationships to avoid over-reliance on any one partner. This diversification has included building closer ties with China and Russia, including technology transfers and coordination in the production of arms such as drones.[15]

Notwithstanding the spectrum of views described above, it is notable that none of the Arab Gulf states, even Qatar with its closer U.S. alignment, have formally picked sides in the Russia-Ukraine war. As with much of the global South, it has become clear that states across the Middle East do not feel that Ukraine is "their war" and do not share the view of many in Washington and European capitals that the collective defense of Ukraine is "an international order defining event, a generational moment in which international alliances and norms are being reshaped."[16] Arab Gulf leaders have refused to get drawn into the era of great-power competition and strategic rivalry; unlike the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, this is not an issue that is deemed to pose a direct threat to their political or security interests. Instead, when they have engaged, they have done so in pursuit of narrow and carefully defined objectives.

Instances of Arab Gulf states' engagement with Russia and Ukraine since February 2022 underscore how officials in those states are acting to project (and protect) their own interests first and foremost in ways that sometimes belie their often-described role as integral U.S. security partners in the Middle East. Qatar and Russia, together with Iran, are members of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, which held a leaders' summit in Doha in February 2022, just two days before Russian forces invaded Ukraine.[17]

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14 Steve Holland and Rania El-Gamal, "Trump Says He Does Not Want War after Attack on Saudi Oil Facilities," Reuters, September 16, 2019 ~ https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-aramco/trump-says-he-does-not-want-war-after-attack-on-saudi-oil-facilities-idUSKBN1W10X8.

15 Gordon Lubold and Warren Strobel, "Secret Chinese Port Project in Persian Gulf Rattles U.S. Relations with U.A.E.," *Wall Street Journal*, November 19, 2021 ~ https://www.wsj.com/articles/us-china-uae-military-11637274224; and Agnes Helou, "Chinese and Saudi Firms Create Joint Venture to Make Military Drones in the Kingdom," *Defense News*, March 9, 2022 ~ https://www.defensenews.com/unmanned/2022/03/09/chinese-and-saudi-firms-create-joint-venture-to-make-military-drones-in-the-kingdom.

16 Marc Lynch, "Saudi Oil Cuts and American International Order," Abu Aardvark's MENA Academy, October 9, 2022 ~ https://abuaardvark.substack.com/p/saudi-oil-cuts-and-american-international.

17 Qatar, moreover, hosts the headquarters of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum. See Gas Exporting Countries Forum, "Contact Us" ~ https://www.gecf.org/contact.aspx.

At the meeting, Qatari officials committed to working with all partners to maintain balance in global gas markets, an issue that the Qatari emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, had discussed with President Biden.[18] Qatari and Russian officials also engaged in dialogue on issue-specific areas of mutual interest, notably Iran, to minimize any fallout or cycle of escalation after the Vienna negotiations to revive the JCPOA initially stalled and then later broke down altogether.[19]

Saudi and Emirati officials have also engaged in the Russia-Ukraine war in specific and limited ways to advance their own perceived interests. Saudi coordination with Russia of oil output levels within OPEC+ caused backlash in the United States but was designed with considerations of regime security in mind, as the kingdom remains reliant on higher oil prices and revenues to fund its Vision 2030 and related "giga-projects."[20] Mohammed bin Salman and Mohammed bin Zayed additionally claimed credit for mediating several prisoner swaps involving Russia, Ukraine, and the United States, which gave substance to their claims that maintaining ties and balancing relationships with all parties can and do produce tangible outcomes.[21] Their involvement in mediation and in balancing diplomatic relationships is another indication that the role of the Arab Gulf states in the multipolar environment of the 2020s will be quite distinct from the Cold War era. Although then these states were part of the non-Communist bloc, they now have far greater agency as "middle" and regional powers in economic, political, and energy affairs.

Looking Ahead

Moving forward, there are several key takeaways from the first year of the Russia-Ukraine war that resonate with political leaders and security considerations in the Middle East. The first is the speed with which Russian

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18 Colm Quinn, "Biden Hosts Qatari Leader to Talk Gas Supplies, Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, Morning Brief, January 31, 2022 ~ https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/31/qatar-white-house-ukraine-gas-afghanistan.

19 Annmarie Hordern, "Qatar's Foreign Minister to Visit Moscow over Iran, Ukraine," Bloomberg, March 12, 2022 ~ https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-13/qatar-s-foreign-minister-to-visit-moscow-over-iran-ukraine; and Hanna Notte, "Don't Expect Any More Russian Help on the Iran Nuclear Deal," War on the Rocks, November 3, 2022 ~ https://warontherocks.com/2022/11/dont-expect-any-more-russian-help-on-the-iran-nuclear-deal.

20 Summer Said and Dion Nissenbaum, "Before OPEC+ Production Cut, Saudis Heard Objections from a Top Ally, the U.A.E.," *Wall Street Journal*, November 1, 2022 ~ https://www.wsj.com/articles/before-opec-production-cut-saudis-heard-objections-from-a-top-ally-the-u-a-e-11667335415.

21 Bennett Neuhoff, "Saudi Prisoner Diplomacy During the Ukraine War," Washington Institute, December 20, 2022 ~ https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/saudi-prisoner-diplomacy-during-ukraine-war.

business elites and Russian capital were targeted by Western sanctions, including in jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, which hitherto had embraced them.[22] London has long been a haven for investors and sovereign wealth funds from the Middle East, due in part to its historical links with the region, and the rapid targeting of sanctions against Russia has raised awareness of the possibility that the same measures directed against Russia could conceivably be used against Middle Eastern investors in the future. Although this is not (yet) deemed a critical or imminent threat to economic resilience and business interests, it is a trend that decision-makers in regional capitals are watching.

A second takeaway that is being followed closely by regional leaders is that the security relationship between Iran and Russia warrants observation, especially any sign that it may lead to a deeper strategic agreement or military partnership.[23] Iran's transfer of armed drones to Russia and their use on the battlefield against civilian and military targets in Ukraine, including infrastructure, have caused alarm in Arab Gulf circles. Memories are still raw over the precision missile and drone strikes against Saudi oil infrastructure in September 2019 that temporarily knocked out half the kingdom's oil production and were likely backed by Iran. The possibility that Iranian-made weapons systems may gain operational and combat experience and/or technical and financial expertise from the Russian arms sector is an issue under close review in the region. Already, one effect of the closer Russia-Iran security partnership is the reactivation of a working group on defense cooperation between the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council that began during the Obama administration but fell into abeyance during the Trump presidency. Officials from the United States and Arab Gulf states met in Riyadh in February 2023, and while the working group does not signify any "picking sides" over the Russia-Ukraine war, it does illustrate how a secondary impact of the war is being tracked.[24]

The final takeaway is that while it may become more difficult to balance competing relationships in a more polarized world, states in the Middle East will resist any pressure to throw their support decisively

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22 Max Colchester and Alistair MacDonald, "Sanctions Threaten U.K.'s Position as Playground for Russian Oligarchs," *Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2022 ~ https://www.wsj.com/articles/sanctions-threaten-u-k-s-position-as-playground-for-russian-oligarchs-11645623038.

23 Dion Nissenbaum and Warren Strobel, "Moscow, Tehran Advance Plans for Iranian-Designed Drone Facility in Russia," *Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 2023 ~ https://www.wsj.com/articles/moscow-tehran-advance-plans-for-iranian-designed-drone-facility-in-russia-11675609087.

24 Barak Ravid, "Senior U.S. Delegation in Saudi Arabia for Talks with GCC," Axios, February 15, 2023 ~ https://www.axios.com/2023/02/15/senior-us-delegation-saudi-arabia-talks-gcc-iran.

behind any one side and will continue to project their own interests if and when they do engage in international affairs. Ties with long-established security and defense partners, such as the United States, will continue along issue-specific and transactional lines but may not be regarded as exclusive of developing other relationships. Leaders in the Middle East do not regard geopolitical rivalry involving Russia, China, or the United States to be in their interest and will seek to stay out of any confrontation that may occur and minimize the regional overspill. To the extent that any global uncertainty is likely to keep oil prices at elevated levels, the region's energy producers will accrue economic leverage and reinforce their self-perception as influential middle powers. ◈

Faraway War: Effects of the Ukraine War on South Asian Security Thinking

Rajesh Rajagopalan

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is potentially a turning point in global politics, serving as the indicator of a transition from a unipolar order to a new bipolar Cold War between the United States and China. While global political changes often have direct regional consequences, especially on the economies and fortunes of states in the region, their effect on the policies and attitudes of individual states may be exaggerated. Regional international politics have a rhythm that is more autonomous of the global order, even significant developments such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its aftereffects. This is because, on the one hand, for most states, local concerns usually predominate over global ones and, on the other hand, the effects of global changes on local issues are usually limited. Indeed, the potential effects of global changes tend to be viewed through a parochial lens and thus do not often lead to significant policy or attitudinal shifts.

The implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for how South Asian states view their security problems is a good example. While several South Asian states have felt the knock-on effects of the Russian invasion, especially on their already struggling economies, it is unclear that security planners in the region see any clear lessons to be drawn from the war. India is an exception, as I outline below. However, even in the Indian case, the lessons from the war mostly appear to reinforce existing sentiments and policy approaches. The other South Asian states, except Pakistan, have neither the wherewithal nor the need to consider lessons from the faraway war. Pakistan, though more consequential, has been too beset by significant domestic political and economic problems to pay much attention or seriously consider these lessons either. Thus, this brief essay, which evaluates South Asia's consideration of the security lessons of the Ukraine war, will largely, though not exclusively, confine itself to examining how India has assessed the war.

Following the introduction, the first section of the essay will broadly outline the effects the Ukraine war has had on the South Asian region.

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The second section will assess two major lessons of the war that have been considered in South Asia, especially in India, and three smaller issues arising out of the war. A conclusion summarizes the essay's findings.

Effects of the Ukraine War on South Asia

There are at least two significant effects that all the countries in South Asia have faced as a consequence of the war in Ukraine. The first is economic pressure affecting a range of areas—from energy resources to food—that is exacerbated by the general uncertainty caused by the war. Some economies in the region were already in various stages of economic distress and political turmoil, and the war has put further pressure on them, particularly Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Pakistan's economic situation has been close to desperate, with its foreign exchange reserves reduced to cover just a couple of weeks' worth of imports.[1] Though domestic economic mismanagement is no doubt an issue, the Ukraine war has raised both fuel and food prices, making an already bad situation much worse for Pakistan.[2] The crisis has been sufficiently serious that two senior Pakistani analysts suggested "re-evaluating" Pakistan's external affairs, including strengthening relations with neighbors, even India.[3] Similarly, Sri Lanka has been grappling with a debt and economic crisis that has morphed into a serious domestic political disturbance, and the country has turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a $3 billion bailout.[4] Meanwhile, Bangladesh's currency depreciated by 25% and its foreign reserves by 28%, leading to inflation, slowing economic growth, and an appeal to the IMF for aid.[5] By contrast, the Indian economy did reasonably well in 2022, leading an IMF official to call it a relative "bright spot" in the

1 "Pakistan's Forex Reserves with Central Bank Drop to $3.09 Bln," Reuters, February 2, 2023 ~ https://www.reuters.com/markets/currencies/pakistans-forex-reserves-with-central-bank-drop-309-bln-2023-02-02.

2 Tehseen Ahmed Qureshi and Abdul Wajid Raja, "Pakistan: Impacts of the Ukraine and Global Crises on the Economy and Poverty," International Food Policy Research Institute, October 2022 ~ https://www.ifpri.org/publication/pakistan-impacts-ukraine-and-global-crises-economy-and-poverty.

3 Jalil Abbas Jilani and Zafar Masud, "Ukraine War: Threats and Opportunities for Pakistan," *Dawn*, October 31, 2022 ~ https://www.dawn.com/news/1717916.

4 "Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis: From Protests to IMF Bailout," Reuters, March 20, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sri-lankas-economic-crisis-protests-imf-bailout-2023-03-21.

5 AKM Zamir Uddin, "One Year of Ukraine War: Undoing of Bangladesh Economy," *Daily Star* (Bangladesh), February 24, 2023 ~ https://www.thedailystar.net/news/world/russian-invasion-ukraine/news/one-year-ukraine-war-undoing-bangladesh-economy-3255641; and Ashraful Alam Chowdhury, "What Does a New IMF Loan Mean for Bangladesh?" *Diplomat*, February 1, 2023 ~ https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/what-does-a-new-imf-loan-mean-for-bangladesh.

global economy that is growing faster than its peer economies.[6] Despite this relatively sunny outlook, India did not escape unscathed: it recorded its currency's sharpest decline against the U.S. dollar since 2013, and inflation has persisted.[7] Further, India's positive economic performance has brought little benefit to the South Asian region as a whole because the region is poorly integrated.

A second consequence of the war is that countries in the region have faced significant strategic pressure to take sides. This has particularly affected India and Pakistan, which is not surprising since they are the more consequential players in the region. India's growing closeness to the West broadly, but especially to the United States and Europe, led to surprise about what was seen as India's "neutrality" in the face of blatant aggression. Similarly, the West also criticized India's purchase of Russian fuel, which Russia could not sell elsewhere because of Western sanctions. However, despite some rumblings, India's value in the developing coalition against China, as well as an understanding of the constraints India would face in entirely cutting itself off from Russia, appears to have muted the criticism eventually, especially since New Delhi did not openly side with Moscow, its traditional friend. Surprisingly, Pakistan also found itself facing pressure, but from Russia, because of reports that Pakistan was supplying Ukraine with arms.[8]

Lessons from the War for South Asia

There are at least two key lessons from the war that security managers have noted, particularly in India: the unexpected duration and nature of the war and the necessity of self-reliance in war. Beyond this, some smaller lessons have also been identified relating to technology, especially the prominence of drones in modern war, the role of nuclear weapons, and the resilience of the West.

The duration and nature of the war. One of the surprising aspects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been its duration. Despite initial

6 "Indian Economy in a Relative 'Bright Spot', Must Leverage Exports: IMF Official," Reuters, January 6, 2023 ~ https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-relative-bright-spot-must-leverage-exports-says-imf-official-2023-01-06.

7 "One Year of Russia-Ukraine War: How the Conflict Impacted Indian Economy," *Times of India*, February 24, 2023 ~ https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/one-year-of-russia-ukraine-war-how-the-conflict-impacted-indian-economy/articleshow/98214568.cms?from=mdr.

8 Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Pakistan Denies Supplying Ammunition to Ukraine," *Dawn*, February 17, 2023 ~ https://www.dawn.com/news/1737577.

expectations, shared by both Russia and the West, that the war would be short, it has continued for over a year with no expectation of ending soon.[9] Although the United States fought for over two decades in Afghanistan and for more than a decade in Iraq, these were counterinsurgency campaigns that necessarily take time; conventional, high-intensity wars between states are generally not expected to last as long. In South Asia, New Delhi's expectation has been that India would fight short conventional wars. This is reflected in India's war stocks, which have generally been calibrated for ten days of high-intensity war, though in recent years this requirement was raised to fifteen days for the western front with Pakistan and thirty days for a possible war with China.[10] These limited stocks reflect, in part, the general Indian expectation of fighting short wars, though they may also reflect financial and logistical difficulties. But the Ukraine war suggests that conventional, high-intensity wars do not necessarily have to be short. Indian military forces have taken note of this shift, though the Indian chief of defense staff, General Anil Chauhan, appeared to suggest that India still does not expect conventional wars that it might become involved in to last as long.[11] This is surprising, considering that the last major war that India fought, with Pakistan in Kargil in 1999, lasted almost two months. Moreover, though India may find it difficult to sustain a high-intensity war for more than a month because of potential shortages of arms and ammunition, this constraint might not apply to China, which produces most of its own weapons. India's reluctance to consider high-intensity, conventional war of longer duration may also reflect financial constraints on maintaining large supplies of war stocks. Nonetheless, learning from Ukraine's experience in the current war, Indian military planners should see the failure to hold greater stocks as a potential weakness.

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9 On Russian perceptions, see Alona Mazurenko, "In Event of the Capture of Kyiv, Kremlin Had Two Plans: Medvedchuk and Yanukovych," *Ukrainska pravda*, February 28, 2023 ~ https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/28/7391345. For Western perceptions, see Jacqui Heinrich and Adam Sabes, "Gen. Milley Says Kyiv Could Fall in 72 Hours If Russia Decides to Invade Ukraine: Sources," Fox News, February 5, 2022 ~ https://www.foxnews.com/us/gen-milley-says-kyiv-could-fall-within-72-hours-if-russia-decides-to-invade-ukraine-sources; and Scott Neuman, "After a Year of War in Ukraine, All Signs Point to More Misery with No End in Sight," NPR, February 19, 2023 ~ https://www.npr.org/2023/02/19/1153430731/ukraine-russia-war-one-year-anniversary-how-will-it-end.

10 Snehesh Alex Philip, "Arsenal for Pakistan Prepped, Army Now Focuses on Ammo Reserve to Deal with China," *Print* (India), September 25, 2019 ~ https://theprint.in/defence/arsenal-for-pakistan-prepped-army-now-focuses-on-ammo-reserves-to-deal-with-china/296531.

11 Dinakar Peri, "Self-Reliance in Weapons Production Major Lesson from Ukraine War: Gen. Chauhan," *Hindu*, March 3, 2023 ~ https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/self-reliance-in-weapons-production-major-lesson-from-ukraine-war-gen-chauhan/article66577314.ece.

Concerns about duration and war stocks do not appear to have made much of a mark on the security planning of other South Asian states; only Pakistan would potentially consider such issues. But even in the best of times, it simply does not have the financial capacity to stockpile war reserves that would last for months. Considering the economic difficulties that Pakistan has faced over the last year, these concerns do not appear to have been raised by security planners.

Another aspect of the Ukraine war is that it now resembles the trench warfare of World War I more than modern wars are expected to, as General Chauhan noted recently.[12] It is unclear, however, how this directly impacts Indian defense planning, other than the necessity of possessing vast quantities of artillery and ammunition. Pakistan's military leaders appear to have taken heart from Ukraine's spirited defense of its territory, suggesting that the war illustrates the capacity of a smaller, agile military force to defend its territory against a much larger adversary, no doubt alluding to Pakistan's situation against India.[13] At the same time, this does not suggest any particular lessons for Pakistan, considering that its capacity to fight a full-scale, high-intensity conventional war is likely to be even less than that of India.

Military self-sufficiency. The duration and nature of war are closely tied to what is probably the most important lesson resulting thus far from the war in Ukraine, which is the necessity of a scalable war industry to keep a high-intensity war going. Even the West is scrambling to boost its manufacturing capacity to meet Ukraine's need for arms and ammunition.[14] If a high-intensity war should also turn out to last more than a couple of weeks, it will strain existing war reserve stocks in any armory. Once this happens, the war becomes a test of not just military strength but also of the manufacturing capacity of the warring parties as well as their allies and partners. The latter—allies and partners—are an especially important

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12 Rahul Singh, "Boosting Self-Reliance Biggest Lesson for India from War in Ukraine: CDS," *Hindustan Times*, March 4, 2023 ~ https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/boosting-self-reliance-biggest-lesson-for-india-from-war-in-ukraine-cds-101677874017649.html.

13 Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan Army Chief Blasts Russia's Aggression Against Ukraine," Voice of America, April 2, 2022 ~ https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-army-chief-blasts-russia-aggression-against-ukraine/6512372.html.

14 Sissy Ryan, "In Race to Arm Ukraine, U.S. Faces Cracks in Its Manufacturing Might," *Washington Post*, March 9, 2023 ~ https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/03/08/us-weapons-manufacturing-ukraine; and Gustav Gressel, "More Tortoise, Less Hare: How Europeans Can Ramp Up Military Supplies for Ukraine in the Long War," European Council on Foreign Relations, November 4, 2022 ~ https://ecfr.eu/article/more-tortoise-less-hare-how-europeans-can-ramp-up-military-supplies-for-ukraine-in-the-long-war.

concern in the context of South Asian states, including India, whose domestic capacity to manufacture war materiel may be open to question.

Of all the lessons of the war in Ukraine, this appears to be the one that has struck Indian security managers the most. In a speech he made to celebrate a local election victory, Indian prime minister Narendra Modi pointed to this problem, explicitly identifying the Ukraine war as an additional reason to emphasize his Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) policy approach.[15] Other senior officials have repeated calls for self-reliance.[16] Most recently, General Chauhan suggested that the biggest lesson of the Ukraine war is that India needs greater indigenization of military equipment to reduce its reliance on foreign suppliers, since such reliance is a source of vulnerability.[17]

Two caveats must be noted. First, India's pursuit of self-reliance in defense is, itself, nothing new and goes back to the first decade of Indian independence. Moreover, the need for self-reliance has been frequently reiterated for many decades, and India has established a fairly large defense research and manufacturing base,[18] though it has been noted for its ineffectiveness and inefficiency. This capability has contributed to India being one of the largest arms importers in the world for decades. The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, which is broader than self-reliance in defense, also predates the war in Ukraine, having been initiated in 2020 in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, while the sentiment for self-reliance is nothing new, the war appears to have reinforced it. Second, India's interest in self-reliance does not necessarily mean that India will actually be able to achieve the significant levels of self-reliance in defense production that it wants. The problems with India's previous efforts at self-reliance, especially the lack of coordination between the Indian bureaucracy and military services, the red tape and incompetence, and

15 Sumana Nandy, "PM Modi's Push for Atmanirbhar Bharat with Reference to Russia-Ukraine War in Victory Speech," *India Today*, March 10, 2022 ~ https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pm-modi-push-for-atmanirbhar-bharat-with-reference-to-russia-ukraine-war-in-victory-speech-1923951-2022-03-10.

16 "Piyush Goyal Calls Upon Startups to Help India Become Self-Reliant in Energy, Defence Sectors," *Mint*, March 12, 2022 ~ https://www.livemint.com/companies/start-ups/piyush-goyal-calls-upon-startups-to-help-india-become-self-reliant-in-energy-defence-sectors-11647159058874.html; and Akriti (Vasudeva) Kalyankar and Dante Schultz, "Continental Drift? India-Russia Ties after One Year of War in Ukraine," Stimson Center, March 9, 2023 ~ https://www.stimson.org/2023/continental-drift-india-russia-ties-after-one-year-of-war-in-ukraine.

17 "CDS General Chauhan Says Lesson for India from Ukraine War Is..." *Hindustan Times*, March 3, 2023 ~ https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/cds-general-chauhan-says-lesson-for-india-from-ukraine-war-is-101677855740326.html.

18 Chris Smith, *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defence Policy?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

myriad other issues, do not appear to be closer to any resolution.[19] In short, India's defense self-reliance is still in the "baby steps" phase, according to General Chauhan.[20]

Military self-sufficiency is undoubtedly a problem for other countries in South Asia too, including Pakistan. But it is unlikely that these much smaller economies will be able to resolve this issue to any great extent. Pakistan could possibly depend on China, considering their shared security concerns regarding India as well as their long-term security partnership, but this is no doubt an unsatisfactory situation for Islamabad.

Other lessons of the war. New technologies are always a key player in major wars, and the war in Ukraine has been no different. In particular, the use of combat drones by both sides has been noted, especially in India. The importance of drones is not a surprise—India has already invested in drones and the technology itself—but their extensive use and effectiveness has reinforced the importance of this technology. In particular, Indian security sources have pointed to the effectiveness of mass drone attacks in overwhelming defenses in the Ukraine war as a rationale for investing in and deploying what is claimed to be the world's first offensive "high density swarming unmanned aerial system."[21] India is reportedly planning to deploy several new types of surveillance and combat drones suited to the different conditions of its two critical borders, the Himalayas and the western plains.[22] India has reportedly ordered around 2,000 new drones, including some for logistics that can transport materiel across the difficult terrain in the Himalayas.[23]

The Ukraine war has reinforced another traditional Indian concern: the use of threats of nuclear escalation. India has repeatedly faced such threats from Pakistan, which refuses to follow India in adopting a "no first use" doctrine, making New Delhi particularly sensitive to such threats. Senior officials have stated that India opposes the use of such threats

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19 On these problems, see Laxman Kumar Behera, *India's Defence Economy: Planning, Budgeting, Industry and Procurement* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), especially chap. 4.

20 Singh, "Boosting Self-Reliance Biggest Lesson for India from War in Ukraine: CDS."

21 Snehesh Alex Philip, "Army Gets Its First Set of Offensive Swarm Drone System, IAF Next," *Print* (India), February 13, 2023 ~ https://theprint.in/defence/army-gets-its-first-set-of-offensive-swarm-drone-system-iaf-next/1368508.

22 Rajat Pandit, "Bit-by-Bit, Army Adding Lethal Firepower to Boost Capability," *Times of India*, February 13, 2023 ~ https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/bit-by-bit-army-adding-lethal-firepower-to-boost-capability/articleshow/97848572.cms?from=mdr.

23 Paran Balakrishnan, "Indian Army Has Placed Orders for Nearly 2,000 Drones for Surveillance," *Telegraph* (India), January 8, 2023 ~ https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/the-indian-army-has-placed-orders-for-nearly-2000-drones-for-surveillance/cid/1908405.

by Russia.[24] Despite India's refusal to join with its new strategic partners in condemning Russia over the invasion, India joined them in criticizing the use of nuclear threats in the war, an implicit criticism of Russia and an indicator of how seriously India feels about this particular firebreak.[25]

A final lesson might be about the utility of allies and partners, especially in Indian foreign policy thinking. The war has clearly demonstrated that the collective West is united and that Russia and China have deepened their strategic partnership. This development suggests a much more divided international security order that the rest of the world will need to navigate. Moreover, this divide will be one that will be difficult for India to bridge entirely, as India found out when it hosted the March 2023 G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.[26] On the one hand, India's experience while hosting the meeting might suggest that New Delhi needs to be less ambitious about trying to find the middle ground between the two sides. On the other hand, India has managed nevertheless to stay in the middle and maintain its value to both sides. Though this is an impressive balancing act, it also runs the risk of India becoming overconfident in its indispensability and underestimating the need for friends in a potential future crisis. In other words, India's success, so far, could be teaching it the wrong lesson about the current global security order.

Conclusion

The dramatic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine appear less impressive when viewed through the lens of South Asian international politics, where local security concerns reign supreme. Most states, even in distant regions, are affected by such global developments that they cannot control, but local concerns filter the effects. While there may be some lessons that security planners in regions such as South Asia consider important, in most cases these only appear to reinforce existing attitudes and approaches. ◈

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24 "'India Trying to Ensure Russia Doesn't Use Nuke Against Ukraine,'" *Hindustan Times*, December 4, 2022 ~ https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/lucknow-news/india-trying-to-ensure-russia-doesn-t-use-nuke-against-ukraine-101670173351158.html.

25 "Joint Statement: Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting," Ministry of External Affairs (India), March 3, 2023 ~ https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/36323/Joint_Statement_Quad_Foreign_Ministers_Meeting.

26 Anjana Pasricha, "No Consensus on War in Ukraine among G20 Foreign Ministers," Voice of America, March 2, 2023 ~ https://www.voanews.com/a/modi-urges-cooperation-to-resolve-global-issues-at-g20-talks-/6986316.html.

Southeast Asian States Have Their Own Views on the Ukraine War

Jeffrey Reeves

Just as Southeast Asia has emerged as the center of gravity for the countries of the global West's respective Indo-Pacific strategies, so too has the region become a priority area for Western diplomacy on the Russia-Ukraine war. Since the start of the conflict, the United States, in particular, has lobbied Southeast Asian states and the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to condemn Russia's aggression and to comply with Western sanctions against Moscow. In May 2022, for example, the Biden administration raised the Ukraine war in discussions with Southeast Asian leaders at their summit in Washington and tried to insert language in a joint U.S.-ASEAN vision statement criticizing Russia's militarism, ultimately having to settle instead for more vague language on support for territorial sovereignty and international law.[1] Similarly, in 2022, the entire Western cohort of the G-20 pressured then host Indonesia to include language criticizing Russia's invasion in the group's joint statement. According to one European sous-sherpa involved in the statement's drafting, China and India also partially supported this language, which therefore made it possible to include.[2]

In at least one instance, however, European leaders were unable to bring their Southeast Asian counterparts on side with their criticism of Russia. In a December 2022 joint statement following an EU-ASEAN summit, negotiators failed to draft a common critique of Russia's actions.[3] Neither have Western leaders had much success in securing Southeast Asian state support in condemnation of the war at the bilateral level, aside from Singapore, which is unique in the region for its relative acceptance

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1 Susan Walsh, "Biden Looks to Nudge ASEAN Leaders to Speak Out on Russia," Associated Press, May 13, 2022 ~ https://www.npr.org/2022/05/13/1098734688/biden-looks-to-nudge-asean-russia; and "ASEAN-U.S. Special Summit, 2022 Joint Vision Statement," Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), May 12, 2022 ~ https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Final-ASEAN-US-Special-Summit-2022-Joint-Vision-Statement.pdf.

2 "G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration, Bali, Indonesia, 15–16 November 2022," G-20, November 16, 2022 ~ https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/about_g20/previous-summit-documents/2022-bali/G20%20Bali%20Leaders%27%20Declaration,%2015-16%20November%202022.pdf; and author's interview with a G-20 sous-sherpa, Vancouver, November 2022.

3 "EU, ASEAN Fail to Jointly Condemn Russia's War in Ukraine," Deutsche Welle, December 15, 2022 ~ https://www.dw.com/en/eu-asean-fail-to-jointly-condemn-russias-war-in-ukraine/a-64099763.

of Western views on the Ukraine war. Indeed, for all the West's efforts to propagate a distinctly critical narrative of Russia in Southeast Asia, regional media, scholarship, and leadership remain either noncommittal to the idea of Russian censure or sympathetic to what they perceive as Russia's strategic logic.

As the Ukraine war passed its one-year anniversary in February 2023, Southeast Asian states were decidedly less interested in the war and in criticizing Russia than before. Although in a March 2022 UN General Assembly resolution eight ASEAN members voted to condemn Russia (Vietnam and Laos abstained), polling now shows that Southeast Asian states lead the world in their disinterest toward the war.[4] Large majorities of the public in Thailand (60%) and Malaysia (56%) and sizable numbers in Singapore (44%) and Indonesia (48%) believe that the war is not their business and that their states should not interfere.[5] Far from being a region that is sympathetic to Western narratives on the Ukraine war, Southeast Asia stands out for its perceived detachment from the conflict.

How can one explain Southeast Asian states' apathy toward the war at a time that stands out in many ways as a high-water mark for Western states' attention? While the diversity within and between Southeast Asian states makes it nearly impossible to answer this question comprehensively in short form, there are several trends and characteristics across the region that provide some degree of insight.

First, there is a clear lack of consensus on the origins, strategic direction, and global impact of the Russia-Ukraine war among Southeast Asian states and within ASEAN. Second, most Southeast Asian states remain open to and interested in maintaining economic, political, and social ties with Russia despite Western pressure to limit or restrict engagement. Third, Southeast Asian states are, in general, more cynical about Western intentions toward the war than other states, particularly with respect to Washington's proclivity to use the conflict to justify the further isolation of China and NATO's attempt to use the conflict to expand its influence in Asia.

In this essay, the author will draw on polling data, official statements, media, and scholarship from across Southeast Asia to detail regional states' contemporary views on the Ukraine war and demonstrate that Southeast Asian states are generally less concerned about Russia's invasion

4 "The World's Response to the War in Ukraine: A 28 Country Global Advisor Survey," Ipsos, Game Changers, January 2023, 4 ~ https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2023-01/node-988296-1004661-en.zip.

5 Ibid., 7.

of Ukraine than their European and North American counterparts, more critical of the war's economic impact than of its purported effect on the global rules-based order, and cynical about Western narratives and policies toward Russia.

Divergent Views on the War's Origins, Strategic Direction, and Global Impact

Across Southeast Asia, there are significant differences in perceptions of the Ukraine war both between and within states. At the systemic level, the primary differences exist between (1) those states with close U.S. economic and/or strategic ties (i.e., Singapore and the Philippines) that are largely critical of Russia's decision to invade Ukraine, and (2) those states with historical and/or contemporary ties to Russia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam) that are far more circumspect in their critique of Moscow.[6]

Singaporean and Philippine leadership, for instance, have stated clearly and repeatedly that they oppose Russian actions in Ukraine, that they support Western countermeasures toward Moscow, and that they worry that Russia's invasion is undermining the global rules-based order and international law. Singaporean leadership, in particular, has specified unambiguously that it will adhere to Western sanctions against Russia, including limiting Russia's access to international finance and banking.[7] Similarly, the Marcos regime has been vocal in its criticism of Russian aggression and has sought to deepen its military and security relations with the United States in response to the Ukraine war.[8]

The rest of Southeast Asia is, however, far more empathetic to Russia's strategic logic, which holds that Moscow's decision to invade Ukraine

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6 David Hutt, "What's Behind SE Asia's Muted Ukraine Response?" Deutsche Welle, March 7, 2022 ~ https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-conflict-whats-behind-southeast-asias-muted-response/a-61039013; and Richard A. Bitzinger, "The Russia-Ukraine War: Lessons for Southeast Asia," S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, IP23008, January 13, 2023 ~ https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/ip23008-the-russia-ukraine-war-lessons-for-southeast-asia/#.Y_F3CnZBzSI.

7 "MFA Spokesperson's Comments on the Situation in Ukraine," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Singapore), February 24, 2022 ~ https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2022/02/20220224-Ukraine; and "Sanctions and Restrictions against Russia in Response to Its Invasion of Ukraine," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Singapore), March 5, 2022 ~ https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2022/03/20220305-sanctions.

8 Betheena Unite, "Marcos Says Russia's War in Ukraine Is 'Unacceptable,'" *Manila Bulletin*, November 19, 2022 ~ https://mb.com.ph/2022/11/19/marcos-says-russias-war-in-ukraine-is-unacceptable.

stems from Kyiv's stated intention to pursue NATO membership.[9] Leadership statements on the war from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand are either ambiguous about or oppositional to Western narratives of Russian aggression, instead focusing on the need for a negotiated outcome to the war that recognizes both Russia's and Ukraine's national security interests.[10] Within ASEAN deliberations, strategic views on Ukraine are more notable for their lack of unity than agreement. Where ASEAN has gone on record regarding the Ukraine war, it has done so in general terms, for instance, calling on "all relevant parties" to exercise restraint.[11]

Notably, there are also marked differences within Southeast Asian states, primarily between state and society perspectives. Whereas statements by leaders tend to focus on the war's effect on an international order or rules-based system, recent polling shows that the majority of Southeast Asians worry almost exclusively about the war's impact on the global and regional economies.[12] Rather than seeing the war as a strategic threat, people across Southeast Asia are more concerned that the war has contributed to inflation and a cost-of-living crisis. From this perspective, Southeast Asian societies see the West's response, focused on sanctions, trade restrictions, and global energy markets, as being as destabilizing as Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Continuing Ties with Russia

Closely correlated with Southeast Asian state perceptions of the war is the degree to which states see their relations with Russia as either problematic

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9 Ian Storey and William Choong, "Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Southeast Asian Responses and Why the Conflict Matters to the Region," ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Perspective 2022, no. 24, March 9, 2022 ~ https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ISEAS_Perspective_2022_24.pdf.

10 See, for instance, "Indonesian Government Statement Regarding the Military Attack in Ukraine," Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Vancouver, Canada, February 25, 2022 ~ https://kemlu.go.id/vancouver/en/news/17861/indonesian-government-statement-regarding-the-military-attack-in-ukraine; "Myanmar Regime Backs Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *Irrawaddy*, February 25, 2022 ~ https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-regime-backs-russias-invasion-of-ukraine.html; and Subasa Suruga, "Laos President: Sanctions, Embargoes 'Will Not Make World a Better Place': Thongloun Says His Government Will Not Take Sides in Today's Conflicts," *Nikkei Asia*, May 27, 2022 ~ https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Future-of-Asia/The-Future-of-Asia-2022/Laos-president-Sanctions-embargoes-will-not-make-world-a-better-place.

11 "ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Situation in Ukraine," ASEAN, February 26, 2022 ~ https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ASEAN-FM-Statement-on-Ukraine-Crisis-26-Feb-Final.pdf.

12 Sharon Seah et al., "The State of Southeast Asia: 2023 Survey Report" ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, February 9, 2023, 18 ~ https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-State-of-SEA-2023-Final-Digital-V4-09-Feb-2023.pdf.

or desirable. Within the region, only Singapore has taken a hard diplomatic approach, pledging repeatedly that it will take policy measures to reduce trade, financing, and investment with Moscow in line with Western-led sanctions.[13] By contrast, the rest of Southeast Asia remains remarkably open to diplomatic and economic ties with Russia, up to and including energy trade. According to polling, 73% of Indonesians polled in 2022, for example, supported the continuation of Indonesian-Russian ties, and respondents in Malaysia and Thailand showed similar levels of support.[14] Further, whereas trade with Russia has decreased in Northeast Asia, it has increased across most of Southeast Asia—an indication that Southeast Asian states remain open to and interested in economic ties with Russia.[15]

Cynicism over Western State Intentions

Perhaps most salient with respect to Southeast Asian views of the Ukraine war is the extensive amount of media, policy analysis, and opinion writing that is fundamentally at odds with the prevailing Western narrative. Rather than describe the war as an act of Russian aggression, for instance, most academics, public intellectuals, and media reports from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand appear to take a more nuanced view of the conflict. This includes critiquing, among other things, U.S. foreign and security policy, the idea of NATO enlargement, the West's increasing willingness to fight a "proxy war" in Ukraine, and Washington's seeming intention to use the war as a pretext to expand its alliance relations in Asia and to promote NATO's involvement in the region.[16] Whereas Western media is replete with reports

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13 Vivian Balakrishnan, "Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's Written Reply to Parliamentary Question on the Scope of Singapore's Sanctions on Russia," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Singapore), May 9, 2022 ~ https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2022/05/20220509PQsanctions.

14 "The World's Response to the War in Ukraine," 12.

15 "Russian Exports to South and Southeast Asia Show Significant Year-on-Year Increases," Dezan Shira and Associates, Russia Briefing, April 24, 2022 ~ https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/russian-exports-to-south-southeast-asia-show-significant-year-on-year-increases.html.

16 "Nga va NATO tien gan 'diem khong the quay dau' va nguy co chien tranh hạt nhan" [Russia and NATO are Approaching the "Point of No Return" and the Risk of Nuclear War], Bao Dien Tu VOV, January 31, 2023 ~ https://vov.vn/the-gioi/quan-sat/nga-va-nato-tien-gan-diem-khong-the-quay-dau-va-nguy-co-chien-tranh-hat-nhan-post998785.vov; "Pthm bth suk yukhern yuththsastr NATO khyay taw" [The Beginning of the Ukrainian War Expansion NATO Strategy], *Thai Post*, January 31, 2023 ~ https://www.thaipost.net/columnist-people/317166; and "Mantan pejabat Prancis sebut ekspansi NATO jadi akar krisis Ukraina" [Former French Official Says NATO Expansion Is at the Root of the Ukraine Crisis], *Antara News*, May 18, 2022 ~ https://www.antaranews.com/berita/2885957/mantan-pejabat-prancis-sebut-ekspansi-nato-jadi-akar-krisis-ukraina.

calling for more armaments for Kyiv, Southeast Asian public discourse is more concerned with the potential for Western-prompted escalation.[17]

This is not to say that criticism of Russia's actions in Ukraine is absent from Southeast Asian discourse on the war. Indeed, one can find criticism of Russian tactics in regional media, particularly those published in English. Where the discourse does differ remarkably is in its skepticism of Western intentions, cynicism over Western states' claims to a moral high ground, and treatment of NATO's role.[18] Charges of Western and U.S. hypocrisy are also present in regional discourse, with references to U.S. military interventions in and invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Vietnam being the most commonly made.[19]

Notably, regional media is also keenly attuned to Western attempts to conflate Russian and Chinese behavior and to argue for a common approach to both. While Southeast Asian states are wary of China's increasing influence, they are far less willing than states in the West to accept the logic that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a precursor for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.[20] Neither does Southeast Asian commentary propagate the belief that Russia and China are similar strategic threats to international order and international law. For most Southeast Asian states, the Ukraine war is far away and inconsequential to Asia's strategic environment.[21]

Understanding the Differences of Perspective

While Southeast Asia is too diverse for simple classification, there are common themes in the regional discourse on the war that provide insight

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17 "NATO mulai 'main' di Asia, 'seret' ke perang Rusia-Ukraina" [NATO Begins to "Play" in Asia, "Drag" into the Russo-Ukrainian War], CNBC Indonesia, February 1, 2023 ~ https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20230201050046-4-409878/nato-mulai-main-di-asia-seret-ke-perang-rusia-ukraina.

18 Norajaya Tanjapatkul, "Yukh smạy hæng phumirathsastrr: Kaw su rabeiyb lok sxng khaw xansc hæng stwrrs thi 21" [The Age of Geopolitics: Stepping into a Bipolar Global Order of the 21st Century], 101.World, December 27, 2022 ~ https://www.the101.world/world-2022.

19 Viet Hai, "Thoi 'dao duc gia' cua cac nuoc lon" [The "Hypocrisy" of Big Countries], Tin tuc, August 28, 2014 ~ https://baotintuc.vn/phan-tichnhan-dinh/thoi-dao-duc-gia-cua-cac-nuoc-lon-20140828204710755.htm; and Oleh Muhammad Fahmi Md. Ramzan, "Konflik Rusia-Ukraine hipokrasi Barat?" [Russia-Ukraine Conflict Western Hypocrisy?], Utusan Malaysia, February 23, 2022 ~ https://www.utusan.com.my/rencana/2022/02/konflik-rusia-ukraine-hipokrasi-barat.

20 Cu Huy Ha Vu, "Nga-Ukraine: Hoa Ky co hoa hoan voi TQ đe Viet Nam khoi phai 'di day'?" [Russia-Ukraine: Will the U.S. Make Peace with China So That Vietnam Won't Have to "Walk the Wire"?], BBC News, March 9, 2022 ~ https://www.bbc.com/vietnamese/forum-60670679; and "Tai sao Ukraina khong phai la Dai Loan?" [Why is Ukraine not Taiwan?], RFI, https://www.rfi.fr/vi/qu%E1%BB%91c-t%E1%BA%BF/20220304-t%E1%BA%A1i-sao-ukraina-kh%C3%B4ng-ph%E1%BA%A3i-l%C3%A0-%C4%91%C3%A0i-loan.

21 Reni Erina, "Apa pun hasil perang Rusia-Ukraina, Uni Eropa akan menjadi pecundang" [Whatever the Outcome of the Russo-Ukrainian War, the European Union Will Be the Loser], RMOLID Network, September 23, 2022.

into why Southeast Asian states and societies hold such different views than their Western counterparts.[22]

First, most Southeast Asian countries are developing states and, as such, have different priorities with respect to security. Whereas Western narratives on the implications of the Ukraine war focus almost exclusively on Russia's threat to the international rules-based order, Southeast Asian commentators primarily write about the war's consequences in socioeconomic terms. Viewing the war from this perspective, Southeast Asian analysts tend to treat it as a complex threat system, one more in line with Western narratives on polycrisis than war.[23]

Second, many Southeast Asian states identify as part of the global South, and, as such, their leaders are more naturally inclined toward "third way" worldviews and policy responses to global issues.[24] Across the region, there is an innate disinterest in adopting externally constructed narratives of global affairs, whether propagated by China, the United States, or Russia. Rather, leaders and public intellectuals across Southeast Asia tend to view global affairs through a regional or national lens that is fundamentally informed by their experiences with great-power politics and their desire to remain neutral in the international system.[25] The most demonstratable example of this predilection is the self-ascribed ASEAN identity, which is predicated on ASEAN values, including ASEAN

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22 "Dampak perang Rusia-Ukraina: memperlambat pertumbuhan negara berkembang Asia" [The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War: Slowing the Growth of Developing Asian Countries], *Antara News*, April 6, 2022 ~ https://sumbar.antaranews.com/berita/497909/dampak-perang-rusia-ukraina-memperlambat-pertumbuhan-negara-berkembang-asia.

23 According to the Cascade Institute, "a global polycrisis occurs when crises in multiple global systems become causally entangled in ways that significantly degrade humanity's prospects." Michael Lawrence, Scott Janzwood, and Thomas Homer-Dixon, "What Is a Global Polycrisis and How Is It Different from a Systemic Risk?" Cascade Institute, Technical Paper #2022-4, September 16, 2022. On Southeast Asian perspectives, see Huynh Dung, "Tu chien su Nga-Ukraine: Lam phat dang gay hon loan tren toan the gioi, dau la diem nong?" [From Russia-Ukraine War: Inflation Is Causing Chaos around the World, Where Are the Hot Spots?], *Dan Viet*, October 26, 2022 ~ https://danviet.vn/tu-chien-su-nga-ukraine-lam-phat-dang-gay-hon-loan-tren-toan-the-gioi-dau-la-diem-nong-20221026080616744.htm; "Ngeinfex-phl phwng sngkhram yukhern tha khn yakcn thaw lok pheim khụn xik 71 lan khn" [Inflation—Aftermath of the Ukrainian War Makes the World's Poor an Additional 71 Million], Thansethakit, July 9, 2022 ~ https://www.thansettakij.com/world/532091; and Putri Novani Khairizka, "Dampak perang Ukraina, inflasi RI dapat tembus 4%" [Impact of the Ukraine War, RI's Inflation Can Reach 4%], Pajakku, 2022 ~ https://www.pajakku.com/read/622af310a9ea8709cb189691/Dampak-Perang-Ukraina-Inflasi-RI-Dapat-Tembus-4-Persen.

24 Kishore Mahbubani, "Asia's Third Way: How ASEAN Survives—and Thrives—amid Great-Power Competition," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2023 ~ https://www.foreignaffairs.com/southeast-asia/asias-third-way-asean-amid-great-power-competition.

25 Thiwin Suputtikul, "Khid pị thang hịn lok hmun pị thang nan? Cak Yukhern Tihwạn su Wethi Prachum Phuna Lok" [Where Do You Think the World Spins That Way? From Ukraine, Taiwan to the World Leaders Forum], 101.World, November 25, 2022 ~ https://www.the101.world/world-order-and-self-fulfilling-prophecy.

centrality, noninterference, and consultation.[26] Given these values, one can understand ASEAN's insistence on remaining neutral on the Ukraine war as a function of its identity.[27]

Third, and related, is Southeast Asia's colonial history—a legacy that informs discourse on the Russia-Ukraine war throughout the region. While postcolonial sentiment does contribute to sympathy toward Ukraine across the region, it also manifests as cynicism toward the West's involvement and NATO's intentions, as apathy to U.S.-led calls for strategic alignment, and as empathy for Russia.[28] Southeast Asian states and societies are more accepting of Russia's narrative of self-defense against Western encroachment and hegemony, rather than viewing Moscow's decision to initiate war as inherently aggressive, for instance.[29] Southeast Asian memories of Western intervention also undermine regional support for regime change in Russia as a precondition for a negotiated peace. Rather, writings and analysis on the war throughout Southeast Asia tend to call for Western negotiations with Vladimir Putin to end hostilities.[30]

Fourth, Southeast Asian states do not want to bandwagon with any great power on the Ukraine war, as doing so is not in their national interests. Rather, Southeast Asian leaders, policy thinkers, and academics are fundamentally committed to the idea of nonalignment, neutrality, and flexibility in their approach to the war, particularly as they believe it has little direct strategic impact on the region. In this respect, the West's

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26 ASEAN, *ASEAN*, no. 1, May 2020 ~ https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/The-ASEAN-Magazine-Issue-1-May-2020.pdf.

27 Ukrit Pattamanan, "Sngkhram Rạsseiy-Yukhern nı Xaseiyn/lok thr rsn" [Russo-Ukrainian War in ASEAN/Worldview], *Matichon Weekly*, April 28, 2022 ~ https://www.matichonweekly.com/column/article_544762.

28 Theo Mot The gioi, "Bao My: Phuong tay đang can thiep qua sau vao Ukraine?" [U.S. Newspaper: The West Is Interfering Too Deeply in Ukraine?], Thanh vien lien hiep cac to chuc huu nghị Viet Nam, January 31, 2023 ~ http://vpdf.org.vn/tin-tuc-su-kien/chinh-tri-xa-hoi/bao-my-phuong-tay-dang-can-thiep-qua-sau-vao-ukraine-.html.

29 "Yukhern sngkhram tawthæn fay prachathiptiy kab xanac niym" [Ukraine's Representative War against Democracy and Authoritarianism], *Thai Post*, February 19, 2023 ~ https://www.thaipost.net/columnist-people/326892.

30 Duy Linh, "Tong thong Putin: Nga san sang đam phan voi tat ca cac ben o Ukraine" [President Putin: Russia Is Ready to Negotiate with All Parties in Ukraine], *Tuoi tre*, December 25, 2022 ~ https://tuoitre.vn/tong-thong-putin-nga-san-sang-dam-phan-voi-tat-ca-cac-ben-o-ukraine-20221225171824743.htm; and "Pu ti nph r xm cerca Se len ski hak Yukhern yxmrab khwam pen cring reuxng din daen him" [Putin Ready to Negotiate with Zelensky If Ukraine Accepts New Territorial Realities], *Thai Post*, January 5, 2023 ~ https://www.thaipost.net/abroad-news/297467.

zero-sum approach to Ukraine war diplomacy is particularly ineffectual in Southeast Asia.[31]

Conclusion

While the Ukraine war has little direct impact on Southeast Asia's strategic order, it has brought a regional trend into sharp relief: that Southeast Asian states are less willing to act as proxies for great-power conflict than they did during the Cold War and more willing to take positions on foreign and security affairs that run counter to great-power priorities. Even though two states, Singapore and the Philippines, have expressed support for international actions against Russia, Southeast Asian states are, in general, intent on remaining neutral and nonaligned rather than inclined to bandwagon with one state against another. While omnidirectional diplomacy is nothing new in Southeast Asia, that it manifests itself so clearly on a matter of such strategic importance for the global West is notable, particularly when the costs of alignment are minimal.

Further, that Southeast Asian states are able to remain neutral, despite the mounting global pressures for them to endorse Western narratives and perspectives on the Ukraine war, speaks to their growing agency as strategic actors. Rather than passively accepting the predominant Western worldview on Russia, most Southeast Asian states have instead actively developed alternative narratives that are more in line with their own foreign policy and security interests. Finally, Southeast Asia's emergence as an alternative source of narrative power on Ukraine is particularly significant, as it reflects the region's global strategic importance and individual states' abilities to leverage this importance.

The West will likely see this last development as a strategic liability, but it should be recognized for what it is: the deepening of a subregion into a distinct security complex with its own priorities, networks, and narratives. The United States and other countries in the West can no longer look to Southeast Asia as a region to be compelled. On the contrary, Southeast Asian states' reactions to the Ukraine war show that it is now a region that must be convinced. ◈

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31 Kris Mada and Harry Susilo, "Teka-teki kekuatan besar dalam perang Rusia-Ukraina" [The Great Powers Riddle in the Russo-Ukrainian War], *Kompas*, July 7, 2022 ~ https://www.kompas.id/baca/internasional/2022/07/07/teka-teki-kekuatan-besar-dalam-perang-rusia-ukraina; and "Xung đot Nga-Ukraine: Nhung an so kho đoan" [The Russian-Ukrainian Conflict: Unpredictable Unknowns], Central Agency of the Vietnam Communist Party, February 10, 2023 ~ https://dangcongsan.vn/the-gioi/tin-tuc/xung-dot-nga-ukraine-nhung-an-so-kho-doan-631329.html.

U.S. Lessons from Russia's War on Ukraine

Matthew Kroenig and Clementine G. Starling

What lessons should the United States draw from Russia's invasion of Ukraine? While the invasion has been a shock to the European global and security architecture and a humanitarian tragedy, it has also been a laboratory for understanding the future of warfare.

This essay reviews the major lessons Washington has learned and provides recommendations to policymakers. The invasion has sparked an intense debate about how to deal with the "two peer challenger" problem and whether the United States can provide support to Ukraine while still meeting other demands, such as countering a revisionist China in the Indo-Pacific. This essay argues that the sides of this debate are in fact further apart in rhetoric than reality and that there is an emerging broad consensus on some of the steps necessary to deal with the two-peer-challenger problem. It also reviews lessons learned related to military basics, emerging technology, Taiwan, nuclear deterrence, and other key issues. The essay recommends that the United States (1) develop a defense strategy and force posture capable of dealing with China and Russia simultaneously, (2) increase defense spending, (3) adapt defense innovation adoption, (4) augment its security assistance program, and (5) strengthen nuclear deterrence.

Balancing U.S. Priorities in Europe and the Indo-Pacific Is Necessary

The war in Ukraine has reopened a debate in Washington about the importance of the U.S. role in European security. On one side of the debate is the "walk and chew gum" camp, which maintains that the United States must redouble its commitment to European security to thwart further Russian aggression, stabilize the continent, and ensure the security of its European allies—even as it deals with other challenges, such as China, in other regions.

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For this group, the war has revealed—with devastating costs—the lengths that Russia will go to seek influence in its near abroad and pursue its territorial ambitions in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and other former Soviet states. This aggression heightens the security concerns of the Baltic States, Sweden, and Finland—leading to the recent historic accession of Finland into NATO and to Sweden's bid for NATO membership. While NATO's deterrence posture has so far held—in that Russia has not intentionally physically crossed the territorial lines of any NATO ally—Moscow's nuclear threats and continued interference in the internal affairs of other states through cyber and information means are indicative of its intent to destabilize its neighbors. By the same token, war is unpredictable, and the risk of it spilling beyond Ukraine's borders, even accidentally into one of Ukraine's NATO neighbors Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, or Romania, should remain a major concern for the United states, as it could result in direct conflict with Russia by virtue of NATO's Article 5 obligations. Additionally, Russia's overt nuclear threats aimed at compelling Ukraine to surrender and the West to halt assistance to Ukraine have set a dangerous trend surrounding potential nuclear use.[1] To bolster deterrence and prevent further Russian aggression, proponents of this camp argue that the United States should continue to play an active role in Europe, increase arms transfers to Ukraine, send more U.S. forces to NATO borders as part of the alliance's enhanced forward presence, increase funding as part of the European Deterrence Initiative, and offer Ukraine an action plan for seeking NATO membership when the war concludes.

On the other side of the debate is the "Asia first" camp. Those in this camp decry the devastation of the war but emphasize the growing need for the United States to turn its attention to the long-term challenge posed by China and away from other threats, including Russia. They argue that the United States should maintain a narrower direct military contribution to Europe in order to focus resources and attention on China. Although the war has wrought atrocious human costs, from a military perspective, Russia has proved less capable than analysts would have predicted before the war. The mixed quality and performance of the Russian armed forces, and Moscow's heavy reliance on the mercenary Wagner Group, have called into question the extent of the conventional military threat posed by

[1] Pierre de Dreuzy and Andrea Gilli, "Russia's Nuclear Coercion in Ukraine," *NATO Review*, November 29, 2022 ~ https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2022/11/29/russias-nuclear-coercion-in-ukraine/index.html.

Russia to NATO. Given that it could take Russia years to rebuild its forces following the war, the scale of Russia's military threat to NATO appears less formidable, and thus U.S. forces would be better placed in the Indo-Pacific to buydown risks from China. In addition, Eastern European states have proved adept at defending themselves—with significant material support from the United States and other allies—such that the United States can afford to lighten its military footprint in Europe. Finally, while European stability is strategically important to the United States, Europeans should ultimately assume the responsibility for stabilizing and defending their own backyard. Given that the United States cannot be everywhere at once, and budgetary resource constraints require prioritization and strategic trade-offs, the United States should encourage its European allies to step up on European defense and deterrence, enabling Washington to focus on more strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific. This division of labor between the United States and its allies would ensure that both the short-term risks from Russia and the long-term risks from China can be managed simultaneously.

Beyond public debate, we believe that there are several points of agreement between the two camps that form an emerging consensus that will assist with actual defense planning. First, the United States and its allies need a combined defense strategy designed to deter, and if necessary defeat, Russia and China at the same time. Even those in the Asia-first camp recognize the United States needs to maintain stability in Europe—they just disagree on the best way to do so. Second, both sides agree that China is the greater long-term threat and should be the priority. The debate is about whether the United States can focus on China only or China plus another theater. Third, the United States needs to increase defense spending. Currently, the United States spends less on defense as a share of GDP than during the Cold War. Both sides of the strategic debate maintain that China is a greater threat than the Soviet Union was during the Cold War, given its greater economic potential. If this is true, then a meaningful increase in defense spending is in order. Fourth, U.S. allies need to do more. Even those in the walk-and-chew-gum camp understand that the United States cannot take on Russia and China simultaneously on its own—a greater contribution from allies in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific is necessary. Fifth, the United States needs to strengthen nuclear deterrence. China's massive nuclear buildup and Russia's effective nuclear coercion mean that, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, Washington will need to strengthen its strategic deterrence posture. We will return to these items in the recommendations section.

The Need to Go Back to Military Basics

The war itself has revealed valuable lessons for the United States about the future of warfare. The conflict has demonstrated to policymakers and publics that major-power war is more possible than we have imagined since the end of the Cold War. Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the general sentiment in Europe was that major war was unlikely, if not impossible.[2] Now, after more than a year and hundreds of thousands of casualties,[3] the war has forced policymakers to adjust their expectations about the possibility of major conflict and spurred the United States to prepare accordingly.[4]

In addition, the war has underscored to Washington the importance of getting the military basics right. Though we have seen technological advantages used to great effect, this is very much a twentieth-century war in that applying the appropriate logistics, training, and sustainment basics is critical for battlefield success. The poor logistical performance of Russian forces early in the conflict thwarted their campaign goal to quickly advance on Kyiv. The Russian forces failed to achieve a rapid, strategic victory, and the ongoing and lengthy nature of the conflict has increasingly strained Russian supply lines. Meanwhile, the Russian military has suffered from basic issues of poor equipment maintenance, insufficient support for supply and sustainment, and a lack of well-trained manpower. All these weaknesses serve as a reminder not to underestimate the importance of training, logistics, and sustainment—getting the fundamentals right is key to possessing an effective force structure to execute military plans. These principles should undergird U.S. security assistance programs to ensure U.S. allies and partners are being trained well, not just buying flashy, expensive platforms, especially in the Indo-Pacific where the United States must plan for even more complex logistics and sustainment contingencies. The Ukraine conflict is a reminder to prioritize military mobility and sustainment plans

2 John Silk, "EU 'Did Not Believe' U.S. Warnings of Russian War," Deutsche Welle, October 11, 2022 ~ https://www.dw.com/en/eu-did-not-believe-us-warnings-over-russias-invasion-says-josep-borrell/a-63408125.

3 "How Many Russians Have Been Killed in Ukraine?" *Economist*, March 8, 2023 ~ https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2023/03/08/how-many-russians-have-been-killed-in-ukraine.

4 "Statement by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on the President's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget," U.S. Department of Defense, Press Release, March 9, 2023 ~ https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3324103/statement-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-the-presidents-fiscal-y.

in key areas of geographic risk,[5] to overcome bureaucratic roadblocks and determine authorities and arrangements with other countries in advance, and to pre-position equipment.

New Technology Favors Defense

The conflict in Ukraine has shown the importance of leveraging technological innovation to create asymmetric advantages for smaller states defending themselves against larger, well-equipped aggressors. The war has thus served as a strategic laboratory for testing the applications of off-the-shelf dual-use technologies—or the "small, many, smart" construct[6]—for military and defense purposes. As a result, the United States recognizes the value of encouraging partners, especially those with less advanced militaries, to invest in emerging technology, including commercially available systems, to augment their military capability. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles and ground robots for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions, for example, has shown the worth of uncrewed technologies to enhance capabilities on the battlefield.

Space has also served as a major force multiplier for the Ukrainian military. Ukraine has no national space capability, but third-party commercial and government space assets have been critical to its war effort. The military's use of commercial satellite communications and high-resolution imagery has been a game changer for ISR, command and control, documenting Russian activity, and tracking and targeting enemy positions and activities.[7]

By the same token, the use of commercial space capabilities in the conflict has raised questions about whether commercial space assets are legitimate military targets, as Russia has threatened to consider them. This has opened a debate about the extent to which governments should protect commercial space assets as national space assets. Going forward, the United States must provide more clarity to the commercial space industry as well as

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5 Curtis M. Scaparrotti and Colleen B. Bell, "Moving Out: A Comprehensive Assessment of European Military Mobility," Atlantic Council, April 22, 2020 ~ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/moving-out-a-comprehensive-assessment-of-european-military-mobility.

6 T.X. Hammes, "The Future of Warfare: Small, Many, Smart vs. Few & Exquisite?" War on the Rocks, July 16, 2014 ~ https://warontherocks.com/2014/07/the-future-of-warfare-small-many-smart-vs-few-exquisite.

7 David T. Burbach, "Early Lessons from the Russia-Ukraine War as a Space Conflict," Atlantic Council, August 30, 2022 ~ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/airpower-after-ukraine/early-lessons-from-the-russia-ukraine-war-as-a-space-conflict.

prepare for how it would respond to potential attacks on commercial space assets during a crisis, whether kinetic or nonkinetic. Additionally, the war has shown that access to satellite systems is a comparative advantage and a less direct way to support allies and partners. As it plans for the future, the United States should consider working with partners to facilitate training and access to commercial space systems as a relatively low-cost and less overt method to support mutual capacity building.

Nuclear Weapons Backstop Aggression

Russia's nuclear threats throughout the conflict have reinforced that nuclear weapons can be used as a shield for conventional aggression. Beijing, in particular, has reportedly learned this lesson and may make nuclear coercion an element of its strategy in Asia. It could, for example, invade Taiwan and make nuclear threats in a bid to deter U.S. military intervention. China's significant buildup of nuclear weapons in the past several years indicates the strategic importance it places on nuclear capabilities to achieve strategic effects. The challenge of managing two near-peer and nuclear-armed adversaries will further complicate U.S. strategic deterrence posture.

The United States Needs a Defense Industrial Base Built for Capacity

Russia's war in Ukraine has revealed that the U.S. defense industrial base no longer has the capacity to supply sufficient levels of munitions and platforms for an extended conflict or war—Ukrainian forces are using weapons, such as Javelin and Stinger missiles, faster than the United States can produce them. The scale and pace of U.S. weapons transfers to Ukraine have revealed systemic deficiencies with the lean, just-in-time-delivery, defense industrial base the United States created after the end of the Cold War. Fortunately, the war in Ukraine may be the wake-up call necessary for Washington to revitalize its defense industrial base for a new era of strategic competition.

For this new era, the defense industry must be reoriented around capacity—the ability to produce large numbers of munitions in a short period of time to get weapons into the hands of the warfighter. Additionally, while platforms and hardware remain important, the U.S. Department of Defense must adapt to a digital, software-centric age that is likely to define

the next era of warfare.[8] The United States must now—in peacetime—make the necessary adjustments to the U.S. defense ecosystem. The Department of Defense and Congress should signal to industry that the country will increase procurement of key munitions and emerging capabilities needed for a fight with adversaries like China and Russia so that industry can make the long-term investments needed to boost production capacity for a wartime footing.

The Need to Deter a Chinese Attack on Taiwan

The United States is also seeking to apply lessons from Ukraine to a conflict scenario in the Taiwan Strait, which includes trying to determine what lessons China may be also drawing from the war.

The war in Ukraine likely has made an invasion of Taiwan by China less likely for now. If Vladimir Putin had easily toppled Kyiv, Xi Jinping may have been emboldened by dreams of an easy victory. Seeing Putin's struggles, however, will remind Xi of the uncertainties of war. Yet this is a story that is still being written. If Putin and Russia ultimately succeed in taking all of Ukraine, the prospect of a near-term Chinese attack on Taiwan may increase.

The Pentagon is clearly seeking to try to shape the lessons China will draw from the conflict and make Beijing believe that invading Taiwan is strategically unwise. The U.S. deputy secretary of defense, Kathleen Hicks, remarked that a large-scale amphibious invasion of Taiwan would be much harder for China to execute than Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as projecting military power across a body of water is a much more difficult problem. She also emphasized that China would face fierce resistance from the Taiwanese population, much the same as Russia has faced in Ukraine.[9]

For China, the conflict has also likely demonstrated the value of going in big and fast to seize territory before Washington and its allies can unite and cobble together an effective response. While U.S. and European support for Ukraine in the first year of the war has remained steadfast, the initial response was slow. Indeed, despite early intelligence warnings from Washington and London that an invasion was likely, the consensus in

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8 Nand Mulchandani and John N.T. Shanahan, "Software-Defined Warfare: Architecting the DOD's Transition to the Digital Age," Center for International and Strategic Studies, September 6, 2022 ~ https://www.csis.org/analysis/software-defined-warfare-architecting-dods-transition-digital-age.

9 Tara Copp, "How Ukraine War Has Shaped U.S. Planning for a China Conflict," Associated Press, February 16, 2023 ~ https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-taiwan-politics-china-8a038605d8dd5f4baf225bdaf2c6396b.

Brussels and even Kyiv in early 2022 was that Moscow was unlikely to make such a strategic mistake.[10] It took the actual invasion to spur allies to action and longer to determine how to collectively respond as an alliance. Putin's miscalculation that he could topple Kyiv quickly with a light military footprint gave the West time to respond, put pressure on Russia, and allowed Ukraine the chance to react. China may heed this lesson and determine that, if it were to resort to military means, a strategic victory in Taiwan could only be achieved through a swift and punishing invasion, leaving Taiwan, the United States, and U.S. allies little time to respond.

An alternative lesson Xi may take from observing the reputational damage Putin has faced following the war—especially after the International Criminal Court's issue of an arrest warrant for Putin over the targeting of civilians and other war crimes[11]—is that pursuing an overt, all-out invasion of Taiwan may not be the best strategy. Instead, Xi may calculate that integration of Taiwan with China should be sought via less brutal means, such as a maritime blockade.

In either case, the United States should increase supplies of critical defense capabilities to Taiwan. As Michele Flournoy, former U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, has emphasized, greater attention must be placed on the near-term risks Taiwan faces and enabling Taipei to create a "porcupine" defense strategy that can resist Chinese aggression, making it slower, more costly, and more difficult.[12] This includes delivering U.S. arms to Taiwan more quickly and encouraging Taipei to adopt the best of Ukraine's model by investing in the capabilities that can most cost-effectively blunt an adversary's invading forces. Taiwan needs more anti-ship missiles, for example, and it should also leverage off-the-shelf dual-use technologies and pursue novel combinations of existing technologies to enhance its deterrence and defense posture.

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10 "Road to War: U.S. Struggled to Convince Allies, and Zelensky, of Risk of Invasion," *Washington Post*, August 16, 2022 ~ https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/interactive/2022/ukraine-road-to-war.

11 "ICC Judges Issue Arrest Warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova," International Criminal Court, Press Release, March 17, 2023 ~ https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and.

12 "Democracy under Siege: What Does the Ukraine Crisis Mean for Taiwan?" Atlantic Council, Event Recap, April 11, 2022 ~ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/event/democracy-under-siege.

Recommendations

While the war is not over, the United States can harness these lessons for policy action today to enable more effective deterrence against its adversaries and to support better preparedness for future conflict.

Recommendation 1: Adapt defense strategy and posture for a two-peer threat environment. The United States must be able to deter wars in both the European and Indo-Pacific theaters, but it requires a strategy to do so. The issue of simultaneously deterring and, if necessary, defeating Russia and China at the same time is an immense challenge. The Biden administration's National Defense Strategy correctly characterized this strategic simultaneity challenge and the need to adapt to meet it. However, today's U.S. strategy does not meet this new security context—U.S. force posture remains geared toward a one-war scenario. Future U.S. defense strategies and force-planning constructs must prepare for the worst-case (but all-too-plausible) scenario that it may face a multi-theater, two-adversary conflict.

Recommendation 2: Increase defense spending. The 2018 National Defense Strategy Commission report recommended that the United States commit to annual defense spending increases of 3%–5% above inflation.[13] President Joe Biden's budget request for the next fiscal year includes a 3% defense budget increase, but this may barely keep up with inflation rates and may result in an actual decrease in defense spending (adjusted for inflation). The demands on the U.S. Department of Defense to respond to global strategic competition far outweigh what the budget can afford. As such, the United States should commit to defense spending levels commensurate with a new era of strategic competition.

Recommendation 3: Adapt the defense innovation and acquisition model. The United States must adapt to meet the pacing threat from China by implementing changes in its acquisition process to ensure a more agile and adaptable defense ecosystem. Russia's war in Ukraine has shown the value of dual-use technology from the commercial sector, yet today's acquisition and procurement system does not enable the United States to absorb emerging technology from the leading edge of the private sector at the speed of relevance. The United States must adapt its defense industrial ecosystem to be fit for purpose and focus not only on research and development but also on procurement and the ability to scale production.

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[13] Eric Edelman and Gary Roughead, co-chairs, "Providing for the Common Defense: The Assessment and Recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission," United States Institute of Peace, Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States, 2019 ≈ https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf.

The Atlantic Council's Commission on Innovation Adoption outlines ten critical recommendations for Congress and the U.S. Department of Defense to enact that would enable the U.S. defense industrial ecosystem to better respond to the demands of strategic competition.[14] Washington should implement these reforms immediately.

Recommendation 4: Improve security cooperation. Deterring Russia and China simultaneously will require allies to do more, but Washington can help. It should adapt U.S. security cooperation and assistance programs to effectively build the defense and warfighting capabilities of its key allies and partners. Ukraine's military performance has proved that effective security cooperation pays dividends. Security assistance should focus on improving the basics of the recipient military—troop morale, transparency, command and control, modernized equipment, secure communications, and increased professionalization in the force—so that the country's military can function effectively and without a U.S. presence. By helping partners acquire the necessary capabilities rather than the most expensive platforms, the United States can increase the ability of its allies to defend themselves and fight alongside it. Increasing foreign military sales to Indo-Pacific allies and partners and investing in capability development through structures like the trilateral security pact AUKUS between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States will help Washington and its allies stay ahead on developing key enabling technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing technologies while supporting interoperability among allies. Foreign military sales are often hampered by outdated International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) provisions. Washington should reform its foreign military sales and ITAR procedures to ensure its allies are suitably armed for the new era of strategic competition.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen nuclear deterrence. The United States will need to ensure that it maintains an adequate strategic deterrent to counter Russian or Chinese nuclear blackmail. A bipartisan task force has recently recommended that, for the first time since the Cold War ended, the United States should increase the size of its deployed strategic arsenal to deter China and Russia simultaneously.[15] Washington and its allies must

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14 Mark T. Esper and Deborah Lee James, co-chairs, "Commission on Defense Innovation Adoption," Atlantic Council, 2023 ~ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/programs/scowcroft-center-for-strategy-and-security/forward-defense/defense-innovation-adoption-commission.

15 "China's Emergence as a Second Nuclear Peer: Implications for U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Strategy," Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 2023 ~ https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/CGSR_Two_Peer_230314.pdf.

also maintain flexible, nonstrategic nuclear options to deter, and if necessary respond to, limited Russian or Chinese use of nuclear weapons.

Conclusion

The war in Ukraine has provided hard-earned, valuable lessons for the United States. It has underscored the importance of alliance unity and material support to counter aggression and the ingenuity of warfighters on the battlefield in the face of atrocious human cost. While future warfare will increasingly see the employment of new technologies, concepts, and domains, Ukraine is a stark reminder that traditional warfare and the essentials of good defense planning will always be important. For all the successes of Ukraine, the war effort has revealed strains on the U.S. defense industrial ecosystem, from limited capacity for supply to stretched budgets that may struggle to match global strategic demands. The United States must adapt the way it does business—including tailoring intentional security assistance programs to its partners' needs and removing stumbling blocks to improving defense capability development with close allies in emerging technologies. U.S. force posture and strategic deterrence posture must be recalibrated for a two-peer environment. Major-power war is no longer unfathomable or distant—taking action today is necessary to secure tomorrow's peace. ◈