



SCHOLAR WARRIOR

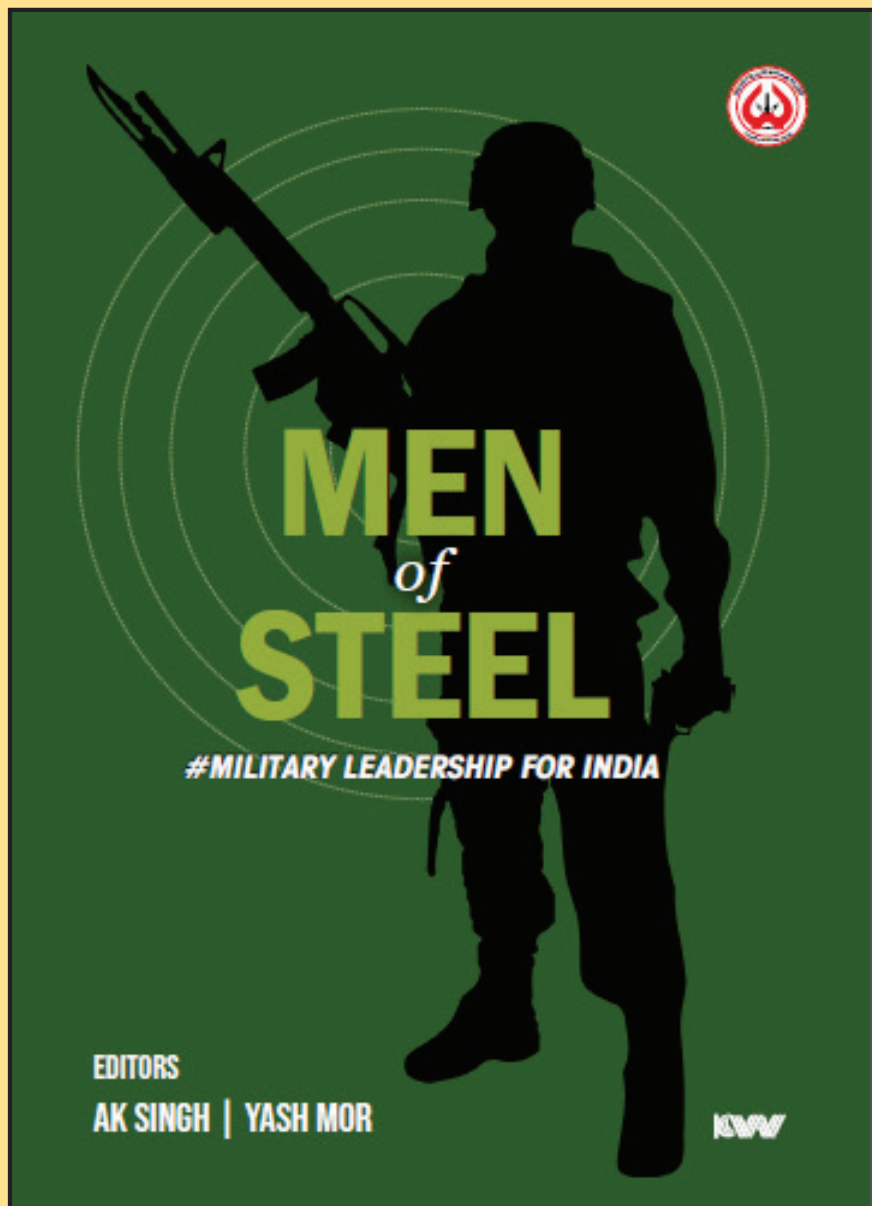
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SCHOLAR WARRIOR

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From the Desk of Editor

It gives me immense pleasure to bring to you the September 2022 issue of Scholar Warrior which is a “Special Edition” on the Russian–Ukraine conflict. The special edition is in two parts, with Section I focussing on the conflict and Section II has commentaries and book reviews.

The Russian–Ukraine Conflict which commenced in February 2022 has the potential to change conduct of future wars in a hybrid atmosphere of technological advances in weapon systems, weaponisation of daily use apps, involvement of citizens in conduct of warfare in social media domain and most significantly, emergence of private players in the actual conduct which earlier was an exclusive military domain.

Ukraine has become a test bed for new weapons and technologies supplied by US and the NATO countries to degrade Russian combat capability. The Starlink satellites of Elon Musk provided real time imagery of battlefield to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, a first in conduct of warfare. Social Media apps like the Decentralised Infrastructure for Internet Accountability (DIIA) enabled Ukrainian citizens to become the eyes and ears of the government by giving war related information as well as acting as a swift platform to nullify incorrect information or propaganda by Russian soldiers. Shutting down of everyday use apps by the US brought the war to every Russian citizen as he was now directly affected due to denial of apps like Google Pay, SWIFT transactions, and so on.

However, the most important lesson of the conflict is self-sufficiency or Atma-Nirbartha. The conflict highlighted the need to have own financial systems, apps and developing core areas for energy and defence capabilities as stoppages during war could render the country vulnerable to attack from multiple fronts.

In this issue, we are covering 13 articles on the Russian–Ukraine conflict. The articles range from strategic and tactical lessons, diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, the role of United Nations in future wars, acceptance of private defence contractors in fighting wars to effect on the economy as well as technological lessons. The last two articles cover the battle of Kyiv and the future role of tanks due to high casualty rate. Section II covers two commentaries and two book reviews. The Iron Beam air defence system has the potential to alter the defensive battle. The second commentary takes a fresh look at aspirations of younger generations in insurgency areas. The book reviews provide the readers a summarised view of “The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World” and glimpses of valour

in “Bangladesh Liberation @50 Years: ‘Bijoy’ with Synergy India–Pakistan War of 1971”.

We look forward to articles on national security and strategy from our readers. Units are welcome to submit articles on unit level operations and historical battles.

Happy Reading!



Colonel Ashwani Gupta
Managing Editor



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The vision of the CLAWS is to develop a 'strategic culture' to bring about synergy in decision making both at national and operational levels. Since its inception, CLAWS has established itself as one of the leading 'think tanks' in the country. To achieve its vision, CLAWS conducts seminars (at Delhi and with commands), round table discussions and meetings with academia and intellectuals of strategic community both from India and abroad. CLAWS also comes out with a number of publications pertaining to national and regional security and various issues of land warfare.

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SCHOLAR WARRIOR

SECTION I

RUSSIA–UKRAINE
FOCUS

CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES

Interim Lessons: Russia–Ukraine Conflict

ARUN SAHNI

The Russian special military operation that commenced on February 24, 2022 is now into its seventh month, with no end in sight. If one was to take heed of Ukrainian President Zelensky's remarks in one of his many speeches, it is expected that the War will continue till the end of the year when Ukraine assesses that the tide of War will turn in their favour. However, one thing is clear that conflict resolution is still some time away and will have to be resolved bilaterally. Russia is likely to call for this special military offensive, once it achieves its desired objective of securing domination of the Black Sea ports and securing the land connectivity to Crimea. Wherever the battlefield stabilises in the Donbass region, the border will remain contested and active in a manner to what we see on the Indo-Pakistan Line of Control.

The last few months have seen intense debates on the causes of the War. The western media, led by the United States (US) has painted Russian President Putin being a megalomaniac who wants to see Russia in the grandeur of the erstwhile Soviet Union, with territorial ambitions to not only annex and assimilate the erstwhile States of the Soviet Union, but also unhindered expansion towards the states of East Europe and Baltic. The Russian contention has been Ukraine's insensitivity towards Russian security interests and the unbridled and meaningless expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), driven by the US agenda.* The US and the European Union (EU) will have to stop fuelling the conflict with their tangible and intangible support and insist on an immediate ceasefire of hostilities by both countries. Thereafter, bilateral talks can resume resolving the situation amicably.

This conflict has raised critical questions on a range of politico-military issues. The role of international alliances, external support, multilateral cooperative security structures, the impact of "influence operations"—fake/manipulative

* In my view the Russian stance merits attention, however, early termination of the Russian 'Special Military Operations in Ukraine', is a global imperative and a priority. For this, both sides will have to reduce the emotional hype and look at realistic futures.

news, deterrence, and the role of conventional armies in the future contours of changing “character of War”. For matters military, there are some major lessons at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Even though a lot has been written and spoken about these in various articles and debates over the last few months, the aim of this article is to derive lessons contextual to India’s security matrix.

It would be fair to state that caution needs to be exercised in drawing lessons from conflicts with special features, continuing and with ambiguity on the outcome. It is between a nation that still has the trappings of a superpower in terms of vision and resources, against a proxy NATO, being contested on the sweat, soil, and blood of Ukraine. The asymmetry should have seen a swift and surgically executed conflict termination, but it is otherwise. However, the good and bad of both the adversaries in all stages of conceptualisation, planning, conduct and execution, contextualised for their unique conditions will give valuable lessons.

Conflict Overview

The offensive planning and training for Russia’s “Special Military Operations” in Ukraine, was always an option, as the bilateral relations were slowly deteriorating. The downslide started with events that led to Crimea’s annexation in 2014. Preparatory actions were indicative in the narrative set for the “Zapad” series of military manoeuvres, conducted in western Russia and Belarus, in proximity to Ukraine’s border. These military drills were conducted jointly between Russia and Belarus in earlier years and again as a multilateral exercise “Zapad-2021”,¹ in September 2021. India also participated in this exercise. However, the troops by Russia were not de-inducted and remained in the proximity of the border with Ukraine. It was during these exercises that Russia tested the efficacy of its recently constituted “all arms tactical grouping”– the Battalion Tactical Groups (BTGs). These are battalion groups with mobility, self-contained and orbatted with integral armour and firepower resources. Thus, making them agile and potent to execute “shock and awe” tactics, to subdue the adversary.

As the conflict is continuing, it would be premature to conclude the outcome. However, if the events are studied till date, it is clear that this operation has not achieved its initial objectives, due to a combination of reasons, namely, Russian overconfidence in its capabilities, poor intelligence, Ukrainian resolve, etc. The Operation has proved that in a “limited conflict”, these tailored BTGs can achieve tactical and operational surprise and temporarily create decision paralysis in the adversary. However, its efficacy in a prolonged conflict will need to be studied, post-conflict termination. This is of special interest as Chinese Combat Operational Groups (COGs) have been formed on similar logic.

The current Russian offensive was premised on the speed of operations on multiple fronts, by a combination of tailored and agile forces, including elite combat units and the early capture of Kiev. It was launched on four major thrust lines from the North, North-East, East and South-East, along with airborne assaults in depth areas. These ground offensives were preceded by the destruction of major logistical dumps and power grids, of the targeted military objectives, by Airforce and missiles. This was likely to force an exodus of locals, from these urban centres and force early capitulation by Ukraine.

The offensive did not go according to plans, is history. To a large extent delay in capture of the Hostomel airstrip, in proximity to Kiev, among many such failures, denied rapid build-up of additional Russian combat resources essential for the capture of Kiev. Also, there was inadequate thought given to *what if* it became a prolonged confrontation. This was apparent in the sub-optimal plans for sustenance and logistic replenishment of the offensive troops. The spatially separated Russian offensive did initially destabilise the Ukrainian leadership, but it soon became a nightmare for the Russian military, as the conflict mutated into separate conflicts. The absence of a centralised command for the offensive led to sub-optimal and delayed support of men and material, for the spatially separated conflict zones. The final result of this conflict will not be determined by *greater numbers and firepower but by superior tactics, commitment and resolve.*

Strategic Lessons

Relevance of Conventional Conflict

The Russian “special military operations” has debunked the cacophony of defence analysts’ naysayers, who had hammered the last nail in the coffin, with respect to the relevance of conventional conflict. Kinetic engagements in a limited war

The Armed Forces will have to prepare for new age threats while continuing the upgradation and value addition to traditional military platforms.

are a reality. For India with the historical baggage of unresolved/contested borders, with two antagonistic neighbours, Pakistan and China, a conventional conflict is always a distinct possibility. The Armed Forces and the nation will have to prepare to meet the new age threats of disruptive and technologically innovative weapon platforms while continuing to accord priority to the upgradation and value addition to traditional military platforms. Strategizing for

evolving effective operational/tactical drills to meet the changing “character of war”, is a necessity, as the battlespace has changed with newer domains of

warfare and induction of disruptive weapon platforms like UAVs, swarm drones, loiter munitions, etc. Countermeasures to deal with cyber threats and influence operations will demand new strategies to mitigate their impact on a future conflict.

Criticality of Strategic Communication

The importance of strategic signalling in evolving geopolitics cannot be understated. It requires skills and constant analysis of events so as not to be surprised. It is equally important to ensure that you control the narrative and effectively articulate it with respect to national interests. For example, India has been successful in this sphere with respect to its trade imperatives with Russia. There seems to have been a complete failure of strategic deterrent signalling and its reading, by Russia and the US as a prelude to the Ukrainian conflict. It is similar to what was stated by John Toland eons ago in *The Rising Sun* about the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire, about failure of strategic deterrence signalling between the US and Japan, prior to the attack on Pearl Harbour.² In the case of the Ukrainian conflict, all the players seem to have misread signals, especially the US, NATO, and Russia.

There is, therefore, a need for India to understand the nuances of strategic communication with China and Pakistan. There will be greater clarity and understanding of what they are saying or implying in an No War No Peace (NWNP) period that currently exists, with our two adversarial neighbours. This could ensure better preparedness and timely interventions to avoid/deter conflict. Failure of deterrent communication is a result of talking past and not listening to each other. We are not considering the underlying message being communicated as we are obsessed with our stand on critical issues.

Nuclear Deterrence

The events of the conflict underscore the relevance and efficacy of nuclear deterrence. It has immense value for not only the weaker nation in the conflict but also for the stronger/powerful State. Early in the current conflict, the Russian President used nuclear brinkmanship to deter the EU and other developed nations, from physically joining the conflict against Russia. The absence of a similar deterrence with Ukraine, which gave up its nuclear weapons on its own accord, proved its waterloo. Russia would have reconsidered its offensive plans, in case Ukraine still possessed its nuclear arsenal. It, however, needs to be appreciated that any deterrence has tangible leverage. Against the backdrop of these events, there is a need for a realistic assessment of own deterrence and strategic signalling capability.

Weaponisation of Economic Interdependence³

The evolving politico-economic scenario due to the Russia–Ukraine conflict, provides very critical insight into sanctions, for the apex political leadership of the country. There exists an opportunity to weaponise economic interdependence, by arm-twisting by the less dependent nation. It is, however, important to note that this interdependence can increase the cost of conflict, but cannot deter it.

In the present case, there is a very strong interdependence with respect to the sale-purchase of oil and gas, between Russia and the EU. Though Europe is dependent on the energy exports from Russia, the latter is equally dependent on the EU for its revenue generation. There is, therefore, a symmetrical balance in this interdependence and that can be seen playing out in the current conflict, where energy has been kept outside the gambit of sanctions on Russia. It has also been able to arm-twist the European nations to make payments in roubles. However, where this balance does not exist, ie in its financial relationship, Russia is vulnerable to expulsion from the West-dominated Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) financial arrangements. The important lesson is that in the case of asymmetric interdependence between two warring nations, then weaponisation of sanctions is a strong probability. It is in this context India's focus on "Atmanirbharta" needs to be understood and promoted.

Undoubtedly the cost on the aggressor due to sanctions in a limited conflict would be marginal, but in the case of a prolonged confrontation, its impact will be profound and long-lasting on the socio-economic well-being of a nation. We will have to wait and see what is the outcome, especially as Russia has been successful to circumvent the full impact of sanctions, by exploiting an alternate financial-cum-trading system.

Alliances and Groupings

The current confrontation has displayed the advantage that accrues by having well-meaning and supportive allies. Ukraine has been able to deal with its power and resource asymmetry with Russia, with the assistance of timely and meaningful support from the western world. It has shown that the weaker adversary in a conflict can deal with the asymmetric differential, with relevant support and information provided by friendly nations. It, however, prolongs the conflict with a devastating impact on the intrinsic fabric of a nation. This can be seen happening

in the case of Ukraine. Therefore, such a decision by any nation has to be based on realism and not on a leader's egoistic arrogance.

An important lesson for all countries is the relevance of a well-bonded alliance/grouping of nations, in today's turbulent and evolving world order and the importance of collaborative security architecture. Any meaningful grouping should be sensitive to the core values and interests of each member nation and their desire for "strategic autonomy".

Comprehensive National Power

Comprehensive National Power (CNP) is a *function of political resolve, diplomatic dexterity, economic resilience, and military power*. Of importance to us is the aspect of military power. This conflict has displayed that "military power" is a function of effective command and decision-making, by not only the operational commanders entrusted to achieve politico-military objectives but by the apex political leader of any nation. The nation's apex leadership should have the ability and skills for seeing complex situations, building trust, and have the ability to be agile in responding to unexpected conditions. A commander who combines resolve with keen strategic intelligence can turn the tide of battle. The conflict has reiterated that "military power" is not only about a nation's armaments and the skill with which they are used. It must take into account the resources the adversary is likely to receive from its allies and friendly nations, to supplement its current arsenal.⁴

The key take away is that the military power of a nation is a total of its qualitative and quantitative status, coupled with training and resolute leadership. Success in future conflicts is a function of an "all of nation' approach", to the security challenge.

Operational and Tactical Lessons

Changing Battlefield

The changing character of war, the impact of technology in creating hi-tech disruptive weapon systems, and the militarisation of global commons of cyber and space, have changed the complexion of the battlespace. In these changed environmental realities, militaries have to be capable of functioning in a "multi-domain battlefield". The speed and swiftness of conflict require training and organisational restructuring for "combined arms" and synergistic application of the combat might of a nation.

The impact of non-contact degradation with accurate and precise, long-range vectors, demands greater priority being accorded to survivability and mobility on the battlefield. Capability and capacity enhancement has to be there

to mitigate the effect of influence operations of the adversary, on the cognitive mind space of its own troops/population. Also, there is a need to be prepared for the hybrid battlespace, develop skills to combat in Built Up Areas , and delegate authority to tactical commanders. The latter is hinged on trust between the various hierarchical levels of command and the soldier on the ground.

The significance of logistics supply chains, exploitation of space-based Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets and Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites for enhanced battlespace transparency and alternate communication links are lessons at the operational level. Whereas, high quality of junior leadership and skilful employment of small teams are key aspects at the tactical level.

Cyber resilience is another important lesson, from this conflict. Russia's use of cyber weapons since 2015 in Ukraine, had led to greater training and awareness towards this threat and manifested in improved "cyber defence". An example of this was on display when the Ukrainian President continued to communicate with world audiences after its "Viasat satellite network" was disrupted by Russia, The "Starlink" small satellite network of Elon Musk, provided this crucial alternative. This highlights that in a cyber-sensitive environment, capability development should look at alternatives to ensure resilience to cyber warfare.

Strategising for Changes in the Character of War

It is often said that militaries, the world over prepare for the last war. But this requires to change proactively, as was witnessed in the evolution of more contextualised strategies by Russia, for its unique challenges and the changing character of the War. The key elements of the process followed by Russia are revealing and provide indicators for other militaries to carve out their transition strategy. Flexibility and an open mind is a prerequisites.

Russian military hierarchy has been slow but responsive to the changing character of War both in the long-term perspective and with respect to the current Russian "special military operations". However, carving and executing a new doctrine in the case of limited conflict using the new elements of warfare was apparent when it evolved into the "Gerasimov Doctrine" – the Russian equivalent to "grey zone operations". It consciously exploited the changed character of War due to the emergence of new domains of warfare, guerrilla tactics, non-state actors on the battlefield, the efficacy of small team operations, increased devastation capabilities of new and legacy war waging platforms, and path-breaking technological advancements. Also, the doctrine harnessed the innovative exploitation of cyber and social media platforms during the "Arab Spring" movements, in different parts of Africa and the Middle East.

The review was triggered by their performance in the Chechen conflict of the 1990s launched to quell the secessionist movement in the Republic. Their

performance was sub-optimal, both in the achievement of the political aim, as also the attrition of its Armed Forces. Later the lessons of Georgia and Estonia led to a logical evolution of the current hybrid strategy, which paid rich dividends in 2014, in operations preceding the annexation of Crimea and the start of the conflict in the Donbass Region. It was in these events that for the first time there was a reference to the “little green men” who were military personnel without their markings/insignias, who participated in the unrest preceding the Crimean annexation. Also, to retain leversages Russia did not recognise the independence of the two pro-Russian enclaves but negotiated the “Minsk accords” to retain leverage on Ukraine. Undoubtedly this evolutionary doctrine did put the *adversaries on the back foot by bringing together regular and irregular forces and overt and covert activities and combining established forms of military action in conjunction with cyberattacks and information warfare.*

In the kinetic phase of the doctrine for creating shock and awe and greater agility, Russia has reorganised its fighting units into an All Arms Tactical grouping of BTGs, self-contained, mobile, and potent groupings of infantry and mechanised combat elements. It was a combination of these that was used in a four-pronged offensive in Ukraine.

The current “theatreisation” and military reforms are a step in the right direction. It needs to be appreciated that this transition management is deliberately required and in a nuanced manner so that all through the transition, the fighting capability of the force is not adversely impacted. Also, it should be tailored to meet India’s unique security challenges.

Detailed Planning

The criticality for success in war is hinged on the key principle of war, ie detailed planning and analysing actions for likely contingencies. At the outset, to undertake comprehensive planning for any kinetic option, there is a need for setting a realistic aim and desired outcomes of the conflict. There is a need to evaluate own and adversary’s capabilities, threats, and other influencing conditions for retaining the advantage, during conflict escalation and termination. In this conflict, it seems there was an overreach by Russia in estimating its capabilities, the state of training and motivation of troops, the likely reaction of the Ukrainian leadership, and misreading the anti-Russia sentiments, even in Russian speaking territories of Ukraine. The timing of the offensive, weather and terrain conditions at the time of offensive, and its impact on the mobility of heavy vehicles, were not appropriately addressed. Also, the use of new age disruptive weapon systems like drones and loiter munitions, etc., by Ukraine surprised the Russians. These critical inadequacies have prolonged the conflict and denied Russia its politico-military objectives. The important learning is the need for deliberate planning

and a correct appreciation of the challenges and their counters, prior to the launch of any military operations.

Influence Operations

The role and impact of influence operations, at all stages of the Ukrainian conflict, have been visible and profound. The US and the developed world have systematically and relentlessly pushed narratives to boost Ukrainian morale and psychologically pressurise Russia. The campaign has continuously exploited the transparency and penetration facilitated by digital connectivity and social networking platforms. Exaggerated reports, fake news, malicious videos, and the use of “toolkits” on “WhatsApp” and Twitter were used to steer digital campaigns. The seminal statement that the outcomes of modern warfare depend not only on whose army wins but also on “whose story wins.”, by John Arquilla, in a Rand publication of July 2020,⁵ has proved effective, in setting the narrative for the current anti-Russia world opinion and increasing intensity of sanctions. The US calibrated exposure to the impending Russian invasion, facilitated EU cohesion in responding to the Russian Offensive. Apropos, the role and importance of information warfare coupled with strategic communication cannot be understated.

The blanking of all Russian media, be it print, video or digital, led to a one-sided campaign of exaggerated reports of Ukrainian success and Russian losses. In addition, President Zelensky’s courage of staying in Ukraine has paid Ukraine rich dividends. His visible and voluble appeal to his countrymen, motivated the people to resist against odds and led to the imposition of stringent economic sanctions on Russia. It also led to increased availability of weapons and War waging materiel, both offensive as well as defensive systems. Undoubtedly his determination has enhanced his political stature. Highlighting war crimes, like the “Bucha killings” and the effect of indiscriminate destruction of hospitals, schools, etc., by Russia during the offensive, by western media has contributed to creating a swell of anti-Russia feelings and harsher economic reprisals.[†]

Militaries across the world will have to find ways and means to address the exploitation of digital connectivity by inimical elements to shape opinion and target their human resource. It requires suitable counter strategies and the creation of leverages.

Defensive Battle

The current conflict has shown that an empowered defender can offset the advantage that an asymmetrical superior adversary possesses. It has reaffirmed

[†] In the author's view, the war has coalesced from a Russia–Ukraine conflict to Russia–NATO, with unimaginable consequences.

the importance of the defensive battle and displayed the destructive capability of modern weapon platforms. Russia possessed an overwhelming advantage in combat power and capability when compared to Ukraine. But despite this, Ukraine has been able to offset this advantage by innovative employment of the disruptive hi-tech weapon platforms, supplied by its allies and small team operations. Therefore, in the context of a limited conflict amongst asymmetric adversaries, a coordinated defensive strategy, exploiting the adversary's vulnerabilities, can derail well laid out plans of the aggressor and deny/delay the stronger adversary from achieving its politico-military objectives of the conflict. With external support, Ukraine has been and is punching, far beyond its capabilities.

The potency of degradation by use of long-range vectors and missiles, with smart ammunition and increased lethality-accuracy, by either the attacker or defender, can be a game changer. The defender can use the devastating firepower on massed concentrations of the attacker, to derail his planned offensive. Whereas, unbridled use of firepower by the attacker is akin to the erstwhile “scorched earth policy”. In this case, there has been unprecedented destruction of infrastructure. A month ago the Ukrainian President, while speaking to the EU, stated that rebuilding Ukraine after this ruinous conflict would be upwards of 530 billion USD.

Smart Power⁶

The conflict has highlighted that “smart power” is the way forward to achieve national objectives. It is a combination of hard and soft power, as they are complementary in achieving objectives. “Hard power” is coercive, whereas, “soft power” is effective over time. Therefore, there is a need to combine both hard and soft power. Putin failed to do that, leading Germany to decide on its militarisation and rescinding its energy dependence on Russia, including the suspension of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. In contrast, the Ukrainian President was able to secure not just sympathy but also the military equipment that is essential for hard power.

Empowerment of Tactical Commanders

The initial operations by Russia showed the need to have greater flexibility for executing tactical operations and the importance of delegating authority to the tactical commander. The lack of this was apparent in the reaction by the Russian Forces, to adapt plans at the ground level, to avoid repeated casualties by enemy fire and counterattacks. This was witnessed at *Chornobaiivka airfield near Kherson while being used for the build-up of supplies by helicopters from Crimea*. The Russian forces continued to use this airfield, awaiting orders, in spite of extensive

damage to men and material by enemy action. This inflexibility of the Russians to adapt to unforeseen situations in the contact battle, was a consequence of the rigidity of their hierarchical command structures. In principle, Russian doctrine allows for local initiative, but the command structures in place do not encourage subordinates to risk disobeying their orders. Inflexible command systems can lead to excessive caution, rigidity in tactics, and inadequate truthful reporting ground upwards to meet unforeseen situations, leading to greater casualties.⁷

The changing battlefield requires a cultural shift to delegating authority and accountability, down the military chain of command. This requires a change in mindsets, greater trust by senior leaders in tactical commanders, and empowering the junior leaders with the requisite skill.

Conclusion

It would be apt to highlight before concluding, that this conflict has once again exhibited the “unpredictability of war”. A short, swift offensive is always an attractive option, but some imponderables take over once the war starts. Therefore, militaries must be well-prepared for all such eventualities. Irrespective of the outcome of this conflict, it heralds a change in the future global order.

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Dynamics of Role of the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Ukraine and Likely Implications in Indian Context

K J SINGH

Ukraine has not entered NATO...but NATO has entered Ukraine.

– John Mearsheimer

Introduction

The ongoing, unresolved war in Ukraine has thrown up a bevy of complex issues like the limitation of deterrence value of alliances and partnerships, efficacy and response mechanism of such mechanisms, and most importantly, are they, ultimately, instruments of the great power game. Ukraine despite its growing proximity to the United States (US) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has witnessed Russian aggression and wanton destruction of the country. Like Russia, China is on an expansionist rampage of sorts, as witnessed in Ladakh and the South China Sea. It has also naturally created anxiety for everyone around and apprehensions about the efficacy of alliances like Quad in the Indian context. The main question that haunts people is can these alliances be relied upon and if so, how much? Will they require a threshold level to be triggered, while China continues its salami-slicing in calibrated orchestration? The challenge here is to include collusive threats with China and Pakistan acting in concert and collusion. It is coupled with internal fault lines, in what is colloquially termed as two and half front threat. In the case of China, threats besides conventional land, air, and

sea are shifting to domains of cyber, space, and cognitive (info, psychological, and propaganda) warfare domains.

Scope and Preview

While analysing and drawing on relevant trends and lessons, the scope of this article is focused on devising a way forward in the Indian context. The article is structured in the following parts:

- Russian Interests and Aims in Ukraine.
- Collapse of Warsaw Pact and Expansion of NATO.
- Indian Quest for Non-Alignment and Strategic Autonomy.
- Major Emerging Geo-strategic Trends.
- Recommended Way Forward.

Russian Interests and Aims in Ukraine

Ukrainian Peoples Republic, formed in 1917 was reconstituted as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic by the Bolsheviks. It was incorporated as a founding member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or the Soviet Union, in 1922. Since then, Ukraine with its warm water port access to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov was developed as a critical and pivotal part of the Soviet geo-economic and geo-political ecosystem. Major military industrial facilities or show-pieces, in space, maritime, aviation, and terrestrial domains like Antonov complex, Sevastopol, Zalyv, Odessa shipyards, and Zorya gas turbine propulsion systems, came up in this region, blessed with ample resources and a competent workforce. The creation of large complexes had created shared manufacturing chains and complimentary dependencies. Frigates for the Indian Navy being ordered with Russia, their source propulsion system and components were from Ukraine. The latter also has the know-how and know-why of a few niche technologies, which Russia apprehends, will get compromised by Western powers.

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in Ukraine gaining independence, yet retaining link in the form of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which entailed limited military partnership. The binding factors include a shared complex bevy of Slavic, Austro-Hungarian, Polish, Tsarist, and even Ottoman and Mongolian invasions coupled with colonial legacies. Another major factor was linguistic familiarity, wherein Russian besides the Ukrainian language is commonly understood and used. Eastern and Southern regions of Donbas and Crimea (part of Ukraine till 2014) have the majority of the Russian ethnic population. It is ironic that while Russia still manages her relations with Islamic demographics of Central Asian Republics

(CARs) like Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and the self-avowed neutral state of Turkmenistan, it ended up attacking Ukraine. The first time was 2014 when Russia moved into Crimea and later it encouraged separatist forces in Luhansk and Donetsk, which make up the Donbas region.

Ukraine is the second largest European country, spanning 6,00,000 square kilometre with, 40 million (eighth most populous) is the geostrategic pivot, situated in the “heartland” as alluded to in *The Geographical Pivot of History* by Halford Mackinder. This also explains multiple invasions by colonial powers to gain control over this vital piece of real estate. Ukraine, referred to as the “breadbasket of Europe” is among the top global exporter of wheat. It has a significant presence in other agricultural commodities like maize, barley, sunflower, and rapeseed. The lack of fossil fuel has been compensated with the establishment of large nuclear plants like Chernobyl (now defunct) and Zaphroizazhia, which is the largest in Europe. A large part of the military production complex, now destroyed, is located in the Donbas region.

Collapse of Warsaw Pact and Expansion of NATO

In the aftermath of the collapse of the mighty Soviet Union in 1991, Warsaw Pact, collective security pact, pitched as a counter to NATO, literally crumbled. However, to retain its hold on the former constituent republics, Russia promoted the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which has failed to gather traction. In 1994, Ukraine agreed to destroy all Soviet-era nuclear weapons and formally joined Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Ukraine also secured bipartisan guarantees from the USA, the United Kingdom, and Russia through Budapest Memorandum. Ukraine was associated with CIS but later concurrently also joined Partnership for Peace (PPP) with NATO in 1994 to emphasise her neutrality. Ukraine announced the severing of ties after the recent Russian invasion; however, as a matter of record, Ukraine had never formally joined CIS, PPP provided training and equipment including setting up depots, which served to reorient Soviet modelled Ukrainian forces to NATO methodology. This turned out to be a major irritant for Russia.

Initially, even Russia joined PPP in 1994, but suspended participation in 2007, citing a breach of an agreement to limit the expansion of NATO as agreed in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. In March 2015, with the looming shadow of NATO, it pulled out from this body. NATO starting with just twelve countries has grown into thirty countries. Since, 1990, fourteen countries have joined NATO, and most of them are proximate in a location to Russia. Most of these countries were erstwhile breakaway Soviet Republics and Warsaw Pact vassal states. Colour and other revolutions like Orange, Purple uprisings and Maidan unrest, in Ukraine were dubbed by Russia as aimed at marginalising her.

Russia has also not been able to push forward the idea of collective security for Europe, de-coupled from NATO. The looming shadow of the Western footprint resulted in Russia taking control of Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014.

The current invasion of Ukraine has been triggered by such insecurities. It is also relevant that under President Biden, Trump's America First Policy signalling internal focus and institutional neglect of collective security, both in Europe (NATO) and Indo-Pacific (Quad) has been discarded. It is best explained by John Mearsheimer, in his recent quote, "Ukraine has not entered NATO...but NATO has entered Ukraine." Actually, on balance, it is not only the pro-activity of NATO and the US but it is also triggered by the aggressively rising behaviour of China. Ill-advised wolf warrior diplomatic forays like a Crimean invasion by Russia and Chinese island grabbing in the South China Sea, have resulted in two most pacifist states—Germany and Japan reviewing their policies like self-defence forces orientation. It is a sign of time that Japan and South Korea attended the recent NATO summit meeting as observers.

Indian Quest for Non-Alignment and Strategic Autonomy

Historically, India had chosen the path of non-alignment, even when in the immediate neighbourhood, Pakistan actively courted alliances like the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in the 1950s and the 1960s, which were adjuncts of NATO. Pakistan also assumed the role of mid-wife in the Kissinger-Nixon era to build ties between the US and China to counter the Warsaw Pact. Pakistan also fronted for orchestrating Jehadi-Mujahideen-Taliban, in Afghanistan, once again to counter the Soviet Union. Both these endeavours have turned out to be diabolic. Aggressively rising China and Islamist extremism, in the shape of Al Qaeda and ISIS, are diabolic outcomes that that world has been left to grapple with. The only exception was when forced by repeated aggressions in 1962 and 1965 coupled with Pakistan enjoying the CENTO/SEATO guarantees, India had to opt for the Friendship Treaty in 1971 with USSR, in face of looming refugee crisis from East Pakistan. This Pact had a distinct security elements, which paved the way for strategic co-operation. Pakistan is now firmly ensconced in the Beijing camp and poses a collusive threat to India, with her Iron-brother relationship with China. Pakistan also hosts the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in the form of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The relationship and strategic reality in this strategic trilogy have been summed up by noted Pakistani Former Diplomat, Hussein Haqqani, "For China, Pakistan is a low-cost secondary deterrent to India while for Pakistan, China is a high-value guarantor of security against India."

India has nuanced its relationships in the form of multi-lateral groupings like the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). These arrangements or loosely structured alliances had limited relevance and utility, and consequently failed to find requisite traction. India currently sees for herself, the role of “Balancer” in global affairs, like the Indo-Pacific and in the Ukrainian imbroglio. India has also sought to redefine alliances as partnerships to retain strategic autonomy. This has gained more relevance in keeping with the “Atam-Nirbhar Mission.” Despite forging a strategic partnership with the USA, India has maintained a special relationship with Russia, giving her rare relevance with both sides in the Ukrainian conflict.

Major Emerging Geo-strategic Trends

It is rather dangerous to even attempt to stipulate an iron-clad geo-strategic template as major powers have failed to resolve conflicts in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and now Ukraine. Hence, conflicts linger in Yemen, Syria, and the Taliban are back to their medieval ways in Afghanistan. Russia has already been forced to recalibrate objectives in the festering Ukrainian invasion. It is ironic that it has triggered rearming of NATO with Germany opting to jettison her pacifist image to rebuild her forces. Traditionally neutral Nordic and Baltic states have opted to firmly align with NATO. It probably underscores the limitations of force application to achieve decisive victory and this is the first trend.

The Russian Ukraine conflict has resulted in rearming of NATO with neutral Baltic and Nordic states firmly aligning with NATO.

While Ukraine has been reduced to rubble, the only net gainer is military-industrial complex supplying armaments and munitions. Coupled with this is the fielding of BRI, Maritime Silk Corridor, and Digital and Health Silk Roads to gain hegemony in the so-called new great game. The western counter is coming in for Build Back Better World (B3W), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and other initiatives. US has anchored Quad (US, India, Japan, and Australia); Australia, UK, and US (AUKUS); Australia, New Zealand, US, UK, and Canada (I5); India, Israel, US, and UAE (I2U2) multi-lateral alliances. Unlike, Quad with all-encompassing agenda, AUKUS is more security-focused aligned with the transfer of defence technology, particularly for nuclear submarines to Australia. I5 has been floated for intelligence sharing.

It indicates the growing importance of geo-economics, vis a vis, geo-political and geo-strategic calculus. Concurrently, it also raises some relevant posers on the efficacy and willingness of such alliances to intervene and put boots on the ground. There is increased reluctance, characterised by the US pull-out from Afghanistan. At best, they could be used to enhance interoperability and info-sharing. It is also relevant that member countries of the Quad have differing

perceptions of the scope and focus of the Indo-Pacific. The US looks at it through compartmentalised boundaries of Hawaii-based Indo-Pacific and Central Command, headquartered in Bahrain. Japan is focused towards the Pacific, looking East and towards the South China Sea. Australia's focus is on North and Pacific littorals. India reaches out to both the African and Pacific maritime spheres.

Till pushed by Chinese actions in Ladakh and notwithstanding earlier forays like Doklam, India appeared to be conciliatory to resolving issues. PM Modi had in Shangri-la and other fora articulated Indian policy of inclusive maritime Security and Growth in SAGAR formulation. India has tried to play down singling out of China by remaining engaged in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO), and bilateral engagement with China. Yet, India has indicated firm red lines to safeguard her vital national interests. The growing footprint of China through BRI and particularly CPEC poses serious challenges. This includes the possibility of China and Pakistan acting in collusion and concert.

It seems that the world is heading for plurilateralism with concurrent multiple alliances. Nations retain the flexibility to plug and play. It is also fairly evident that sanctions have a very limited effect due to dependencies on manufacturing and supply chains. This is evident in Europe, where nations continue to draw Russian gas despite the embargo. The traditional paradigms of short and decisive wars are under questioning. More importantly, the limitation of the efficacy of application of force as seen in Ukraine and even coercive PLA manoeuvring in Ladakh is evident. The traditional belief of short and decisive wars is also being discarded.

World is heading for plurilateralism with concurrent multiple alliances with Nations retaining flexibility to plug and play.

Recommended Way Forward

War in Ukraine has emphasised the importance of self-reliance (Atam-Nirbhar) and capability building. Alliances are neither silver bullets nor insurance against unreasonable expansionist forces like China. Hence, the focus has to be on eternal vigil and surveillance, modernisation, and infrastructure development. It is important to reiterate the seminal wisdom that, "preparation is the most potent deterrent." India is also forced to reduce its dependencies on Russia in defence technologies and armaments. There is lurking Damocles' sword of Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which India is negotiating to safeguard critical orders under execution like the S-400 Air Defence System.

India should continue to invest in alternative connectivities like North South Transport Corridor (NSTC) and Chahbahar port in Iran, specially to outflank the Chinese port in Gwadar. The collapse of exploitative BRI projects like Hambantota in Sri Lanka opens opportunities to reclaim lost ground seized by Dragon. In keeping with Mandala's theory, strategic linkages with Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia remain important for India. India will have to continue to play the role of balancer in the new great game, especially with Russia diminishing as power and India gaining strategic salience. Despite Chinese obduracy, India should persist on the path to resolving borders and in the interim build better CBM and border guarding protocols.

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Diplomacy in Defining the Russia–Ukraine Conflict

A B SHIVANE

Geopolitics Redefining International Relations

The twentieth-century Cold War era defined the great power rivalry and competing spheres of influence in an essentially bipolar world balanced by nuclear deterrence. However, the twenty-first century has been redefined by the United States (US)-led western brand of exceptionalism, Chinese belligerence, and Russia's resurgence sowing seeds of a multipolar strategic contestation in which all instruments of national power have been weaponised. It has also seen the rise of nations like India from the passivism of the galleries to activism in the global playfield based on national values and interests.

In this fragile geostrategic canvas, the Ukrainian conflict has not only accelerated global instability but is redefining the global order and creating new polarities. While the friction is embedded in the historical and geopolitical context the narratives are built around the expansion of spheres of influence or regaining perceived historically lost influence—in short, the US NATOfication, Russia's Russification, and China's Salamification. Foreign policy and diplomatic resilience of nations thus face Hobson's choice in pursuance of principled and pragmatic international relations.

Key Geostrategic Trends of the Twenty-first Century

Five key geostrategic trends define this contemporary geostrategic canvas and its global implications.¹ These are as follows:

- *International relations and liberal international order are not a linear trajectory but it's all about slants and crosses.* It is now about managing the realignment of power rather than the balance of power and addressing a multitude of threats to humanity much beyond just conflict. The art of international relations in the twenty-first century is thus to leverage the geopolitical opportunities for the furtherance of national interest through agile, flexible, and adaptive diplomacy. Further, the reality of new players in

this concert of global diplomacy and their role in shaping global peace and prosperity cannot be side-lined.

- *The world is seeing a transition to a multi-engagement world order shaped by competition to secure strategic connectivity with overlapping and often conflicting spheres of influence.* However, it's not the model which is important but its elements that will determine not only war and peace but also the future stability of global energy, food security, global supply chain, financial system, environment security, health care, human rights, etc. Unlike, the nineteenth or twentieth century models, the twenty-first-century globalisation model will have a lot more variable geometry in terms of the participants who will promote decentralised approaches to global cooperation. Covid 19, Chinese coercive diplomacy, and the Ukraine conflict have established the need for decentralised globalisation. Conflict and lack of trust will thus result in decentralised investment and trade and usher in a retreat from the global interdependency model of globalisation wherein production centres were concentrated in the hands of a few.²
- *Conventional wars are here to stay and the twenty-first-century wars are never-ending wars with an ambiguous notion of victory or defeat.* Hard power remains the most potent deterrence and respected instrument of national power. Yet, conflicts have become a kaleidoscopic phenomenon of information warfare where the first casualty is truth and history scripted in fallacies. Perception management has thus become the new centre of gravity and narratives are the weapons to capture the psycho-cultural high ground. As conflicts increasingly involve society and people nations will need to invest in this high ground.
- *Rule-based world order or international norms of behaviour have seized to exist.* The present archival system is an exclusive model wherein the powerful call the shots and redefines norms at will. Reversing this global tide of authoritarian nativism requires the legal systems to be transformed and be more inclusive and relevant to contemporary challenges.
- *Provision of covert weapons, proxies, and tools of sanctions are self-defeating as part of the long-term strategy.* Sanctions are an abject failure in conflict resolution. Sanctions don't change nation states' behaviour but have an adverse ripple effect on the global system, particularly the third world economy. Sanctions, covert weapons, and proxies also create geopolitical instability and forge new power centres.

There is a transition to a multi engagement world order to secure strategic connectivity with overlapping and conflicting spheres of influence.

Diplomacy in Shaping Future World Order

The challenges of conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution have been made complex in twenty-first century international relations with great power rivalry, weakening of liberal international order, growing transnational threats, and rising nationalism and populism.

In these contemporary contestations, despite the US proclaiming the irresistible triumph of the West's liberal international order model, its new avatar is in reality populated by a multiplicity of several and diverse poles. The future thus envisages a complex multipolar order that would be politically pluralistic seeking multiple issues based on cooperative partnerships over strategic alignments. Fundamentally in practice, such a multipolar order would be complicated and convoluted with leading actors cooperating in certain domains yet clashing in others, as their strategic interests interlocked with ever greater intricacy.³ It is in such a model that nations will need to draw the cost-benefit of pursuing their national interest through more resilient and flexible diplomacy.

In *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*, an international group of experts confronts these challenges to peace and conflict diplomacy. In doing so, they consider three potential scenarios⁴ for the future, namely, a return to a Cold War-like situation, a return to the liberal rules-based order, and variable geometry multilateralism wherein nations collaborate on a case-by-case basis. Each scenario requires a different kind of diplomacy. The first scenario would likely require transactional diplomacy; the second values-based, governance-based diplomacy; and the third "a concert depending on the issue" at the regional or functional levels that are based on specific challenges. The Book makes a strong case for concert diplomacy as the principal form of international cooperation in the twenty-first century. It is in such a multipolar global environment that India's stature will continue to grow in its rightful trajectory.

Ukraine: A Defining Moment for Diplomatic Choices

The tragedy of the Ukrainian conflict is embedded in the historical past and geopolitical present. In particular, the Monroe Doctrine 1823, the Treaty of Versailles 1919, the Marshall Plan 1948, the Budapest Memorandum 1994, and the US-driven unilateralism of the last three decades post disintegration of the Soviet Union. Between 1997 and 2021, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expanded manifold in five trances to bring the threat knocking on the Russian backyard.

Once a rejuvenated Russia recovered from the profound political and socio-economic crisis of the post-Soviet decade, the only question was when and where Russia would take a stand against the systemic encroachment of its

periphery. Sooner than later, in continuity with the Soviet quest for Russification, and unease with the US-led NATOfication, led to Russia's "claim to a sphere of privileged interests around its immediate periphery, which was staked out in the wake of the 2008 war with Georgia, and its refusal to accept the post-Cold War security order in Europe decisively affirmed with the 2014 annexation of Crimea."⁵

Next came Ukraine 2022, a West-enticed pawn in the game who was led down the garden path in an essentially Russia-US power play. The US-led Western proxy narrative changed from saving Ukraine to weakening Russia. Instead of peace, stability, security, and neutrality, the option exercised by the US and the West was arming and sanctions. Once again diplomacy took a backseat in preference to expanding/curtailing spheres of influence with little concern for human miseries and catastrophic destruction. The art of conflict prevention and conflict resolution gave way to the science of conflict extension for selfish agendas. The Western narrative of Russia losing, "ostriches" the realities of Russia not only gaining large vital territory, but more importantly controlling the Ukrainian industrial heartland, its energy resources, its ports and shores, and making it a landlocked economically ravaged skeleton state.

The US-led Western proxy narrative changed from saving Ukraine to weakening Russia by arming Ukraine with weapons and economic sanctions against Russia.

Yet there are no angels in this conflict. US stubborn model of exceptionalism and unilateralism caused maximum instability rubbishing the international rule-based order repeatedly. Examples of Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Guantanamo Bay, Abu Garib, and more recently Afghanistan stand testimony to it. The US repeatedly violated the United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions, including by withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal-Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA); recognising Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and recognising Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara.⁶ The US also withdrew from the World Health Organization, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN cultural body. Yet two wrongs don't make a right especially when it causes destruction and loss of innocent human lives. China and Russia too rewrote the international rule book by insisting on national sovereignty being the most important legal principle, one that trumps international law, humanitarian law, and human rights law. Then who is having the last smile? Is it the US Arms Industry (40 billion US dollars aid) and China who gets respite and "salamis" ahead? The sufferer is not just Ukraine but also the world hit by food shortage, energy crisis, inflation, poverty, and instability. Europe has been militarised and

destabilised more than unified. The recession too stares at its face. No victor no vanquished.

Indian Diplomacy-Mapping an Enlightened Post Liberal International Order

India as the largest democracy, a fifth of the world population, and the fastest growing economy with rejuvenated comprehensive national power stands at the cusp of strategic opportunity from being a spectator to a player in the global arena. India is no more a swing power but a balancing power of global recognition. It has taken the lead in confronting global challenges like the Covid vaccine, climate change, disaster management, sustainable development goals, counter-terrorism, and promoting global peace in the spirit of its philosophy of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*. Principally, it has always emphasised the centrality of sovereignty and territorial integrity and upholding rule-based order adhering to the UN Charter.⁷ It believes that every nation has the right to carve its foreign policy based on its enlightened national interests and make choices based on a cost-benefit analysis.

The Ukrainian conflict has confronted India with difficult strategic choices. India's stand in the Ukrainian conflict has been principled and bold in not only rejecting the strategic assumptions and hypocrisy of the West but also remaining neutral to the Ukrainian conflict without being pro or anti-Russia. It marks the mapping of Indian diplomacy to an enlightened post-liberal international order. It seeks peace through cessation of hostilities, and conflict resolution through dialogue and diplomacy. Its position has been consistent and principled wherein it abstained a record eleven times at UN resolutions. India's diplomatic stance is mapping an enlightened world order and is seen as an inflection point in international relations. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar alluded in *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*—"in a multi-polar world, with a multi-aligned foreign policy, India should spend more time chasing its interests instead of caring about pleasing others."⁸

Given the depth of strategic ties between New Delhi and Moscow and the warming up of New Delhi and Washington's strategic relationship, India will maintain its principled neutrality. The "China Problem" factor also weighs in this strategic triangle of neutrality. It is clear that there are no easy choices for India in the New Cold War and it would want to avoid a scenario where China has the last laugh. A weak and isolated Russia is not in India's interests and New Delhi will make efforts to help its traditional friend in its hour of need.⁹ Russia also provides strategic leverage to India in the India-China rivalry. Both India and US too need each other to balance China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. Besides

growing trade and technology future lies with the West. Thus, diplomacy has to balance the Russia-West tug-of-war to safeguard its national interest. Another assumption will be that the US and West will be more understanding of India's neutral stand than Russia should it adopt an anti-Russia stand. So the strategic cost-benefit has been deliberately weighed in its calculus. India's vision remains to ascend to the international stage as a global player sans alliances yet leveraging multiple poles for its trajectory. China currently represents the most significant threat to its trajectory, and thus India while attempting to handle it within its resources would certainly need both US and Russia's support. The shift in the US focus to Europe away from the Indo-Pacific is perilous for an India facing China.¹⁰ Russia's economic leanings and bonhomie with China diminishes the multipolarity India seeks. India's stand is thus not pro-Russia or pro-US, it's pro-India for the preservation of its core values and furtherance of its enlightened national interest. There is nothing known as absolute strategic autonomy; strategic dependence is suicidal; so strategic balancing and flexibility in pursuit of one's national interest are pragmatic.

India's diplomatic stand has been firm, forthright, and logical over European myopic geopolitics. The world recognises India's strategic and economic potential to be inevitably a player in this new Great Game. The Indian leadership's European outreach and the spate of high-level visits and interactions by European leaders with their Indian counterparts have met a common ground of understanding and institutionalised cooperation. It has also strengthened its multi-faceted partnerships and diplomatic relations in a multi-tiered and collaborative matrix at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Despite differences, trade has bonded the relationship between the two. The European Union (EU) is India's third largest trading partner and trade in goods between the two has increased by 30 percent in the last decade as per the European Commission inputs.

To Conclude

India has batted well on the sticky Ukrainian diplomatic pitch. Yet it needs to learn multiple lessons as the conflict unfolds. Externally it needs to envision the dynamic geopolitical future and be prepared for the entire spectrum of contingencies employing all instruments of national power in symphony. Internally the challenges in the internal security domain and divisive trends eroding its pluralistic democracy pose threats to its national security and global image. There is a need for a bolder national unification programme and to garner a strong economy to strengthen both hard and soft powers. Challenging times require an integrated people-centric national response which is the need of the hour.

Militarily India will have to fight its battles alone. No nation will step into another's conflict zone irrespective of strategic partnerships. Time is critical and India needs to be prepared to prevail with a sense of urgency. The sanctions and disruption of the global supply chain will certainly impact the nation like other parts of the world. It is thus imperative for India to achieve self-reliance, self-sufficiency and technology prowess in all spheres of national security. "Atmarnirbharta" is the only way forward in the pursuance and preservation of national interest. We may be walking the talk in this direction but the need is to take giant leaps not baby steps with time sensitivity. Civil-military fusion too will need greater depth and collaboration on matters dealing with defence policies and transformation. Last but not least, diplomacy will be as strong as the nation's hard power and it is here that there is a need for greater commitment to attain the strategic vision of India as a great power.

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Russia–Ukraine Crisis: A Wargame for India–China Dyadic Conflict

DANISH YOUSUF

Introduction

The unfolding of the Russia–Ukraine crisis has exponentially enhanced the interest in scholarly work focusing on its impact on other regions, where fissures might turn into fault lines, resulting in ballistic behaviour from the states. The conflict comes with costs, but the modern nation-state system and the preservation of its units take primacy over all other issues that ring true in the priorities of the policymakers. Into its eighth month, the War has not abated,¹ and took the form of attrition, defying modern ways of doing swift strikes and achieving early success. It seems Russia did not anticipate such a long-torn war, forcing it to rethink its strategic calculus and relative gains from the War. Having suffered losses more than expected, both Russia and Ukraine will be forced to invest more resources to secure some returns from this geopolitical game.²

The crisis has forced neutral members to seek refuge in American security architecture. The security equation seems inflated with fear and threat perceptions while Russia and the United States (US) are bent on achieving regional hegemony.³ Such an end though seems logical from a Russian perspective and works against the security considerations and sensitivities of the small powers populating the European land borders. Fearing a possibility of Russian failure, the states bordering this regional giant will likely feel the need to ensure their security.⁴ The only way to achieve this lies in falling into the arms of the American security institutions.

Russia–Ukraine War: A New Perspective

The Russian reasoning for the initiation of conflict lies in a completely different paradigm. Moscow believes that Washington has violated the promises made to it after the end of the Cold War to not move an “inch” towards Moscow.⁵

But Washington never honoured its commitment. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) members kept on rising with Russia fearing a repeat of the history⁶ with the West bent on subsuming it. The reason for conflict lies in insecurity that grows from misperceived realities.⁷ NATO's stay in Europe is perceived by Moscow's elites as a threat, which needs to be halted. The American policymakers never intended such a purpose. Rather their main concern was to preclude⁸ the emergence of security competition within the European allies, and not trying to wither away the Russian state. However, even Joshua Shiffrin's research shows that Washington pursued a relegation strategy to strip away every bit of Russian power in the 1990s.⁹

Such policy was later put on hold with the Russian factor taking a backseat amidst rising concerns of civil wars and human rights propping in diverse regions. However, it is no one's responsibility to accommodate Russian concerns due to NATO's expansion, but the American responsibilities and diplomatic practices should have hit the full throttle to reassure Moscow of its intent. More so, actions intended to be defensive in nature must be communicated to the Russian regime through the effective use of institutions and by undertaking a proactive role in ensuring that the rules are duly followed and not violated in any sense. But both powers failed in their respective ways. Moscow's threat perceptions, although genuine, lack substance. Although NATO is inching towards Moscow, it nevertheless may not be assumed as a worst-case scenario for Russians. Further, it is the duty and responsibility of the incumbent giant to accommodate the sensitivities of the Russians within the liberal international order. Both powers necessarily failed to actively engage in such behaviour.

Factually, Russia with power capacities; which never touched 50 percent of American Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is apparently the least concerning threat to the West. It's not NATO as such but its expansion, which is beyond security reasons, that created fears in the Russian mind. The logic is simple and intriguing.¹⁰ Russian fears were amplified when in the 2008 NATO Summit, both Georgia and Ukraine expected membership in NATO. The fear of the American military nearly in its backyard was perceived as a wake-up call by Putin. The intention of the US was never to resume the unfinished business of destroying Russia, but the lack of certainty in Russian minds over such manifestation triggered the anxiety. The problem is that there is no way a state's intentions can be easily discerned in the international system. Unless diplomatic practices or spies are used, the intentions remain flexible, with tendencies to change whenever required. Even if the US intentions are benign and Russia interpreted those as revisionist, the

It was not NATO but its expansion, which beyond security reasons created fears in the Russian minds of Western footprint might in their backyard.

problem lies in correctly knowing what others want. This is more structural, and beyond the control of any states populating the system. The US policymakers could have justified their actions, as those which are within the confines of liberal international order but meant to resurrect Cold War competition with Russia. But this seldom occurred.

To amplify the fear, Russia lacked trust¹¹ in American assurances which were previously bypassed and Moscow speculated if future intentions of Washington will remain benign. Following this, the Russians were forced to provide for their security. From a Russian perspective, this reasoning makes sense, as American re-assurances will never sate Russian fears. This forced the Russians to wage a war with Ukraine to balance the power in the system, which is relatively shifting towards the West. Irrespective of power calculation, scholars understand Russian moves through the perceived urge of the Russian regime to reinvigorate the great power identity of Russia. The desire to reclaim lost nationality converted¹² into states is the reason for Moscow's irredentism, unable to manage the degradation of power rank in the world. However, by this logic, it is not clear why the War was waged at this particular time and not earlier.

In the international system, the states are hardwired through years of socialisation and evolution to regard others as threats and manage their relationship accordingly.¹³ The organising principle of anarchy, wherein there is no political authority to resolve disputes between states, makes it more difficult to trust others.¹⁴ Essentially, states are self-interested creatures,¹⁵ securing maximum gains for them through maximising their chances of engagement with other states. It is, thus, not necessarily a moral responsibility of any state to show solidarity and purge its relations with other states.¹⁶ Prudence matters, not friendship which can be detrimental to the state concerned. It is, thus, never a responsibility of the West to provide policing services to the world. It may or may not desire engagement with Russia to end conflicts, depending on its convergences of interests with other states.

The Ukraine and West are on the same rope because the convergences of strategic interests align perfectly, which in this case is the protection from the Russian assault. It is in the self-interest of both Ukraine and the West, especially the US to stop Russian irredentism because of Kyiv. Its sovereignty will be necessary in jeopardy if it kneels in the conflict.¹⁷ Russian supremacy is not what Ukrainians desire, but their sovereign agency to make political decisions in international affairs. To secure that, given the lack of its internal capacity, it has fallen back on the West to gain external support. In other words, Ukraine's bulwark is beneficial for both West and the Kyiv, which must not be viewed as the West gaining from this competition. In absolute terms both Ukraine and the West's interest lies in subtracting the power of Russia through attrition warfare.¹⁸

Since there is no international mediation organisation to resolve the political tensions between states, the perceived assumption of the West taking on the responsibility to strike a deal between Russian and Ukrainian politics is substantially wrong thinking both theoretically and policywise. Rather, the West is caught between a hard place and a rock. The reticence of the West to provide Ukraine with military aid at the start seems to reflect the terrible situation. The West sitting on the fence and sheltering Ukraine helps in keeping the temper of the conflict low, and not irking Russia to level itself which might prompt nuclear responses.¹⁹ Russia expending resources will eventually force it to re-calculate the gains facilitating the end of the War.²⁰ Hence, the expectation is that the West engagement strategy will preclude further conflict and facilitate negotiation. Thus, the end of War is based on flawed logic. Negotiation works only when both sides could agree on certain common terms and concessions could be forwarded benefitting both sides.

Attrition means gains in wars are incremental and small, not exceptionally and strategically large that could compel the other side to draw down on its weapons and the “will” to continue fighting. Coming to tables with the adversary further becomes difficult if the entire European states are bent on disciplining Russian behaviour through the imposition of economic sanctions.²¹ It also becomes further complicated for the Russian regime because the loss in the conflict will result in weakening hold over domestic politics,²² that will not tolerate the regime’s adventurism, which might end up in Putin’s ouster. Likewise, the continuation of War in expectation of some gains in the future might cloud Putin’s thinking, who will be less willing to talk and negotiate.²³ In other words, the West cannot promise Ukraine enough as its strategic priorities are shifting towards the Indo-Pacific. Engaging with Putin makes sense, but not at the expense of Western promises which may not be fulfilled. The West is uncommitted to the Ukraine crisis because it is reluctant to get entangled in the problem; which does not reflect its strategic interests.

The West is uncommitted in the Ukraine crisis as it is reluctant to get entangled in a problem which does not reflect its strategic interests.

The Americans are more interested in tackling the growing and persistent Chinese threat in the Indo-Pacific.²⁴ Thus, the resolution of the Ukraine conflict may be its priority for now but remains secondary to its interests when compared with the Chinese threat in the Indo-Pacific. Its retrenchment further provides data to this logic. The policy of engaging with Russia to end the War is a flawed approach to resolving the inherent power contradictions in international politics. A much more bold approach is to think about the War in terms of European states, not American security. The Europeans must be *emboldened* to shoulder the burdens

of balancing Russia, with the US as an “offshore balancer” providing external support but with minimal engagement in the region.²⁵ The West’s retrenchment from Europe will translate into a much greater focus towards the Indo-Pacific region to tackle the Chinese threat. This Policy approach is bolder and will yield definite results in the future. Even though the War is far from over, both sides have inflicted enormous damage on each other. Attrition will expend resources and push them to negotiate, but if gains were made by Russia in the Donbas region, then Ukraine might be motivated to undo those changes and would want the status quo to be established. Offensive Russian postures yielded territorial gains, which Ukrainian defenses were unable to restore. If this continues, the War is unlikely to stop, and perhaps may even get bitter. Unless a draw is desired by both sides, which seems the most plausible outcome, the end is not near. Such long-drawn war must cut through its recurrence cycles to stop by the negotiating table. Each side must lose valuables for peaceful coexistence. Russians are bent on defending the prevailing gains, while Ukraine is trying to offset this damage by launching a counter-offensive through the West’s help is unlikely to yield any fruits. Diplomatic solutions work rarely but this is a hard truth, which needs to be hammered in through implementable provisions.

Lessons for India

Scholars are busy rationalising the impact of the Russia–Ukraine War on the behaviour of China in the Indo-Pacific region. Extrapolation and comparisons are inevitable, but the associations yield novel insights with distinctive characteristics in individual dyadic imaginations. Unlike Russia which aimed to balance the European distribution of capabilities through War, Beijing will try to undercut the West’s balancing strategy against it. In terms of economic capabilities, the US still leads with 20 trillion dollars of economy, while China follows in second place with approximately 14 trillion dollars of wealth. But relatively it is growing much faster, which is a worry for Washington and will soon catch the US in the near future.²⁶ What is worrying about this dynamic is the behaviour of India in this US-China strategic competition. It is assumed that given the West’s interest, it will exploit New Delhi for balancing out China, ultimately at the expense of the Asian power. In no way does this comparison need to be taken in absolute terms, nor that the author is trying to suggest that. Rather the assumption of the modelling gives enough leeway to the researcher to expand the horizons of thinking by taking different dyadic competitors and applying those prevailing conditions in the new dyadic formation irrespective of history, culture, social diversity, and geographical differences. The point is not to discount the differences or treat situations alike, but to ignore the complexities and focus on important variables, which in this case is the use of various tactics or strategies to prevail on the

battlefield.* As social scientists suggest, the assumptions need not reflect total reality, while some abstraction can be tolerated.

What needs to be understood is that it is not just the West's interest to balance China, but of India as well. To guard our strategic autonomy, reliance on a partner like the US when the strategic interest converges is unproblematic.²⁷ While India protects its independence and decision-making zealously, partnering with the US does not in any manner hamper our interest articulation. Rather given India's lack of internal balancing efforts (3 trillion dollars economy), the West is a *need*, not a choice. Since the self-interest of both India and the West aligns, the spurious correlation of the West's taking advantage of India is not logically sound. Further, historically speaking, India is more promiscuous in its behaviour; which follows from its non-alignment strategy aiming to maximising options in international politics.²⁸ So, the abandonment and less sensitivity to others are more true of India's behaviour than Washington's. More so, the Indian government buying Russian oil and gas gives credence to the axiom that self-interests are privileged over any other considerations in international politics.

The Russia-Ukraine crisis has the following implications for India's relations with China, in the context of imagined China's encroachments on the Western and Northern borders. First, if China's threat increases beyond Indian limits of tolerance, seeking the West's help and falling into their arms will not hurt India's strategic autonomy.²⁹ Like non-alignment, India believes in protecting its strategic interests without necessarily allying with the great powers. But if survival is threatened, seeking US arms will not only protect the Indian state but will guard its strategic autonomy. In other words, relying on the US does not mean trading strategic autonomy for an alliance with the West. But only if strategic compulsions are unbearable, external alignment is the most optimal strategic choice.

Second, India can learn from Ukraine's experience. Ukraine's cyber capabilities claimed to have blinded Russian infrastructure, and its major power centres.³⁰ It can be inferred from the crisis that not always powerful states prevail in international conflict. Ukraine has utilised its defensive forces to cut Russian offences. Now by engaging in attrition, it is imposing significant costs on the Russian regime, which may not be willing to continue the War. Ukraine's tactical and territorial understanding is being utilised to make it difficult for the Russian to gain a significant advantage. India can prepare for the possible confrontation with the Chinese.³¹ India can create a nuisance for China's mobilisation by engaging heavily in A2/AD capabilities.³² The Indian infrastructural development

* The author assumes that there is analytic value in studying the current crisis to the India-China dynamics irrespective of the particularities involved in the cases.

must be accelerated to overpower the Chinese in certain locations where the balance of power favour New Delhi.

Chinese encroachments could be reciprocated through similar Indian interventions in areas where India has the advantage. Unlike Ukraine, India can resort to its heavy Air Force power to ward off Chinese early mobilisation efforts.³³ Further, according to reports from the Belfer Centre³⁴ and CNAS³⁵ India has certain advantages in case of conflict with China, which must be exploited to its advantage. In addition to this, India must build its naval capabilities to asymmetrically challenge Beijing's advantages in the territorial areas.³⁶ With the cutting of the Chinese shipping routes in the Indo-Pacific region by excessive blockades and naval power, India can balance out pressures on its territorial loss on the border.

Third, it must be understood by the Indian and world communities that economic sanctions rarely work and in the case of China, an attempt at disciplining its behaviour through sanctions will never work. China's interdependencies with the world and its plausible de-coupling and creation of alternatives are still in their long durée. Any attempts to sanction China will backfire with possible repercussions for states, which are not involved in the conflict, making it difficult to generate a common consensus against Chinese revisionism. Thus, there is a requirement to focus on deterrence means and war as strategic necessities rather than economic means to control Beijing's attitude.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Russia-Ukraine crisis has provided a cue to the geopolitical imagination of scholars, trying to forecast a similar occurrence in the context of regional areas where geopolitical fissures are still festering. The similar dyadic treatment in the case of India-China relations with the West in the background, playing a major role, acts as a model to prepare for the worst. A similar attempt is made here, with plausible practical policy implications. India's learning curve should enhance its possibilities of dealing effectively with China, and the Russia-Ukraine crisis is one such experience. The notion of powerful states winning is dismantled with technological innovations and changing nature of warfare making it possible even for a middle power like Ukraine to brace and prepare for the impact of the Russian giant. The need is to let India socialise with these experiences to learn and better prepare itself for plausible contingencies in the future.

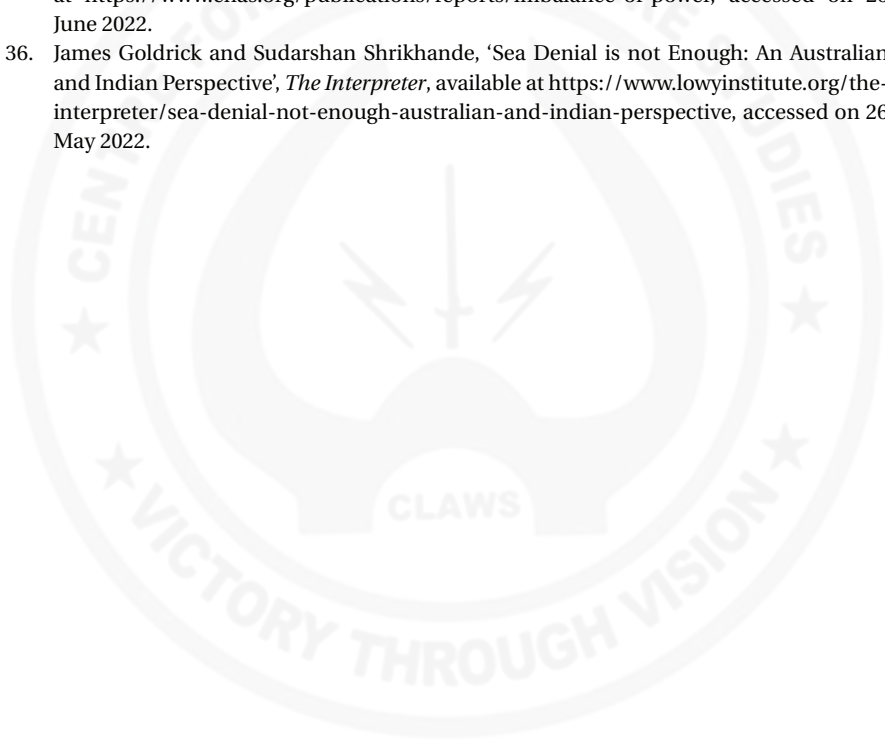
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A New Way of Looking into Contemporary Warfare: The Use of Private Forces in the Russia–Ukraine Crisis

ANURADHA OINAM

Introduction

Change is the law of nature so is the character of war. However, it is said that the nature of the war remains constant in military circles¹ and it does apply in contemporary warfare too. As the definition of war is concerned, it is an act of violence to compel one's opponent to fulfil one's will,² which is still relevant in modern warfare. The Russia–Ukraine crisis can be exemplified as unique hybrid warfare, the war that is being indirectly fought between the United States (US)/West with Russia by proxy groups, including private forces and volunteers. In addition, the ongoing War is also characterised by ideological warfare, and the use of information and disinformation as a tool in many false flag operations.

It has been almost more than seven months since February 24, 2022, Russia and Ukraine continue a full-fledged war with no sign of ending the War under any circumstances. However, policymakers, war strategists, and academia stress the importance of private forces and their considerable role in the ongoing crisis. This further motivates those interested in the field to conduct in-depth research on the role of private military contractors and their contribution to contemporary warfare. Private forces used to be employed in covert operations as a shadow force, but now they are the vanguard of modern warfare, like in the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

Private contractors, such as the Wagner group, mercenaries from Georgia, Chechen, and Syria on the Russian side³ and unestablished private contractors, including volunteers from various nations on the Ukrainian side, are prominent in the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Thus, the number of private forces is multiplying

gradually to engage in myriad tasks assigned by the countries especially the US and Russia across the globe. Ironically, neither Russia nor Ukraine officially accepts the use of private forces though both use private forces in waging war against each other. This article explicates the emerging role of private forces in modern-day war particularly by looking at the Russia–Ukraine crisis.

Understanding Private Military and Security Companies in the Contemporary Era

Private forces in present times play a dual role: (i) Security provider, and (ii) Military provider. Security provider comes under Private Security Companies (PSCs), and military provider comes under Private Military Companies (PMCs). Therefore, it is generally known as Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs).

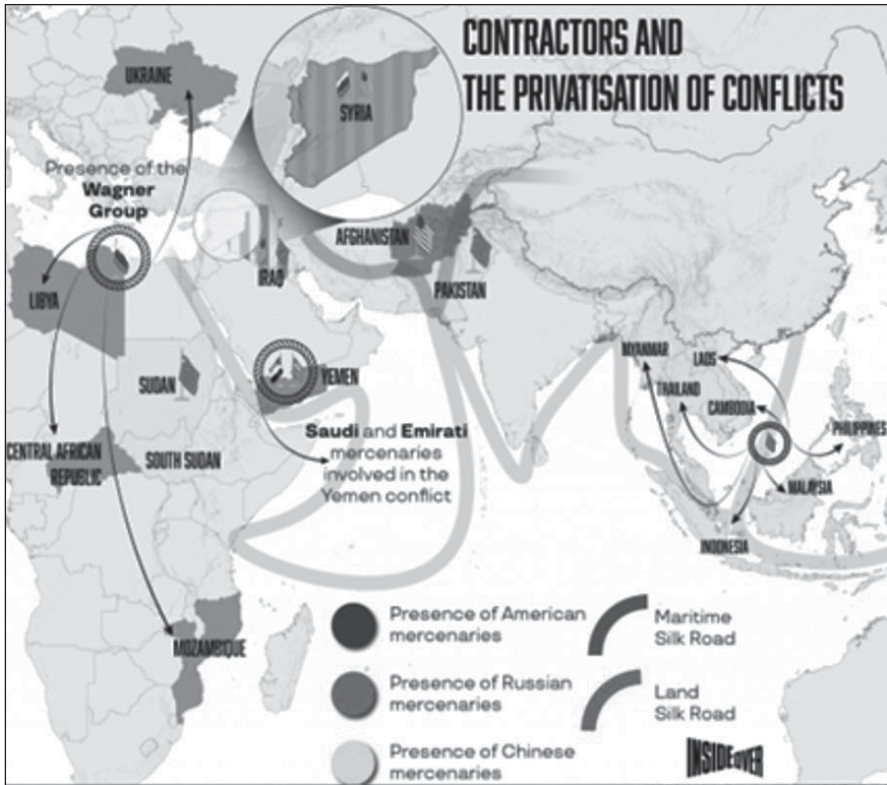
However, scholars like Peter W. Singer classify the same into three kinds: (i) Military Provider Firms, (ii) Military Consulting Firms, and (iii) Military Support Firms.⁴ Table 1 shows the illustration of various tasks performed by PMSCs.

Table 1: Various Tasks Performed by Different PMSCs

	Private Military and Security Companies			
	– (————— Level of Force —————) +			
Types of Company	Military Support Firm	Military Consulting Firm	Private Security Company	Private Military Company
Primary Role	Sustainment	Force Generation, Intelligence, Mission Command	Defence and Protection	Offense
Activities	Transportation Engineering Medical Support Procurement Personnel Services	Intelligence Support Knowledge Management Training Support	Facility Security Physical Security Personal Protection Convoy Security Refugee Protection	Combat Combat Support Close Air Support Fire Support
Notable Examples	Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR)	Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI); DynCorp	Blackwater/Xe/ Academi	Executive Outcomes

Source: Anuradha Oinam, “Increasing Trend of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in Contemporary Global Conflicts”, *CLAWS Issue Brief*, June 14, 2022.

Figure 1: Contractors and the Privatisation of Conflicts



Source: Lorenzo Vita, "The Dark World of Private Military Contractors", 2020, available at <https://www.insideover.com/war/the-dark-world-of-private-military-contractors.html>

With their practical and experienced skills, the involvement of private forces changes the dynamic of contemporary conflicts, and they become part of privatised conflicts across the globe as shown in Figure 1. In addition, states prefer to hire private forces because of various reasons and they assign the private forces with different tasks and responsibilities based on their requirement. The reasons could be due to their plausible deniability, the second to lessen the state's defence budget⁵ and the last as a foreign policy tool.

Therefore, states tend to hire more private forces than deploying their soldiers in waging wars despite the limitations and challenges PMSCs do have in terms of their ambiguous nature and lack of legal status under the straight jacket of international law. However, the emerging prominent role of private forces is absent from the discussion in the future multi-domain warfare—states do have Hobson's choice but to hire private forces in the coming days. They can be

deployed in covert operations abroad, where the state is free from taking any risk (while committing heinous crimes) or any responsibility related to their post-retirement schemes.

Figure 2: Different Roles of PMSCs Across the Globe



Source: Anuradha Oinam (2022)

Private Military and Security Companies in Ongoing Russia–Ukraine Crisis

Russia's exploitation of private forces is not a new trend but could be traced back to the nineteenth century when they initially participated as volunteers in the Balkan war, and then in Spanish War in 1930.⁶ However, the actual deployment of private forces became limelight after 2014 when Russia invaded Crimea. Russia then deployed “Little Green Man or the Private Army of Putin” to control Crimea.⁷ And later established “the Wagner Group” by Yevgeny Prigozhin, an associate of Russian President Vladimir Putin, as the Russian PMCs.⁸ To expand its geopolitical influence, the Wagner Group has been deployed relentlessly since 2014 in Ukraine, Syria, Libya, Central Asian Republics (CAR),⁹ and currently in the ongoing Ukraine War. They perform myriad roles such as force multipliers, arms merchants, trainers of local military and security personnel, and political consultants.¹⁰

The role of the Wagner Group differs from state to state. For instance, in Libya, the Group was epitomised as a flexible foreign policy tool and symbolic of the Russian government, though the Russian government refuted their use of private forces. One of the main objectives of Russia's using private firms is to occupy the vacuum left by the US and its allies.¹¹ When the US withdrew its military forces from most of the countries across the globe, Russia filled this vacuum by deploying Special Operations Forces, intelligence units, and Private Military Companies (PMCs).¹² Intending to have the expansionist mindset, commercial, geopolitical and military gains, the purposes of introducing PMCs by Russia are: (i) To undermine US power and increase Moscow's influence by using low-profile, and (ii) To train, advise, and assist other security forces including Russian forces.¹³

The Significance of Private Military and Security Companies in Russian Military Endeavours

Russia employs PMSCs as a gray-zone challenge¹⁴ which is described as:

Competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality [that] are characterised by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, the opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal framework.¹⁵

As already mentioned, Russian PMCs are utilised primarily to reduce the West/US influence. More reasons explain how Russia uses PMCs for different purposes. These are as follows:¹⁶

- **Foreign Policy:** Used as a toolkit of Russia's foreign policy by influencing foreign leaders, state and non-state partners, and extracting resources.
- **Military:** The use of PMCs is less risky than using Russian soldiers because of the plausible deniability.
- **Intelligence:** PMCs build operative intelligence networks especially for facilitating information to influencers such as political influence, covert action, and other clandestine activities.
- **Economic:** Facilitate to expand commerce, especially in the developing world, and diminish overloaded sanctions from being imposed by building revenue streams from oil, gas, and mineral extraction.
- **Political:** Russian oligarchs who control Kremlin (i) use PMCs to balance political and financial interests, and (ii) to guarantee loyalty to Putin.
- **Informational:** To propagate pro-Russian narratives through PMC-linked media and disinformation outlets.

- **Ideological:** PMCs as a tool to expand “Russian Patriotism” and Slavic identity, especially among the like-minded citizens in the former Soviet states and Balkans.

Another factor of using private forces is to save the Russian government's direct participation in War, which could lead to a diplomatic crisis or even a military confrontation.¹⁷ In the ongoing Russia–Ukraine crisis, Russia makes sure PMCs get involved in psychological warfare, mainly to intimidate the Ukrainians. Engaging in various false flag operations, they use information warfare as a tool to change the factual narratives on the ground.¹⁸ This is a significant character of PMCs as far as their role is concerned in the ongoing crisis.

Nature of Private Military and Security Companies on Ukrainian Sides

Ukraine does not have any established PMSCs like the Russian Wagner group. However, Ukrainian President Zelensky accommodated volunteers from various nations willing to fight against Russian forces. Therefore, he launched “the International Legion of Territorial Defence of Ukraine”, comprising 16,000 volunteers, including experienced private military contractors. Some of them participated as combatants and others in security and defence-related tasks such as extraction, evacuation, and other relevant parameters.¹⁹ Even though these volunteers carried out similar tasks performed by private forces, the Ukrainian government does not officially confirm the deployment of private forces against Russia. However, these volunteers to join the Ukrainian side need to have specific criteria (like a private force), such as they should have served in the military or having combat experience. In the screening process, they will be cross checked whether they have links with extremism or terrorism networks. Thus, they join the foreign legion in fighting against the Russians later.²⁰ Therefore, it is justified that volunteers in Ukraine fighting against Putin's army are more or less like private forces.

The US/West and its allies, including NATO, play a significant role in fighting against Russia by supporting Ukraine. They have supplied major weapons system-artillery, anti-craft weapons, and tracked vehicles to strengthen the Ukrainian capability. In addition, the US facilitates battlefield contractors to manage the weapon systems and train Ukrainian forces. Likewise, France supplied self-propelled howitzers, Canada-howitzers, and Germany-self-propelled anti-aircraft guns.²¹ There is limited data to prove the Ukrainian use of private forces. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that private forces backed by the US/West are actively participating on the Ukrainian side in fighting against Russia. Table 2 shows the number and variety of weapons supplied by the US in Ukraine against Russia.

Table 2: US's Supply Assistance in Ukraine

Sl. No.	Name of the Weapon	Number of Weapons
1	Stinger anti-aircraft systems	Over 1,400
2	Javelin anti-armour systems	Over 6,500
3	Other anti-armour systems	Over 20,000
4	Switchblade tactical unmanned aerial systems	Over 700
5	155-mm Howitzers	126
6	155-mm artillery rounds	4,10,000
7	105-mm artillery rounds	36,000
8	Tactical vehicles to tow 155-mm Howitzers	126
9	Tactical vehicles to recover equipment	19
10	High mobility artillery rocket systems and ammunition	8
11	National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS)	2
12	Mi-17 Helicopters	20
13	Armored high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles	100
14	M 113 armoured personnel carriers	200
15	Grenade launchers and small arms	Over 10,000
16	Rounds of small arms ammunition	Over 5,90,00,000
17	Sets of body armour and helmets	75,000
18	Phoenix Ghost Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems	121
19	Counter-artillery radars	26
20	Counter-artillery radars Air surveillance radars	4 each
21	Harpoon coastal defense systems	2
22	Coastal and riverine patrol boats	18
23	Laser-guided rocket systems, Puma Unmanned Aerial Systems, Unmanned Coastal Defense Vessels, M18A1 Claymore anti-personnel munitions, C-4 explosives, and demolition equipment for obstacle clearing, tactical secure communications systems, thousands of night vision devices, thermal imagery systems, optics, and laser range finders, commercial satellite imagery services, explosive ordnance disposal protective gear, chemical, biological, radiology, nuclear protective equipment, medical supplies to include first aid kits, electronic jamming equipment, field equipment and spare parts, funding for training, maintenance, and sustainment	

Source: Adapted from the US Security Cooperation with Ukraine, US Department of State, July 1, 2022.

Critical Assessments

PMSC's deployments are quite visible in the ongoing crisis though not publicly accepted by Russia and Ukraine. Russia deploys PMCs as proxy groups to fight hybrid warfare in Ukraine since these groups provide plausible deniability to accomplish Russian objectives, supplement the Russian forces, and provide myriad battlefield roles. Having learnt from the 2014 Crimean War and follow-up Syrian war in stabilising the Assad regime by countering the US and its allies, Russia's PMCs personnel, including the Wagner Group, Vegacy, ENOT, Vostok Battalion and other PMCs, are actively participating in the conflict.²² The hybrid-PMC deployment model, which Russia is employing in the ongoing War, is exported from the Syrian war.²³ Despite being illegal under Article 1.5 of the Russian Constitution, Russia continues to use PMCs, especially in risky situations such as grey-zone warfare.²⁴ Russian constitution disapproves of PMCs since the state is in charge of defence, security, and foreign policy. Efforts have been initiated to legalise PMCs both in the Russian Duma and the Executive branch but it remains fail. Contrary, the Russian use of private forces is spawning across the globe.

For Ukraine, its primary purpose of employing private forces is to manage the effective new weapon systems supplied by the US/West in Ukraine. It takes time to learn different skills to use the system and consumes several months to hand over those skills to the actual operators and maintainers.²⁵ Hence, in a short period, hiring battlefield contractors is the solution. Unlike the operational contractor, which is defined as the "process of planning for and obtaining supplies, services, and construction from commercial sources in support of Ccdr [combatant commandant]-directed operations", these contractors are skilled, experienced, and effective, and they are good at facilitating a variety of services from training to maintenance to security²⁶ quickly. Therefore, the benefits of using operational contractors are as follows: (i) It strengthens Ukrainian military capabilities to maintain the operating system wisely, and (ii) It enables it to meet the number of forces without putting more boots on the ground without many risks.²⁷ Rhetorically, the West argues that its main objective is to rescue Ukraine from

Russia deploys PMCs as proxy groups to fight hybrid warfare since PMCs supplement the Russian forces, and provide myriad battlefield roles like intelligence gathering, disseminating pro Russian narratives in captured areas.

Ukraine has primarily employed private groups to manage new weapon systems supplied by US/West to strengthen its military capabilities and to increase number of forces without putting more boots on the ground.

a Russian premeditated, unprovoked, and unjustified war against Ukraine. The US also claims that safeguarding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is necessary. In addition, strategically, Ukraine's geopolitical location is crucial for the West as it facilitates its interoperability with NATO by providing security assistance. In January 2021, the US spent more than \$7.62 billion²⁸ on security assistance in Ukraine. From February 24, 2022 onwards, the US/West has tried their best to fail the Russian aim of capturing two-thirds of Ukraine.²⁹ Therefore, the US and the West have a vested interest in Ukraine and are therefore supplying new weapon systems and operational contractors.

Conclusion

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is unfolding where more details are yet to come out to conclude on the accurate usage of private forces involved in the War. Therefore, we need to wait and watch until details become declassified. Nevertheless, the crisis can be summed up as a mixture of hybrid war, information/disinformation warfare, and cyber warfare, with a large number of actors such as volunteers, private forces, and regular soldiers getting involved. In other words, it can be portrayed as an indirect war fought between the US/West and Russia. The US is using Ukraine as a launch pad to defeat Russia. However, the undeniable fact that emanates from the ongoing conflict is the increasing role of private forces and their significant attributes in future warfare. For the first time in history, private forces are openly fighting a conventional war with regular soldiers. One key takeaway from this ongoing War is that states are more likely to employ more private forces than regular soldiers in the coming time. In a similar vein, PMCs are more comfortable and will be prominent in waging information and psychological warfare against enemies. To conclude, using PMCs will be more inclusive in future war.

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United Nations and the Russia–Ukraine Conflict: Efforts and Challenges

VVIDYASHANKAR

United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.

– Dag Hammarskjöld, *Former Secretary-General, UN*

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was formed to maintain International Peace and Security. However, due to the ever-changing geopolitical environment, evolving nature of conflicts and the power equations involved in its functioning, the UN has been, time and again, challenged to ensure the very “International Peace and Security” that it is trying to uphold. The Russia–Ukraine Conflict of 2022 is the latest challenge thrown at the UN and it is not surprising to see the prompt behind-the-curtains power play by the stakeholders in trying to influence the UN response.

The Russian ground offensive over Ukraine on the intervening night of February 23 and 24, 2022 should not be construed as the precipitating moment for the UN to suddenly step in. The UN has been aware of and has been involved in monitoring the crisis in Ukraine much before that.

United Nations and Ukraine Crisis

The issue of the crisis in Ukraine being brought to the doorstep of the UN can be dated back to 2014 when in February, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in the UN wrote a letter¹ to the President of the UN Security Council (UNSC) highlighting the deteriorating situation in Crimea, when the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine and subsequently carried out annexation of Crimea. The UNSC, in turn, held a private meeting² and heard a statement from the Representative of Ukraine on the issue. This was followed by a number of

meetings by the UN which found slow traction due to intense lobbying by the two of the Permanent-5 (P5) members of the UNSC, the United States (US), and the Russian Federation.

The subsequent “Minsk Agreement” signed on September 5, 2014 by the “Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine”, consisting of Russia, Ukraine, and Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) did not abate the fighting in the region. This resulted in the revision and updating of the “Minsk II” Agreement, signed in February 2015. The “Minsk II” Agreement recommended inclusions such as a ceasefire, the removal of heavy weaponry from the front line, reforms of the constitution in Ukraine to grant self-governance to certain areas of Donbas, the restoration of control of the state border to Ukraine, etc. Post the signing of the Agreement, the fighting subsided but the provisions of the “Minsk II” Agreement was not fully implemented in spirit.³ In early 2022, amidst the escalation of tensions between Russia and Ukraine following the massive build-up of Russian ground forces along the borders with Ukraine, Russia claimed that it recognised the Luhansk and Donetsk People’s Republics.⁴ This further led to the President of the Russian Federation proclaiming that the “Minsk Agreements” no longer existed. The UN, in turn, declared that the Russian Federation had “punctured the inviolability of Ukraine’s sovereignty by its formal acknowledgement of the independence of the latter’s territories of Donetsk and Luhansk.”⁵ It is interesting to note that the timing of the ground invasion by the Russian Federation into Ukraine in February 2022 coincided with the Russian Federation holding the appointment of President of the UNSC for February 2022. The political setup in Russia may have been sensitive to this aspect and could have planned to stem the backlash by virtue of their position in the UNSC at that time. As a result, on February 22, 2022, the UNSC failed to adopt a Draft Resolution⁶ on ending the Ukraine crisis as the Russian Federation wielded its veto in its capacity as a P5 member. The UN, in turn, escalated the level and convened an “Emergency Special Session” of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the eleventh such session in the history of the UN. Thus, the UNGA, with a substantial majority (141 votes for, 5 votes against, and 35 abstentions), on March 2, 2022 adopted a resolution⁷ demanding the Russian Federation from illegal “Use of Force” in Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all its forces as well as reverse its earlier decisions on the status of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. This was followed by another UNGA resolution on March 24, 2022 condemning the “Humanitarian Consequences of Aggression Against Ukraine”.⁸ On April 7, 2022, the UNGA further suspended the Russian Federation from membership in the Human Rights Council,⁹ in the wake of reported atrocities against the civilian population of Ukraine.

To date, the UN has been engaged in a range of measures including demanding civilian protection and humanitarian access in Ukraine, appointing three Human Rights experts to investigate possible violations of international law, and making emergency humanitarian appeals to the tune of \$2.4 billion (of which \$1.7 billion has been funded so far) from its partners and the international community, has delivered humanitarian aid to 8.1 million people, and is monitoring the displacement of nearly 8 million internally displaced Ukrainians, some of whom have sought refuge in other European nations.¹⁰

The United Nations Charter and its Constraints to Ukraine Conflict

The UN considers the offensive operations of the Russian Federation in Ukraine territory as having no legal basis. It is neither an act of self-defence nor

The UN considers the offensive operations of Russian Federation in Ukrainian territory as having no legal basis. It is neither an act of self-defence nor mandated by a UNSC resolution.

mandated by a UNSC resolution. The UN Charter (1945), in its Preamble, asserted its constitution “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”¹¹ It was drafted by the international community after very bitter experiences of the two world wars and spurred by the failure of the League of Nations. The Charter aimed “to maintain international peace and

security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace”¹² (Article 1). Thus, the UN has been regularly involved in maintaining international peace through its various agencies and measures. With 71 peacekeeping missions, 41 special political missions, and numerous humanitarian interventions under its belt, the UN has been the singular visible and reasonably effective post world war entity to have succeeded till date, albeit its limitations and lapses enroute. Hence, the UN was expected to intervene in the ongoing Ukraine crisis, and it did. Whether its interventions so far have been adequate and successful, is a matter of separate debate, as the crisis is still ongoing and only time will dictate its future course.

Further, the UN Charter (1945) elaborated that “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”¹³ (Article 2). Hence, the UNGA resorted to its Emergency Special Sessions in condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is seen as a widely collective opinion of the member nations to urge the parties to the conflict to bring cessation to hostilities.

Will United Nations Peace Operations Help?

Chapter VI of the UN Charter (1945) relates to the Pacific Settlement of Disputes, wherein “the parties to any dispute shall seek to solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, or other peaceful means of their choice.” (Article 33) Philip Remler (2020)¹⁴ argues that the Russian participation in the UN is based on interlocking concepts, starting from its definition of International Law, narrowly based on UN Charter and UNSC Resolutions, as opposed to the “Rules Based Order”, which Russia finds as expansive and promotes the interests of the Western powers. Also, the Russian concept of “Multipolarity” leads to its understanding that true sovereignty is possessed only by a few great powers (in this case, its position as a P5 member). Thus, the territories of those states under Russian protection are inviolable and can be defended by force. This argument assumes significance in the light of the Russian Federation’s annexation of Crimea and the current effort to “liberate” the Eastern regions of Ukraine. This is also one of the reasons, why the UN has been unable to resort to Pacific settlement of disputes in the instant case, as the Russian Federation is simply not on board.

Daniel M. Gerstein and Douglas Ligor¹⁵ (2022) argue that UN peacekeeping operations could be introduced in areas where the Russians have withdrawn, like Northern Ukraine. This could usher in the foothold of the UN-led multinational peace efforts in embattled Ukraine. Unfortunately, the Russian Federation holds a key veto power that could scuttle any attempt at peace operations (peacekeeping or peace enforcement). A precedent exists to overcome this, such as when the UNGA passed the “Uniting for Peace” Resolution 377(V)A in 1950 during the Korean crisis, which bypassed the Russian veto in UNSC at that time. This historic resolution allowed the UNGA to vote on recommendations for collective actions such as the call for a ceasefire or a call on willing nations to form a peacekeeping force in Ukraine territory and maintain a pause in the hostilities. While such a resolution did succeed in the Korean peninsula, the current security dynamics and the proximity of Russia to Ukraine cannot fully assure a similar success.

Chapter VII of the UN Charter (1945) relates to “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression”. While, the Russian invasion of Ukraine appears to tick all these three aspects, yet, the UN is on a tightrope here due to the veto power of the Russian Federation in the UNSC. Article 41 states that “the UNSC may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions.” While the UN may consider such measures, economic sanctions against Russian Federation have already been imposed by Western Nations including financial measures, oil and gas sanctions, targeting oligarchs, discontinuance of western businesses in Russia, etc. Any other usage of the Chapter VII provisions in the current context

involving military options could appear to be escalatory in nature, especially so, when one of the parties to the conflict is nuclear armed.

Considering the various arguments, the establishment of any peace operations in Ukraine needs to be carefully weighed and crafted as the Russian Federation is extremely wary of any North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) activity in Ukraine and one needs to weigh the merits of deployment and effectiveness of UN-led multinational peacekeeping force (involving non-NATO members) for the foreseeable future and its long-term contributions in ensuring lasting peace.

The Bane of the Veto

The UN Charter entrusts the UNSC with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Any action requires a “Yes” vote by the P5 members and a “No” or negative vote, is in effect a “Veto”. The sweeping “Veto” power has been a bane since the beginning of the UN and continues to plague the effective discharge of its duties. The alacrity with which the P5 has exercised the veto powers in stopping resolutions needs no elaboration. Statistically,¹⁶ the Russian Federation (earlier the USSR) followed by the US are the largest users of Veto. The Russian Federation has used its Veto 31 times since the USSR broke up while the US has used it 17 times for the same period. China, which exercised its Veto once in 1972, has later used its Veto option 15 times since 1997 while the UK and France have not used it since 1989.

Power equations, geopolitical compulsions, and self-interests have been the key drivers. The Russian Federation’s veto of the draft resolution against its invasion of Ukraine on February 25 is a stark reminder. There have been numerous endeavours in the past to bring changes to veto status, but have not mustered past policy proposals. Spurred by the Veto by the Russian Federation of the draft resolution against it, the UN on April 26 through the UNGA adopted a new resolution calling on the P5 to justify their use of Veto. This makes the UNSC, specifically the Veto member, accountable to the UNGA. While it is a positive step

The Russia–Ukraine conflict has brought out a valuable lesson to the UN; How does the UN meander through the strangle hold of the powerful ‘Veto’ dynamics and fulfil its role?

to curb the self-interest-induced Veto tendency but is it adequate? Emma McClean and Aidan Hehir (2022)¹⁷ postulate that the new resolution on Veto is far from a panacea. The fact that the resolution was passed without objection means that it may not inconvenience the P5 very much, except for being shamed, in some cases. In most cases, the resolutions that may not muster veto during backroom discussions are never brought to the table.

The Russia–Ukraine conflict has brought out a valuable lesson to the UN—the larger issue being, how does the UN meander through the stranglehold of the powerful “Veto” dynamics and fulfil its role? For this, there is a deliberate need to address the constitution of Permanent Membership in the UNSC.

Conclusion

There have been opinions on the relevance of the UN in contemporary contexts. With a chequered history and unending conflicts to resolve, this highly apt world body has, many a time, prevented situations that could precipitate another world war through its numerous initiatives and efforts. No other mechanism can replace it for its ability to build consensus and tirelessly bring out a notion of peace in multi-layered, ever-changing world dynamics. The UN, despite being bogged by the power dynamics of the Veto powers in the Russia–Ukraine conflict, has still kept its heart at the right place to push for peace and bring about solutions to complex problems.

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Ukraine Conflict: First Commercial Space War

G S BAJWA

Introduction

The 1991 Gulf War was the First Space War, i.e. precise targeting and navigation enabled by the Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) satellites being beamed world over 24 × 7 on the satellite television channels. The world witnessed the military utilisation of the space domain leading to an asymmetric advantage for the United States (US) forces. The Ukraine conflict can now be termed the First Commercial Space War. The proliferation of commercial space constellations which are now able to provide services to users even in the conflict domain has expanded.

The services were earlier provided exclusively by the State Enterprise which had invested in the exclusive satellites; however, now in this Second Space Age, a plethora of the US and European space commerce players with competing capabilities are providing space-enabled services like the hyperspectral imageries including Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) imageries of the target areas and also satellite LEO internet data connectivity and strategic communication alongside space domain awareness to enable operation of commercial satellite constellations and also find out spots where jamming and radio frequency interferences are being intercepted and providing information about adversary satellite activities.

The space investment pattern has forced the users of the space domain to go for a hands-on-deck approach. It is exploiting commercial dual-use capability and augmenting its exclusive military capability and also leveraging the strategic partners' capability in the space domain.

Ukraine Conflict Narrative

The Ukraine conflict has been an ongoing frozen conflict since 2014. The present US President Joe Biden administration's first test of its foreign policy was in Afghanistan. The chaotic takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban which

was described by the Indian External Affairs Minister as “throwing a civil society under the bus,”¹ was due to the American decision to withdraw from its “Forever War” and focus itself on the Indo-Pacific for the forthcoming Great Power Competition. In doing so, it has acknowledged China’s rise. Meanwhile, Russia asserted its security concerns in Ukraine and also demonstrated its capability as a net security provider by stabilising Kazakhstan quickly and utilising its security alliance.

The US National Defense Strategy recognises China as its Key Strategic Competitor and Russia as an acute threat to the interests of the US and its allies. Russia, on the other hand, had been seething from the continued simmering conflict in Ukraine and it had sought written guarantees from the US and Europe over the non-expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and it had also pointed out the non-implementation of the Minsk Agreements 2015 by Ukraine.

The mobilisation for the Ukraine “Special Operations” had begun in mid-October 2021. It comprised about 100 Battalion tactical groups. An estimated 1,50,000 troops were mobilised for the operation. The failure of diplomacy led to Russia moving in on Ukraine from four thrust lines, i.e. Kyiv, Kharkiv, Sumy, and northwards from Crimea on February 24, 2022 calling it a Special Military Operation and now 28 weeks later the conflict is still raging in southern and eastern Ukraine. The focus was shifted to the Donbas Region on March 25, it’s now a slow churn of Ukraine forces being pushed out of the Donbas region. While the military success is delayed and limited for Russia, it’s the 30 percent of Ukrainians who have been displaced from their homes who are paying the price. The Black Sea trade has been shut, causing a food security nightmare for some developing countries and the economic losses are estimated at 45 percent of Ukraine’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), leading to world inflation. However, Ukrainians emboldened by the NATO support and limited combat potential being employed by the Russians along with some deliberate “Rules of Engagement” being followed by the Russian forces against “Own Slavic Brothers” have terminated the diplomatic negotiations seeking a guarantee of Ukrainian sovereignty as a pre-condition.

The Stated Aims² of the operation as declared by President Putin were “De-nazification and Demilitarisation of Ukraine and Liberation of the Luhansk and Donetsk Republics,” which were later amended to add “neutral status of Ukraine.” After Ukraine declared that it will not be a part of NATO, the operations shifted eastwards and under the unified command of General Alexander Dvornikov on April 10. However, mixed signals continued to be emitted by Russia with Major General Rustom Minnekow stating that “Control over South Ukraine is another way out to Transineteria.” The Space Domain has not been discussed

much during the conflict other than the sanctions affecting the International Space Cooperation and the disrupted launch of the OneWeb Satellites. More of the information campaign is about sanctioning oligarchs and the health of President Putin and the likely assassination/power struggle within the Kremlin. The US has declared its aim is to weaken Russia through this conflict and will support the Ukrainians to the maximum. It is also trying to isolate Russia from the western world.

This article will identify the lessons which have emerged during the Ukraine conflict specifically in the Space Domain and take forward the conversation on the space security narrative. The lessons can be classified into five major subheads:

- Arrival of the Commercial Space Services and its use in Information Operations.
- Weaponisation of Space and Need for New Space Operation Rules.
- A Divided Space Domain and Weaponisation of Everything.
- Conduct of Operations in the Absence of Surprise.
- Leveraging Advanced Space Powers Capability by Ukraine.

Arrival of the Commercial Space Services and its Use in the Information Operations

The satellite Imagery showcasing the destruction of urban apartment buildings and the logistic inefficiencies/chaos displayed by the 40-mile convoy en route to Kyiv and the timelines of the Bucha killings are just a few examples of the ubiquitous utilisation of the commercial space-based services for developing the themes for information operations.

Besides the Ukraine government seeking satellite imagery, a lot of media houses and think tanks relied on high-resolution imagery from the companies like Black Sky, Maxxar, and Planet which provided it at very short notice. SAR imagery is being provided by CAPELLA Space, Umbra, and IceEye providing radar imagery through the heavy cloud coverage over the conflict zone. The panoply of satellites in orbit over Ukraine meant frequent overflights of key targets allowing rapid verifications of claims and debunking of misinformation. Hawkeye 360 tracked Russian activities in orbit and the Radio and Global Positioning System (GPS) jamming on the ground. Starlink LEO internet satellite constellation is being guided for space operations by the LEO Laboratories for safe space operations.

Commercial satellite imageries with AI have led to identification and elimination of commanders, conduct of operations without the element of surprise and provide quick verification of victory claims to debunk misinformation.

Jamming and Commercial LEO Internet as a Redundancy

Viasat reported jamming of its services across Eastern Europe including Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Starlink stepped in and rerouted its constellation to give coverage over Ukraine and ensured fast delivery of its Satellite terminals. This precedence of the use of commercial services over a conflict zone opens up a new opportunity for space commerce to augment the state assets while complementing its efficiency and flexibility. It not only provided strategic communication within and with the outside world, but also enabled target designations of Russian assets in the Conflict Zone.

Weaponisation of Space and Need for New Space Operation Rules

The Russian Direct Ascent ASAT on November 15, 2021 was essential strategic signalling, the information campaign in the Russian studios highlighted the vulnerability of the GPS constellation which will, in turn, effect world's financial transactions and transportation efficiencies. The spotlight highlighted the GPS as a single point of vulnerability and there is a need to back it up with a terrestrial network comprising ultra-high frequency, low frequency, and fibre backbone link connecting the terrestrial transmitters.

French Space Command had already stated that they are looking at operationalising the co-orbital counter space capability by 2030 and will not develop ASAT capabilities because of uncontrolled debris formation which will be harmful to space operations. On April 18, 2022, the Vice President of the US, Kamala Harris, declared a unilateral ban on the Direct Ascent ASAT³ while speaking at the Vandenberg Space Force Base mentioned that "These tests are dangerous and we will not conduct them." This is a welcome step towards overcoming the lack of international consensus on safe space operations. The United Nations (UN) Office of Outer Space has only been able to create five International treaties for outer space, i.e. 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1968 Rescue Agreement, the 1972 Liability Convention, the 1975 Registration Convention, and the 1979 Moon Agreement. The vintage of these international agreements suggests that they were designed for the Cold War with no verification mechanisms, so is it now a time for this office to be upgraded to a World Space Council to address the needs of the commercial players leading to this Second Space Age. There is a need to ensure safe sustainable space operations for the emerging cis-lunar

economy guaranteeing equitable access to space to all nations and ensuring Debris Mitigation.

China and Russia had on earlier occasions (2008 and 2014) backed the “Draft Treaty on the Prevention of Placement of Weapons in the Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects” (PPWT) in the Conference on Disarmament.

Even the US DoD⁴ in July 2021 had issued directions for “Responsible Behaviour in Space” and in February 2022 had come out with a three-page document⁵ on the Combined Space Operations Vision 2031 for its allies, i.e. the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France, and Germany. The document highlights four objectives, namely, Prevent Conflict, Space Mission Assurance, Unity of Effort, and Defence and Protection.

Nuclear Sabre Rattling

A threat to satellites which are relied upon for missile warning roles, strategic communication, and earth observation can lead to a devastating chain of events due to miscalculations and misunderstanding by any side. There is an existing need to move on from exclusive strategic satellites to a hybrid approach and use of commercial constellations in a disaggregating fashion while also leveraging the dual-use capabilities and strategic partners’ capabilities

Reliance on Missiles by Russia

Russia was not able to achieve total air superiority over Ukraine, and instead of losing its air assets and also signalling its targeting capability across the entire Ukraine, it relied heavily on its missile campaign with around 2,154 missiles launched as per the Ukrainian President in the second week of May, and targeting of the military assets of Ukraine and the warehouses storing NATO supplies. The targeting of the transmitter in Kyiv was a textbook case and it showcased the targeting capability of its GLONASS PNT constellation. However, the strategic dependence on imported microchips is a serious limitation for Russia.

Other Events of Concern in the International Space Security

On June 17, 2021, two NATO ships in the Black Sea reported that their locations on the Automatic Identification System had been spoofed.⁶ A Royal Navy Destroyer and a Dutch Royal Navy Ship moored in Odessa, Ukraine reported their location to be near the Russian Naval Base at Crimea which was 180 miles away from their actual location. On January 7, 2022, the undersea cable to the Nordic Ground Station on the Svalbard Satellite Station was severed.⁷ There was no identification of the attacker. The system had redundancy but it was fully reliant on the second sea cable till it was repaired on January 21, 2022.

A Divided Space Domain and Weaponisation of Everything

The first casualty of this conflict was the international cooperation in space and the notion that outer space will be used as a province for all mankind. The cooperation on the International Space Station due to being decommissioned in 2024 was discussed but ultimately the cooperation continued. ROSCOSMOS refused to launch OneWeb satellites and later, they had to go for launches of their remaining satellites through Space X. There is a talk of a GSLV MK III launch also later in 2022. Europe postponed its Exo-MARS rover cooperation with Russia and some American launch companies had to plan a replacement for the Russian and Ukrainian engines for their launches.

Leveraging Big Technology Algorithmic Governance and Climate Trace

The facial recognition database held by Clearvision Artificial Intelligent (AI) company is now being used to identify individual Russian soldiers in Ukraine and their location is being picked up by the satellite-based ELINT capability. The role of Big Technology leveraging its capability to mute Russia's message to the world has given an asymmetric advantage in the information operations of Ukraine. Another space domain-based project is part of the Climate Narrative. The Climate Trace Project⁶ cues in data from 300 plus commercial satellites into an AI/Machine Learning (ML) database, to monitor every power plant in the world and give real-time information as to the carbon emission in each location of the world. It aims to provide the states with real-time and accurate data needed to take positive climate action for their respective areas. It takes very little to imagine how this capability can also be weaponised.

Conduct of Operations in the Absence of Surprise

The Russian mobilisation was conducted in full view of the world. The commercial satellite imageries were plastered over the television studios discussing various options, but till the time President Putin announced the special military operation, the world thought it was just posturing. The US had vehemently declared a possibility of the offensive going through and hoped that Putin will bow down to the world's opinion against him, but to no avail. Ukraine had not even called for a general mobilisation but the US and Europe had commenced supplying the defensive weapons, i.e. the anti-tank missiles and man-pack portable air defence systems and the decision was taken to defend the cities.

Russia's superior military technology, however, was not able to overcome the Ukrainian resistance and willingness to fight to the last man. Surprise has many dimensions and force posturing is just one of them. It is now time to plan

operations with the enemy knowing the force dispositions and also able to target the administrative columns through hybrid warfare using intelligence derived from satellites imagery.

Leveraging Advanced Space Powers Capability by Ukraine

Success for Ukraine is the stalemate. It has effect on the battlefield and the use of its asymmetric capabilities supplied by the West, i.e. anti-tank and anti-aircraft standoff weapons which have prevented the Russian victory which had appeared imminent within 48 hours of the operations. The successful targeting of the Moskova flagship and the ability to assassinate eight to ten Russian Generals, showcase how Ukraine has been able to leverage the advanced space power capabilities of NATO. The US capability to use its ELINT satellites to cue its earth observation assets has enabled rich intelligence acquisition which has empowered Ukraine.

Conclusion

Outer Space operations have not been effected by the Ukraine conflict so far, but escalations, misunderstandings, and miscalculations are always possible. It is vital for the space community to arrive at finalising the safe space operations rules along with verification processes—the UN Office of Outer Space needs to be converted into a World Space Council. The international cooperation so far arrived at across the world needs to be protected and should not be sacrificed for achieving some brownie points. There is a need to assure equitable access to space for all nations and ensure debris mitigation research which will enable safe sustained space operations in the emerging cis-lunar space commerce opportunity.

Space-based services at the tactical level are essential battle-winning inputs as they enable near real-time situational awareness, command, control, and communication. Ukraine's success in targeting the flagship and Russian Generals enable it to boost the morale of its forces with this asymmetric leveraging of advanced space powers capabilities. The space investment pattern has forced the users of space domain to go in for leveraging the commercial space capabilities with dual-use capability. It is also augmenting its own exclusive military capability and also leveraging the strategic partners capability in the space domain.

The US Space Force now has a budget equal to that of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA),⁷ i.e. USD24.5 billion out of which USD15.8 billion are for research. The US is focussed to find answers to the hypersonic threats being posed by hypersonic missiles of Russia and China. It is deploying the first tranche of its Early Warning Satellites.

The space domain utilisation as an enabler is the key to achieving success on the battlefield. The utilisation extends beyond targeting even by smart artillery munitions, ELINT, situational awareness, and communication. The transparency offered by satellite imageries effects the loss of surprise. It is time to plan operations with the caveat that the enemy is fully aware of the force dispositions and will also be able to target the administrative columns through hybrid warfare. The centrality of space-based service applications for the conduct of multi-domain operations has been acknowledged in this conflict and is also called the First Commercial Space War.

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Weaponisation of History: Poster Wars using the Themes from the Second World War in the Ongoing Russian–Ukrainian Conflict

RAJNISH MAAHI

... Basic Enablers of Globalisation – Finance, Technology, Energy, Law, Education, Science, Trade and Travel – Have all been Turned into Weapons in a new form of Warfare. ... What might be called the ‘Weaponisation of Everything’ is the new reality of Globalisation ...

– Nader Mousavizadeh

Introduction and Background

In the twentieth century, during the industrialisation period, when the two World Wars (WWs) were fought, posters became the first form of information warfare as a means of mass communication and self-identification both in the Allied and Axis Powers. The Clausewitz concept of Trinity of War⁴ was implemented by both the opposing sides during the WWs using posters, speeches, press, etc., to influence the minds, worldviews of millions of people, polity, and the armed forces within and outside their nations. The communist Soviet Union (USSR) has been adept in the art of using posters to recruit young women into the armed forces, exploiting the historic images of the horrors of the Fascist invasion of WW II. The same methods, coupled with social media, are now being applied extensively as weaponised tools in the context of the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict by both sides. The United States (US) Office of War Information set up in 1942 stated that the function of the war poster or the information campaign was to make coherent and acceptable a basically incoherent and irrational ordeal of killing, suffering, and destruction that violates every accepted principle of

morality and decent living. Accordingly, all posters since WW II have been using historic facts and events in a weaponised form to shape perceptions in nations all over the world.

In the present context, such historic themes have been extensively used in the ongoing Ukrainian–Russian conflict, in order to appeal to powerful human emotions. For example, the glorification of the past, the de-humanisation of the enemy, and the concept of the ‘great victory’ are some of these historic themes being used in the conflict. Victory Day, which is a public holiday in the Russian Federation to commemorate the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany and is celebrated in honour of those killed in the years 1941–1945, is now being used to justify and shape public opinion in the Russian operations in Ukraine. The strategic goals behind Russian propaganda have been to establish the concept of a ‘Greater Russia’, to perpetuate Euro-skepticism, and to establish Russian national identity outside Russia.⁵ Victory Day offers the perfect opportunity to exercise power in order to promote these ideologies throughout Eastern Europe. The speeches of President Vladimir Putin focused on celebrating victory, rather than remembering those who lost their lives. In 2022, akin to his 2017 speech, Putin appealed to national pride by saying, ‘We feel a penetrating consanguineous relationship with the generation of heroes and winners’. These words mark a shift away from viewing Victory Day as a tragedy and fit the narrative of Russia

Posters with themes taken from WW II have been used as an information tool in the conflict to raise public consciousness.

as a world power. This article aims to consider the role played by these historic posters in the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian social media campaign and focuses on the analysis of the verbal part (text) and the paralinguistic part (images) of the information warfare tools, i.e., posters. The predominant themes used in Soviet propaganda posters depict the Russian people as a warrior society using the images of historical Russian personalities and referring to their words in the propaganda posters. At the same time, these posters aimed at Russian forces conveyed the message that the Soviet troops would repeat the same victories against the anti-fascist forces in all current operations, reminding the people of the Russian triumphs of the past ‘The same concept is widely being employed in the current Russian–Ukrainian conflict, in the pro-Russian posters that are being analysed in the following section.

Usage of Luhansk People’s Republic/Donetsk People’s Republic Posters from Donbas: Allusions to WW II Imagery and Exploitation of the Soviet Historic Nostalgia

Since the beginning of the war in the Donbas region seven years ago, information warfare through posters has played an integral role in the conflict. In 2017, two

exhibitions⁶ took place in Donetsk. The first one was devoted to posters from WW II and more than fifty posters were brought from Saint Petersburg to Donetsk. They were intended to arouse hatred of the enemy by depiction of the Nazis as demonic creatures, as almost every poster urged the audience to act in a certain way while using straightforward and persuasive style of writing, with exclamatory sentences showing strong feelings and emotions. For example, ‘Beat the fascist raiders!’ or ‘Kill the fascist bigot!’ Imperative sentences were used to convey a command.

Figure 1. To work behind the lines is the same as on the frontline. (left) Russia: Stalinist falcons, beat presumptuous Nazi pirates] (middle)



Source: <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/273934-v-donecke-pokazyvayut-agytacyonnye-plakaty-o-v-oyne#>

Figure 2. Rus: Ubeĭ fashista-izuvera! [Kill the fascist bigot!] (left)



Source: <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/273934-v-donecke-pokazyvayut-agytacyonnye-plakaty-o-v-oyne#>

In addition, the Russians used the narrative of defending the ‘homeland’ from the Ukrainian ‘*junta*’. By labeling the post-revolutionary Ukrainian government as a ‘fascist *junta*’, the Russian Federation was able to depict Ukrainian leaders as German-style fascists which have now been used by Putin to target them

with a Neo-Fascist tag.⁷ It should be noted that many of the contemporary posters had allusions to WW II art and were sometimes almost exact copies of them. The negative depiction of the Ukrainian Army stands in contrast to the positive portrayal of Russian soldiers. The construction of the opponent's image in modern memes, as well as in posters, is also 'based on the exaggeration of negative personality traits, stereotypes and rumors'. Ukrainian soldiers are being depicted as fascists. The Kremlin has been labeling its enemies as fascists for many years, seldom accurately, but often quite successfully.

Figure 3: Russian: *Ochistim nashu zemliu ot hit-lerovskoi nechisti!* [Rid our land of the Hitlerite scum!] (left) Russian: *Komsomoltsy! Uchites nastoichivo voen-*



Source: <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/273934-v-donecke-pokazyvayut-agytatsionnye-plakaty-o-v-oyne#>

Figure 4: Russian: *Riadovoĭ den ' gosudarstvennogo deiatelia Ukrainy* [An ordinary day of a Ukrainian statesman] (left) Russian: *Sokhrani imena tekh, ktosokhranil tebenomu delu! Khrabro, muzhestvenno srazhaĭtes zhizn'. Bessmertnyĭ polk DNR.* [Save the names of those who saved your life. Immortal Regiment of DPR.] (middle) Russian: *Razgromim fashistskikh naletchikov!* [Beat the fascist raiders of those who saved your



Source: <https://kulturologia.ru/blogs/080615/24797/>

The left-hand poster in Figure 4 is a copy of the WW II poster, *An ordinary day of a modern German statesman*. For a more profound impact, the artist used

silhouetted images—including a blue and yellow flag on the person’s sleeve to indicate that the person is Ukrainian. Russian and pro-Russian propaganda routinely describe the Government of Ukraine as ‘a radical and ‘fascist’ minority’, and therefore, such images are rather predictable. Propaganda posters use common and easily-understood symbols that are familiar to the general public. These symbols are used to represent important concepts and ideas. For instance, the skull and blood symbolise death and mortality. It is emphasised that a Ukrainian statesman, like a German statesman during WW II, is killing people and enjoying it. Nowadays, Russian propaganda claims that the Ukrainian authorities are killing their own people and this poster aims to stress that there is a ‘civil war in Ukraine’. Each year on Victory Day, millions of people in Russia march with portraits of their relatives who fought in WW II. They are called the Immortal Regiment and it memorializes those who participated in the Great Patriotic War, as the conflict is known by Russians. Critics of this tradition have accused the authorities of co-opting the tradition to promote patriotism and power, instead of commemorating the country’s war dead, of whom the Soviet Union lost millions. The poster in Figure 4 (right) uses the same slogans (‘Save the names of those who saved your life’) in order to equate the veterans of WW II to ‘DPR’ soldiers.

Figure 5 and 6: [We won, we are winning and we will win!]



Source: Figure 5: <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/269201-v-donecke-pokazaly-kak-studenty-agytyruyut-za-dnr#>; Figure 6: <https://www.prlib.ru/item/320281>

Figure 7 and 8



Source: Figure 7: <http://novosti.dn.ua/news/269201-v-donecke-pokazaly-kak-studenty-agytyruyut-za-dnr#>; Figure 8: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/746471706968329941/>

The poster in Figure 7 refers to WW II military paintings in which the decisive facial expression of a woman was the main feature. In Soviet propaganda posters, women are placed at par with men and were depicted as being both physically and morally strong. Figure 9 is reminiscent of the poster *The motherland is calling you*⁸ (below).

Figure 8 shows a peasant woman with short hair clad in a red cloak holding the Red Army Oath in one hand and raising her other hand behind her triumphantly. In the background, dozens of weapons frame her defiant stance. The 'DPR' poster in Figure 8 also bears a resemblance to the WW II poster *Fascism, the Deadliest Enemy of Women*⁹ with her arms flung open and her wide stance, the woman in this poster recalls Hersilia, the woman who charges into the midst of the battle in David's *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* (Sherwin, 2017).

The Russian Federation and the republics of DPR and LPR use similar methods and principles of poster propaganda to those used in Soviet propaganda posters in WWII. They cover a similar variety of topics to posters imbibed from Russians by contrasting their strength and power to that of its enemies' cruelty.

Ukrainian Propaganda in the Twenty-First Century: From Historic Cossack Myths to WW II and up to the Present Day

The Ukrainians, akin to the 'DPR' have used historical events for influencing their populace. As evident in the March 2015 exhibition, *Junta und Vata* presented works by the Ukrainian artist on two archetypal heroes of the modern mythological dimensions of Ukraine and Russia—'Banderyk' and 'Vatnyk'—depicting the glorification of the Cossack spirit and the exposure of the dark sides of the Russian Federation. Developed akin to the posters of other Soviet republics, the Ukrainian military posters have retained their unique palette of folklore symbols, and images of unbroken historical spirit. Since the Cossack past symbolises power and honour, and an awakening of national consciousness and the struggle for liberation, there are a series of modern military posters that make reference to the Cossack Era. This image was actively used during WW II, when 'red' revolutionaries were identified with famous Cossacks and hetmans. Having analysed Ukrainian Soviet propaganda posters that spread in Ukraine in 1941–1945, it is evident that the Ukrainian artists repeatedly referred to the heroic past of Ukraine. With the depiction of Cossacks in WW II posters, the Russian painters identified the 'red' revolutionaries with famous Cossacks, thus romanticizing the image of the Soviet proletarian, and idealizing the revolution. Modern Ukrainian artists have referred to the image of Cossack Mamay¹⁰, who is a symbol of national identity and 'the people's ideal of the defender of freedom'. Cossack Mamay is one of the most prevalent characters in Ukrainian painting,

usually portrayed with a *kobza*—a lute-like Ukrainian folk music instrument that symbolizes the Ukrainian national soul. Since 2014, after the Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine started, Cossack Mamay began to oppose images of Russian propaganda. In modern military posters, Mamay is pictured with an assault rifle instead of a *kobza* (see Figure 9).

Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Source: <https://io.ua/29552551>

The image of the Cossack is also used when depicting Ukrainian soldiers. In Figure 10, a soldier with both organic and biomechanical body parts is shown. Although he is portrayed as a human being with visibly mechanical parts, specific Ukrainian features of the Baroque style such as the topknot and moustache refer to the past. Figure 11 shows a sword and shield, also belonging to the attributes of the Baroque era that are associated with Cossack savagery, the awakening of national consciousness, and the struggle for liberation.

Furthermore, modern Ukrainian military themes have been using portraits of prominent Ukrainian writers and poets such as Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, and Ivan Franko, as well as passionate lines of their poetry. Figure 12 exploits the image of Lesya Ukrainka who held feminist views and sided with the working people. She repeatedly wrote and said that working people should unite in the struggle for their interests. This poster is reminiscent of the well-known American poster *We can do it!*¹¹ which became a celebrated symbol of female patriotism and a major element of the feminist movement after WW II. The bright yellow painting which depicts a strong woman in working clothes and a red scarf, encouraging her fellow ladies to take wartime jobs in defence industries, was used as a 'symbol of patriotic womanhood'.

Information warfare through posters has been used by Russia to mobilise spirit of nationalism and by Ukraine to awaken people in fight against external aggression.

Figure 12



Source: <https://io.ua/29552528>

Figure 12(a)



Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/383509724519429626/>

Mobilising posters, calling on people to help supply the army by becoming mobilised active soldiers, were widely used during WW II. The mission of these recruitment posters was to mobilise the nation for total war. Nowadays, techniques similar to those outlined above are used as a weaponised form of information. Currently, the majority of army recruitment posters have a patriotic theme. However, there are other topics and methods used, such as portraying a military career as a delightful adventure and an opportunity to achieve higher social status. These kinds of posters are meant to ridicule the enemy, and therefore prove their insolence, worthlessness, and vulnerability.

Likely Impact of the Weaponisation of Historic Information in the Crisis

Ukraine succeeded in attracting attention, which is a feat in a world where the span of attention lasts a couple of days at best and is generally more focused on sports or the latest influencer than on world affairs. The Ukrainians seemed to have mastered the art of information warfare, though Ukraine seems to have fully integrated the exploitation of mainstream media extent into its strategy and operational capacities lead from the front by President Zelensky and his team of Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukrainian armed forces. The same has been demonstrated by the usage of smart phones as part of the kill-chain and as a weapon to target Russian forces. The exploitation of YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, western media, building consensus within North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, European Union. Realignment of Turkey to accept Finland and Sweden as new

members of NATO and finally garnering huge financial, moral, diplomatic and military support for Ukraine from the western world. The Russians, on the other hand, have been able to exploit the divided EU using the tools of economic warfare and effectively influencing its own population while justifying their Ukrainian operations targeted against the Neo-Fascist western world, while successfully keeping the Arab and the Asian continents perceptively isolated from the same.

Conclusion

In summary, WW II imagery and symbols from history have been actively used in the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian conflict by weaponising it as an information tool. Both sides are attempting to depict the most significant historical episodes relating to victories and heroism. Ukrainian and Soviet posters have used themes from WW II and have successfully exploited national symbols, a heroic past, folklore, and their respective artistic heritages. The resultant divide in the world regarding the crisis is a manifestation of the exploitation of this powerful tool of ideological influence on public consciousness. Contemporary artists in Ukraine have used historic Cossack symbols, as well as images of the most significant Ukrainian writers and poets to focus on duty, patriotism, and recruitment. These themes are borrowed from Soviet images as well as from American and British material. Negative feelings, such as hate, fear, and fury are directed towards enemies and positive ones like patriotism and duty are felt towards friends and brotherhoods. Hence, the weaponisation of history at the hands of Nation State has been effectively demonstrated throughout the crisis and will be true for all future campaigns. Therefore, a biographical narrative of the state delineating ‘an experienced space (giving meaning to the past) intertwined with an envisioned space (giving meaning to the future) delineated through horizons of experience and of possibilities’ has emerged and the after-effects or the Post Strike Damage Assessment analysis of the employment of these weaponised information tools in the conflict between nations, in the world, and all future campaigns would form to be an interesting study in itself.

Colonel Rajnish Maahi, SM is a serving Gunner Officer. Views expressed are personal.

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Economic Impact of the Russia–Ukraine War

ASHMINDER SINGH BAHAL

Background

Russia–Ukraine War acted as headwind for a global economy that was slowly emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the International Monetary Fund, the War has impacted three key channels, namely, commodity markets, trade, and financial linkages. Higher food and energy prices have triggered greater inflation, eroded spending power, and weakened demand. This has spurred capital outflows from emerging markets.¹ In India, Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) outflow has crossed 2 Lakhs crores.² Stock markets have fallen by around 10 to 15 percent till June 2022. Crypto currencies too have fallen with Bitcoin dropping from USD 68,990 in November 2021 to around USD 20,433 (June 15, 2022). The United Nations (UN) estimates that there will be nearly one percent reduction in global Gross Domestic Production (GDP) with China, the United States (US), and the European Union (EU) economies slowing down, whilst European economies will slow down from 3.9 percent to 2.7 percent as it imports 57.5 percent of its energy requirements. The War has costed Ukraine an estimated USD 600 billion worth of direct/indirect damage and halted exports of its key products.³

Sanctions on Russia

The US-led sanctions on Russia resulted in freezing a significant part of their USD 630 billion foreign exchange reserves. The sanctions are aimed at hurting the Russian economy and include restrictions on foreign transactions to Russian banks whilst expelling them from the SWIFT system. Apple Pay, Google Pay, and other digital wallets are suspended in Russia. More than 1000 Western Multinational Companies (MNCs) such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, Marks and Spencer, and Information Technology (IT) giants have stopped their operations. The sanctions have cut off major Russian banks from the US financial system, banned Russia's technology imports, and targeted Russian oligarchs.

The sanctions prevent foreign investors to sell Russian stocks/bonds, and Russia is edging towards a default on bonds. Most European countries have banned Russian flights and imposed a ban on the export of dual-use items. EU has approved cutting off Russia's seaborne oil exports and reducing their dependency on Russian oil by 90 percent by end 2022. They are also searching for alternate natural gas sources. Meanwhile, Russia has cut gas supplies to five nations, namely, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, Bulgaria, and Denmark for their refusal to pay in Roubles.

Russia–Ukraine Global Trade

The conflict between two key commodity exporters has severely disrupted supply chains in several developing and small countries. In 2021, Russia shipped USD 491.6 billion worth of goods, with their biggest exports being crude oil, refined petroleum, coal (third largest exporter), gold, and non-alloy steel goods.⁴ 63.3 percent of Russian products are exported to China (13.8 percent), the Netherlands (8.6 percent), Germany (6 percent), Turkey (5.4 percent), Belarus (4.6 percent), the United Kingdom (UK) (4.5 percent), Italy (3.9 percent), Kazakhstan (3.8 percent), US (3.6 percent), South Korea (3.44 percent), Poland (3.4 percent), and Japan (2.2 percent). 50.8 percent of Russian exports are to European countries while 39.8 percent to Asia.⁵ Russia and Ukraine are also major suppliers of raw materials used in the semiconductor industry.

Russia is the world's largest exporter of gas (Europe imports around 40 percent) and wheat (16.9 percent globally) and the third largest producer of oil (Europe imports 27 percent). *Europe is, therefore, significantly affected due to higher energy prices and supply chain disruptions.* Russia is the biggest exporter of fertilizer and exports 38 percent of the world's palladium (used in electronics/mobile phones/memory and sensor chips/automotive exhaust systems) and 13 percent of platinum. Shutting Russia from the international system has seriously impacted Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia. If Russia is completely shut out, the oil prices could easily escalate to USD 175 per barrel. This would have serious worldwide ramifications leading to the global recession.

Higher oil prices have made Russian oil attractive as it is sold at a discount. The EU has bought around USD 60 billion (till May 31, 2022) of energy resources from Russia, whilst Russia earned a record USD 97 billion in the first 100 days of the War. Though the EU bought 23 percent less gas, Russian oil exports to Asia have increased five times and oil exports to India have increased multiple times in the corresponding period with respect to May 2021. This is reflected by the Rouble initially depreciating to 135.50 per dollar, which has now appreciated to around 61 per dollar.

Ukraine produces 46 percent of the world's sunflower oil and is the fifth largest wheat and grain producer. Russia and Ukraine together export around 30 percent of the world's wheat to Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Kazakhstan). Ukraine also exports around 15 percent of corn. This War has resulted in significantly increasing grain prices globally. It is here that the food security of several nations is severely affected.

Ukraine is likely to lose over 20 percent of its winter wheat production due to its inability to harvest and the impact on the spring planting is likely to be more, which will impact corn production. If only grain production and demand were evaluated, ignoring geopolitical variables, the EU, the US, and India can easily compensate for wheat, whilst the US and Argentina can compensate for corn.⁶ At the same time, keeping inflation in mind, India has banned indiscriminate wheat exports.

Global Impact of War on Commodities and Inflation

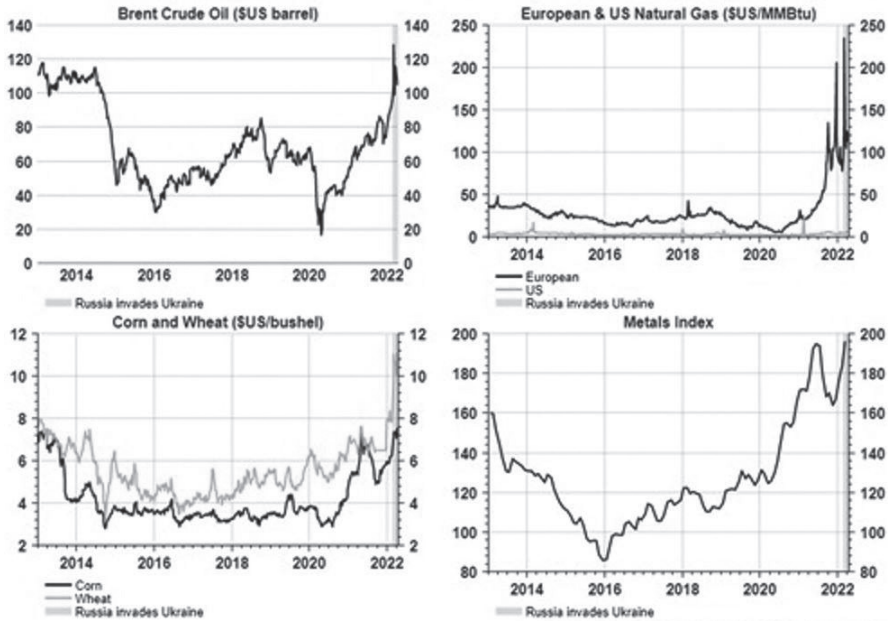
The War has eroded short-term global economic prospects and the impact has primarily been through the commodity markets. Russian and Ukrainian supplied commodities, such as energy, wheat, fertilizers, and metals, have risen sharply.⁷ Logistical bottlenecks, shortages of intermediate inputs, and sluggish supply of energy commodities have fuelled global inflationary pressures.⁸ With 26 million tonnes of grain stuck in Ukraine and due to supply chain disruptions, the cost of wheat has increased by 56.2 percent from last year, Brent crude oil price from USD 90 at the end of the last year to between USD 120 and USD 125 per barrel, which has since come down to around \$100–\$102 and gas prices from USD 3.35 in May 2021 to a record high of USD 8.85–9 per MMBtu in June 2022. Price increases have impacted dairy products, cereals, and vegetable oil and commodity prices have increased by an average of 26 percent from the beginning of this year.⁹

The war has eroded short-term global economic prospects and the impact has primarily been through the commodity markets.

At 8.6 percent, the US inflation is at its highest in the last 41 years, it has come down from 9.1% and the average inflation for European countries is 8.1 percent. India's WPI inflation in May 2022 stood at 15.9 percent, which is the highest since September 1991. The prices of vanaspati oil, wheat, mustard oil, cooking gas, petrol, and sugar have increased significantly. The natural reaction to higher inflation is to increase interest rates, which tightens the money supply, thereby throttling growth. Meanwhile, the EU announced that it would reduce oil supplies from Russia by around 90 percent, which is likely to escalate the oil and gas prices further. This has already resulted in increased gas production

and use of coal, which will have a severe climatic impact as it increases harmful emissions. Already Carbon-di-oxide (CO₂) emissions are at a record high. The commodity price charts are placed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Commodity Price Charts



Source: Accessed from Anil Thakersee, *Executive of Marketing & Business Development at PPS Investments*. Ripple effect of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, 26 May 2022.

Impact on South Asia

South Asian nations are the net importers of oil and Asian economies are consumption-based with food and energy accounting for nearly half the consumption expenditure, the rising oil prices, therefore, affect the Asian markets more than any other region of the world.¹⁰ Sri Lanka and Pakistan have been badly affected. The Sri Lankan WPI has been extremely high, and fuel has been rationed with acute shortages of food and medicines leading to riots in most of their cities/towns.

Russia is India's 25th largest trading partner. Imports from Russia comprise diamonds, nitrogenous fertilizers, coal, and refined petroleum and exports to them include tea, medicaments, telephones, motor vehicles, and parts and flat-rolled stainless steel products.¹¹ India imports around 80–85 percent of its oil and 55 percent of gas requirements and despite increasing cheaper oil imports from Russia, the import cost is still at a record high. Higher oil and gas prices have

increased the current account deficit and have fuelled inflation. It has reduced real wages and spending power. The energy prices have also impacted homes, aviation, paint, tyre and fertilizer companies, thereby, further fuelling inflation.

Alternative to the United States Dollar

Though the US produces only 16 percent of the world's goods and services, the US dollar accounts for nearly 60 percent of the world's foreign reserves and is used as Petro-dollar. This role may diminish in the wake of US sanctions. Other countries may now want an alternate financial system.¹² Russia is already working out payments through Gazprom Bank. A total of twenty European companies have already opened accounts in April 2022 and under this mechanism, two accounts are opened—one in foreign currency and the other in roubles.¹³ Russia is also proposing a rouble-based payment system called “System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS).” China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), processes payments in Yuan and has the potential to replace SWIFT. It has a network of 1,280 financial institutions.¹⁴ It is just a matter of time before an alternate financial system will be found.

Fall Out of Ukraine War in Increasing Defence Spending

The Ukraine war may rejuvenate Cold War style economic interactions. Russia may not be the preferred state for sourcing despite the probable reduction in sanctions after the War ends. Western companies, including high-end technology MNCs, may not return quickly to Russia, and fear of escalation in the Baltic countries may make Europe reduce its energy dependency on Russia. Russian oil production may therefore decline. Similarly, Russian manufacturers may not get access to sourcing automobiles and machinery components. With the increase in oil and gas prices, the sanctions' effect on the Russian economy may be lesser as the world needs Russian energy. Russia may also find alternate markets for its energy and grain exports. Meanwhile, the US continues to provide weapon systems and assistance to Ukraine to prolong the economic and military costs on Russia.

The maximum effect of the War, however, is the destruction caused in Ukraine and the reconstruction costs could climb to trillions of dollars. The Economist's Intelligence Unit recently estimated that Russia's invasion of Ukraine will cause the Ukrainian economy to contract by 46.5 percent this year(2022) and it will not fully recover until 2037. Ukraine would suffer from reconstruction problems, unemployment, poverty, assimilating internally displaced population, high inflation, and lead time required to set up new industries or find new sourcing locations.

The second fallout could be increased defence spending by several European and Asian nations. Germany has already committed to increasing its defence spending for 2022 to USD 112.7 billion and Japan is modernising its self-defence forces. The majority of Europe's military requirements could be met by American companies. This is likely to boost the American Defence Industrial complex. The US has approved USD 1.5 trillion in government funding that allocates USD 782 billion toward defence, six percent more than the last year (2021). The Bill also provides USD 6.5 billion in military support to East European countries, including USD 3.5 billion in additional weapons for Ukraine. In actuality, the US has already spent close to USD 5 billion to assist Ukraine. With China muddying the Indo-Pacific region, the global defence spending is likely to increase further and acquisitions shift more towards western manufacturers.

The major fall out of the conflict is likely to be increased defence spending by several European and Asian nations which will benefit American Defence Industrial Complex.

India's Economic Response to Ukrainian War

Analysing inflation causes has indicated that in daily life, food and energy have been the key drivers of impacting the prices of goods and services. The rupee has depreciated to 78.25 per dollar (June 15, 2022), thereby making imports expensive. India earlier imported sunflower oil from Ukraine. Ukraine's war has also impacted the diamond industry in Gujarat as 27 percent of rough diamonds are imported from Russia.

This War has disrupted the global supply of both grains and energy. India being the second largest producer of wheat has produced 1,08,500 (1,000 Million Tonnes) of wheat this year (2022) but has banned its exports in May 2022. Exceptions to India's wheat exports include earlier contractual commitments, government-to-government sales, and food security purposes; the export forecast of 7 million tonnes this year (2022), is still way above India's export average.¹⁵

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended strong structural reforms that include addressing supply-side bottlenecks, calibrating monetary policies to reduce inflation, and boosting capital spending. Fiscal prudence would be the key. Supply-side policy interventions include removing customs duty on raw cotton, balancing wheat exports, reducing cess on petrol, increasing duty on steel products, reducing duty on raw materials for plastic manufacturing, limiting sugar exports, and removing customs duty on import of sunflower and soyabean oil. The government is addressing some of these issues, but the common man is feeling the brunt.

Conclusion

Russia–Ukraine war was a double whammy to the developing and small countries that were already suffering from Covid induced supply chain disruptions, lockdowns, and shortages of food, medicines, and essential commodities. The War has worsened the near-term global economic growth and created a humanitarian crisis. The conflict has led to severe food, fuel, gas, fertilizer, and financial calamities in several South Asian, South American, and African countries. Specially affected are Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, and Caribbean-based economies that heavily depend on Tourism. Around 7 million Ukrainian refugees based in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova, and other countries strain the food security and economy of these nations. The Russian economy is expected to shrink by 10 percent in 2022 and will probably recover more quickly than that of Ukraine, which could remain affected till 2037.

The War has also highlighted that globalisation has a limited impact on preventing conflicts and global defence spending is increasing further. The Russia–Ukraine conflict is a boon to American defence contractors, due to increased Western spending to boost Ukrainian/European militaries.¹⁶ Life is likely to become more difficult for the lower-income class. This will further increase income inequality. It is in the interest of the world and humanity that this War is brought to a quick end and that mechanisms are put in place so that future wars don't affect international economies badly. The dictum that “together we win and individually we all lose” is proved as never before. The economic effort requires an integrated global response, which includes synergistically filling up supply gaps and increasing OPEC plus crude output to cool oil prices.

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Russia–Ukraine Crisis: Three-Dimensional Implications for the Middle East

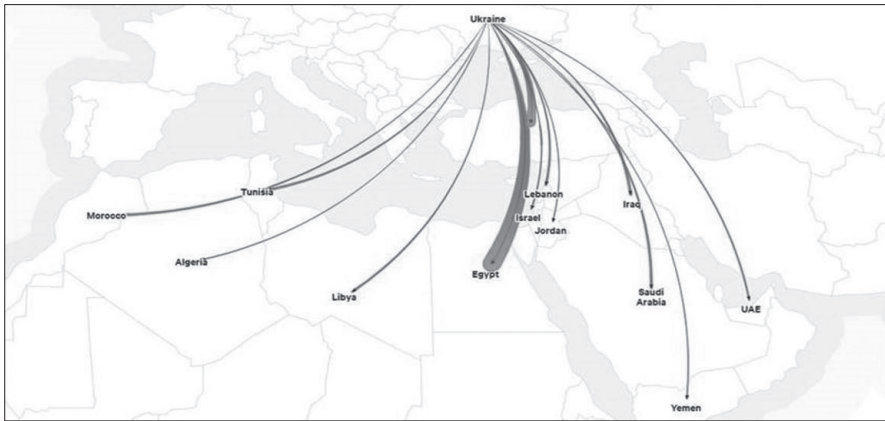
MANJARI SINGH

The Middle East is bearing a huge brunt of the ongoing European war which has not only impacted the region's geopolitical stability but has severely stressed its food security concerns, job markets, and energy prices. The impact of the War is overwhelming and has the potential to impose restraints on the region's fragile economy and overall social fabric. Through diplomatic maneuvering, even though the Middle East nations have been trying to employ a balancing act, vis-à-vis, Russia and the West led by Americans, the implications on its food security issues are compelling and have the potential to spike another Arab uprising kind of situation. The countries in the region are wary of any such occurrence and therefore are watchful of the ongoing European crisis. In short, as per a study conducted by *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, a month after the conflict broke between Russia and Ukraine, the crisis is impacting the wider Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in three principal arenas, namely, geopolitical consideration and military actions and diplomacy, food security, and gas and oil supplies.¹

Ferid Belhaj, World Bank Vice President for MENA, mentions a compounded stress on the region owing to the ongoing crisis. He further illustrates through a not-to-scale map that if an imaginary straight line is drawn from the European conflict-prone region to MENA, then the region is only roughly 1,000 kilometre from the European soil and thus a distant neighbour (Figure 1).

This means that the spillover effects of the Russia–Ukraine conflict are bound to affect the Middle East. The compounding stress as envisaged by Belhaj is divided into five categories, namely, food price shocks (especially wheat); oil and gas price hikes; global risk aversion/flight to safety which could impact private

Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Spillover Effect of Russia–Ukraine Crisis on the Middle East



Source: World Bank, 2022.

capital flows to emerging markets; remittances, and finally tourism.² Three major spillover effects have been discussed in the article, namely, geopolitical considerations, food security, and effects on hydrocarbon respectively.

Geopolitical Considerations

Long-term diplomatic isolation of Russia in the aftermath of its invasion of Ukraine can have glaring repercussions on the Middle East especially when the region was once again getting drawn to Russia, especially in its drive towards military diversification. This became necessary in the aftermath of the United States' (US') decision to withdraw from the region in the recent past.³ However, in the geopolitical and military realm, countries that have a direct influence on Russian military intervention are the only ones that would be impacted by the crisis. These countries include Egypt, Syria, Libya, and Turkey. While in Syria, the Russian military intervention of 2015 paved the way for its reassertion in the region and is thus considered a pivotal moment in Moscow's new Middle East Policy, its increased intervention in Libya since early 2017 aimed at resolving the country's conflict situation by supporting Tobruk-based House of Representatives rather than United Nation (UN)-backed Government of National Accord, ascertained Moscow's growing influence in the Middle East.⁴

Given their geostrategic interests, similar to the global response, the countries in the region also resorted to strategic response based on their equations with the Russian Federation. For instance, while the majority of the countries condemned the violence, use of force and invasions without taking names, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) abstained in both the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

and United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings, while countries directly impacted by Russian interventions, as mentioned earlier, responded accordingly based on their equations with Moscow, most notable of these countries being Syria and Libya.

It is noteworthy that owing to Russian support for Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, the Syrian government instantly affirmed Russia's recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. Moreover, Syrian state media claimed that Assad had conveyed his regime's readiness to acknowledge the Republic of Donetsk and had proposed an agreement to build relations much earlier in December 2021. Additionally, only a day after the conflict broke out, that is, on 25 February Assad had called Vladimir Putin to praise Russia's actions as a "correction of history and a rebalance to the world... lost after the dissolution of the Soviet Union". Assad also emphasized his country's support to Russia against North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) expansion. Such unwavering support by Syria emanates from its insecurity lest it loses Russia's military support in strengthening the government's hold on the country and for the Assad regime to succeed.⁵ However, Damascus must also worry that continued European war also means that Russia would like to use its force deployed in Syria to be focused on Ukrainian borders, this again undermines the Syrian regime holding its ground against the western-supported civil war on its soil.⁶ On the contrary, given that Russia supports the opposition group in Libya, the Foreign Ministry in Libya's Government of National Unity (GNU) released a statement strongly refusing to recognise the two breakaway regions.

Meanwhile, Moscow's relations with Ankara are eccentric in nature, given that both countries had significantly improved their relations post the dissolution of the Soviet Nation in 1991. The fact that both the nations are each other's largest trading partners with a trading volume of US \$26.30 billion (2019) with an import of US \$22.4 billion imports from Russia, and the US \$3.85 billion in exports from Turkey,⁷ topped with Turkey being one of the largest importers of Russian oil (Russia accounts for a quarter of Turkish oil imports and 45 percent of its gas imports)⁸ and the countries' cooperation in the field of energy wherein TurkStream and Akkuyu Nuclear power plants projects along with other 1972 projects worth US \$75.7 billion, are indicative of flourishing relations between the two nations.⁹

However, at the same time, the two countries are at crossroads when it comes to foreign policy decisions. Both Russia and Turkey stand at the opposite ends on various regional issues concerning their national security aspirations such as in crucial and tense situations such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Syrian, Libyan civil wars, Kosovo conflict and hold opposing views on the Armenian genocide.¹⁰ Despite being a NATO member state, Turkey not only offered to

brokered peace between Russia and Ukraine in the ongoing conflict but in the aftermath of energy sanctions on Moscow, Ankara also agreed to import Russian gas while paying for some amount in Rubles.¹¹ This not only reflects Ankara's dependence on Moscow's energy imports which accounts substantially for its

Geopolitical implications of Russian Ukraine conflict in the Middle East is limited and restricted to those countries with which either Moscow has flourishing trade relations or wherein Russia has marked its strategic footprint by militarily intervening in the domestic equations

hydrocarbon requirements but also shows Turkey's amicability with Russia specially in the economic dimension.

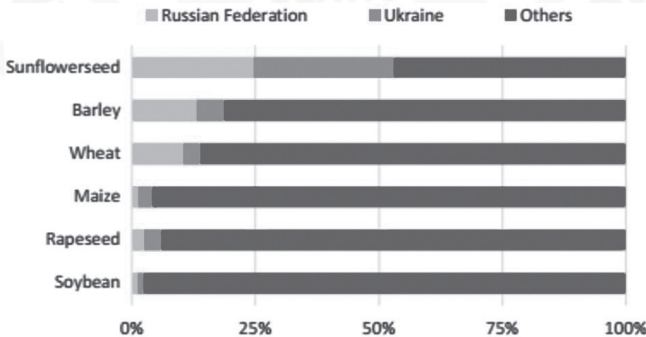
Thus, as stated earlier, geopolitical implications of the ongoing crisis in the Middle East is limited and restricted to only those countries with which either Moscow has flourishing trade relations or wherein Russia has marked its strategic footprint by militarily intervening in the domestic equations. Given Moscow's moderate toolkit in the Middle East owing to its less than a decade-old reassertion

in the region, Russia is yet not a major player in the regional dynamics and thus is regarded as a "Jack of All Trades but Master of None" in the wider West Asian region.¹²

Food Insecurity

The most distressing impact of the ongoing war has been on massive and deteriorating food security situation not just in Ukraine but also in the Middle East, a region that is majorly dependent on the two Eurasian countries for its food requirements. While there are immediate food shortages in the international

Figure 2: Russia and Ukraine's Share in Global Food Production



Source: FAO, 2022. Food and Agriculture Organization had stated the following key challenges to the agricultural sector in Ukraine which will impact the global food supply chain in the immediate times and also in the times to come lest there is no solution to the War:

food market, the War has disrupted the agricultural growing season in Ukraine which will have dire implications for food production for years to come. As per a report by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), “the war has led to port closures, the suspension of oilseed crushing operations, and the introduction of export licensing restrictions and bans for some crops and food products.”¹³

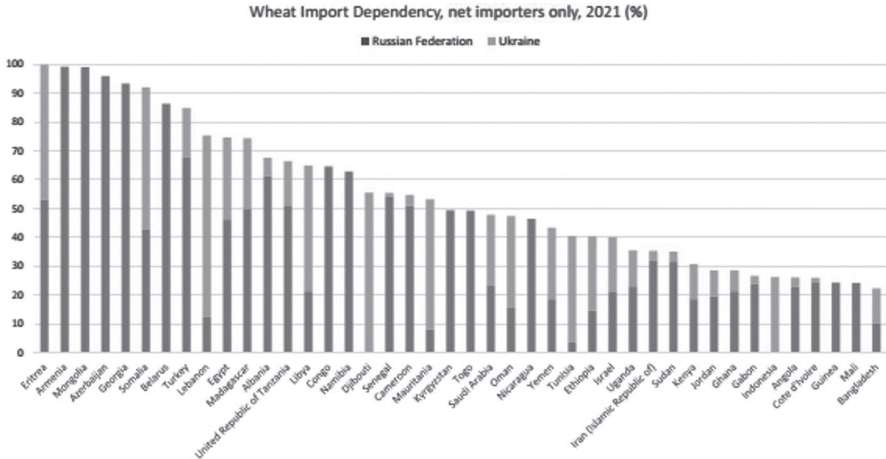
The report affirms that both the European countries are the most important agricultural producers in the world and are net exporters of agriculture-related products (Figure 2). Both play a leading role in supplying foodstuffs and fertilizers to the global market. Combined, both Russia and Ukraine accounted for 19, 14, and 4 percent of the global output of barley, wheat, and maize respectively between 2016/21 and 2020/21. In the oilseed complex, the two countries contributed immensely to sunflower oil with just over half of global output in the same period. In 2021, as per FAO: [E]ither the Russian Federation or Ukraine (or both) ranked amongst the top three global exporters of wheat, maize, rapeseed, sunflower oil, and Russia stood as the world’s top exporter of nitrogen fertilizers and a second leading supplier of potassium fertilizer and third largest exporter of phosphorous fertilizers.

- Disruption to winter harvesting and spring planting;
- Agricultural labour availability, impacted by displacement;
- Access to and availability of agricultural inputs, particularly fuel, seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides;
- Disruption of logistics and all elements of the food supply chains;
- Abandonment of and reduced access to agricultural land;
- Damage to crops due to military activity, especially during vegetative stages in spring; and
- Destruction of agri-food system assets and infrastructure.

Since the majority of the countries in the Middle East are dependent on huge food imports from both Russia and Ukraine, the prolongation of War direly affects their food security. As per the FAO report, as many as 50 countries (of which 10 are in the Middle East and North Africa) are dependent on Russia and Ukraine for at least 30 percent of their wheat imports. In the MENA, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Tunisia, Iran, Jordan, and Morocco import enormously from both countries (Figure 3).

To elaborate, Egypt is the largest importer of wheat in the world and imports around 13 million tonnes of wheat annually of which over 70 percent come from Russia and Ukraine. For Yemen, the situation is direr—given its existing and increasing food insecurity and malnourishment owing to the civil war. Yemen procures nearly 45 percent of its wheat imports from both European countries and thus is largely affected by the ongoing crisis. Lebanon, a country facing

Figure 3: Global Wheat Import Dependency on Russia and Ukraine, 2021



Source: FAO, 2022.

its worst economic crisis topped with the increasing influx of Syrian refugees, procures 75 percent of its wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine, while the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) combined imports 90 percent of its wheat requirements from the two warring countries in Eurasia.¹⁴

Hydrocarbon Considerations

Another dimension that is heavily impacted by the ongoing war is the hydrocarbon sector. While most of the countries in the Middle East are energy exporting countries themselves, a disruption in the hydrocarbon global supply chain may seem as an opportunity to expand their markets and to sell from their reserves. A World Bank estimate suggests that the hydrocarbon exporting countries in the MENA such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, and Algeria might see an improvement in both fiscal and external balances and higher growth in the sector. However, they may not be able to regulate global energy prices owing to increasing demand. The estimate suggests that the Middle Eastern countries exporting gas may see an expansion in demand in the European Union (EU) as the EU diversifies its energy sources.¹⁵

However, following Biden's request to redirect natural gas to Europe in times of escalation, Qatari Energy Minister Saad al-Kaabi stated on February 22 that it is impossible for his country to meet the requirements fulfilled by Russia in terms

of gas supplies to the continent and thus, it will not be able to replace Russian gas supplies in the region.¹⁶ Likewise, Saudi Arabia, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) partner signatory country along with Russia, reaffirmed its commitment to the Agreement within a week of the conflict. Riyadh had stated that despite widening sanctions on Moscow it will respect the commitment made under the OPEC+ Agreement. It is yet to be seen if the Middle Eastern country which has recently warmed up its nearly sour relationship with the Biden administration during the American President's tripartite visit to Israel, Palestine, and Saudi Arabia in early July, will change its stance on hydrocarbon supplies.

On balance, the Russia-Ukraine crisis has both a direct and an indirect impacts on the Middle East. While geopolitical, food security, and hydrocarbon considerations are worth pondering, a prolonged crisis in any of these aspects can disturb the socio-economic fabric of the region. Already having witnessed an Arab uprising, growing resentment within the population especially because of inflation and increase in food prices will have negative consequences on the political systems in the region. In that regard, other factors notwithstanding, India along with some of the technologically advanced partners in the region such as Israel and UAE can cater to the region's food diversification source. In that context, minilateral partnerships like India-Israel-UAE-USA have a crucial role to play in addressing the food security concerns in the wider Middle East region.

Dr. Manjari Singh is an Associate Fellow at CLAWS, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.

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withdrawal of the US troops from Syria and Iraq and feeble support to Saudi Arabia and the UAE when their respective oil facilities were allegedly attacked by the Iran-backed Houthi militia of Yemen. However, soon after, probably the US administration realised its strategic mistake and as a course correction devised the famous infamous Peace Plan and later on brokered Abraham Accords, or normalisation between the Arabs and Israelis.

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Smartphones and the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict

VIVEK VERMA

*When wireless is perfectly applied, the whole earth will be converted into a huge brain... A man will be able to carry one in his vest pocket.*¹

– Nikola Tesla, 1926

Contextualising the Use of Smartphones in Modern Warfare

The duopoly of Apple iOS in 2007 and Google Android OS in 2008 has revolutionised how people communicate today. Smartphones, riding on the Global Positioning System (GPS) trackers with mapping facilities mounted on chips through Artificial Intelligence (AI), have metamorphosed into a platform over which social engineering was carried out during Arab Spring in 2010 and the Colour Revolution in satellite countries of Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. The increasing role of non-military means in achieving political and strategic goals has been highlighted by Russia's Chief of the General Staff and the current architect of the Russo-Ukraine conflict, General Valery Gerasimov, in his February 2013 article, "The Value of Science is in the Foresight", published in the weekly Russian trade paper *Military-Industrial Kurier*. According to him, the rules of war have metamorphosed with emphasis on attacking the enemy's society. The third Moscow Conference on International Security conducted on May 23, 2014 by the Russian Ministry of Defense accused the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) of creating destabilising revolutions through social engineering.² The Gerasimov Doctrine of non-linear warfare places politics and war within the same spectrum of activities. It builds a framework for using regular and irregular forces and other elements of national powers—psychological, economic, and diplomatic. The approach is, therefore, multi-domain with a range of actors and tools employed across all fronts.

Lessons from 2014: Credible Themes on the Information Highways

The year 2014 tested the US primacy of social media use and the electronic space in Mosul and Crimea. Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) militia used the available information highway to defeat the 25,000 Iraqi forces supported by Americans in Mosul town. ISIS employed smartphone-obsessed and internet-savvy Sunni Iraqi teenagers to exploit the deep-rooted sectarian mistrust between the Shia majority and the Sunni minority. These youth acted as willing spies and recruits to well-crafted ISIS online forums coordinated via messaging service. ISIS pre-empted its vanguard action through the Twitter storm “#AllEyesOnISIS”, which went viral. The images of ISIS fighters inspired these Sunni men to indulge in terror acts as they openly supported the ISIS invaders. The Shia, Christian, and Kurdish residents of Mosul and the large numbers of Iraqi troops were consumed with fear as they witnessed the atrocities and could track the invading ISIS publicised advance on their smartphones.

Even before 1500 ISIS fighters arrived, the soldiers gripped with fear abandoned the Mosul Garrison without even fighting. ISIS integrated internet and Instagram filters on smartphone platforms. The War moved beyond the scope of hackers, malicious malware creators, financial disruptions, and outages to another dimension. In the Mosul war, a viral campaign strategy was used to overwhelm the residents and soldiers. It also provided good publicity for ISIS to open militant recruitment franchises across the globe.³ Mosul's case showed that the information highway was available to everyone to harness and exploit their interests.

Similarly, the Russian information teams' fantasy could become credible in the Crimean crisis—thanks to the internet and social media. In November 2013, the Ukrainian government led by the then President Viktor Yanukovich decided to suspend the signing of the agreement with the EU and chose closer ties with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union. It sparked mass protests in Ukraine known as “Euromaidan” with calls for the resignation of the Yanukovich government. It was a major breach of the “zone of privileged control” exercised by Russia around the Black Sea. It prompted Russia to create a safe sanctuary for the launch of a proxy war after Yanukovich's ouster. Russia engineered separatist violence as a convenient pretext to launch a full-scale multi-domain invasion to annex Ukraine's autonomous state of Crimea.

On February 27, 2014, unmarked Russian Special Forces or the “little green men” who wore Russian military uniforms without insignia seized critical infrastructure in Crimea with almost no bloodshed. Russia imposed a complete electronic eclipse over Crimea. It ensured no electromagnetic communications

worked, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), radios, cell phones, smart artillery munitions, and television. Russia identified Ukrainian command and control nodes by tracking electromagnetic emissions and targeted them using Unmanned Combat Aerial vehicle (UCAV) or massed artillery fire. Influence operations coupled with lawfare were used to legitimise the Russian annexation of Crimea. The swift referendum in support of Russia was presented by Putin in his address to Duma on March 18, 2014.⁴ The loss of Crimea and feeble response from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the US pushed Pentagon to ratify President Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy of declaring Russia and China as strategic competitors. However, Ukraine paid the price for not adopting new technology before gravitating out of the Russian zone of privileged control.

Redesigning Ukraine Digital Terrain Post-Crimean Crisis

The Crimean crisis exposed the Ukrainian troops to the need to inculcate creativity in warfare. Constant combat against Russian separatist proxies in eastern Ukraine has demonstrated to them the utility of the cyberspace environment and measures required to counter the Russian hybrid warfare threat. The key concern was to fix digital infrastructure through technological innovations. 2018 Approach Paper "Ukraine 2030: The Doctrine of Sustainable Development" published by experts from almost five Ukrainian universities provided the answer for the integration of Ukraine with the developed world, implying with the EU and the US.⁵ The paper highlighted that the loss of Crimea led to a 25 percent loss in the GDP. It recommended 17 goals for economic development, of which the most important aspect was the creation of stable infrastructure based on a networked economic cluster. Hence, the Ukrainian government's foremost priority was to fortify the information communication technology sector against Russian cyberattacks.

Ukraine Ministry for Digital Transformation (MDT) was established in 2019 to usher in the transformation. It aimed to end Ukrainian reliance on Russian technology and service providers like Kyivstar by developing a home-grown startup ecosystem by attracting foreign technology companies. Oleksandr Bornyakov, current Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation, has been the man behind Ukraine's digital war with Russia. Ukraine's ability to communicate with the rest of the world despite the launch of Russian aggression on February 24, 2022 has been the outcome of strengthening of communication backbone and collaboration with Musk's Starlink satellite internet terminals technology. Ukrainian ability to use the digital highway has helped it to ramp up support and combat Russian digital disinformation manoeuvres. MDT's ability to muster volunteer resistance Information Technology (IT) Army of more than

Ukraine’s ability to muster volunteer resistance IT Army of civilians worldwide has helped contest Russian influence operations through various social media channels to fight misinformation, disinformation, surveillance and targeting.

3,00,000 diffused civilians⁶ worldwide has helped contest Russian influence operations. These IT warriors are the most powerful weapon in Ukraine’s digital arsenal. They have been coopted in the War effort through various social media channels to fight misinformation, disinformation, surveillance, and targeting.

Forward Thinking and Flexible Mindset

In 2020, MDT launched the Decentralised Infrastructure for Internet Accountability (DIIA) Application. “DIIA” in the Ukrainian language means “Action”. It is part of the “State in a Smartphone” project designed with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and twelve international partners, including the EU, the US, Canada, Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland. This application employs and extends the Identity-Based Cryptography (IBC) mechanism to cryptographically authenticate Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and prefixes without introducing any global trusted authority with absolutely no restrictions within the country. It has twelve service centres spread across Ukraine to provide administrative services that combine identity cards, passports, licenses, vaccination records, registrations, insurance, health reimbursements, and social benefits. The Ukraine government has remodelled the DIIA digital applications for wartime information sharing and feedback. It has more than 4.5 million users and has established a fiat-to-crypto gateway with a regulatory mechanism. According to a United Nations (UN) estimate, Ukraine was set to be among the top ten crypto nations by May 2024, with 47 percent population using digital assets.⁷ No wonder MDT in collaboration with diffused IT Army, has obtained more than USD 70 million in crypto donations through crowdfunding for Ukraine’s civilian resistance.

Ukraine successfully mobilised citizens to submit images or videos of Russian actions, use commercially available apps for bomb and air alerts as well as coordinating logistics and medical needs.

Ukraine claimed that the MDT transformed itself into a military organisation within 3 days of the Russian missile targeting Kyiv by deploying its IT Army. Chatbots were created for citizens to submit images or videos of Russian actions and movements that could be used for war crimes against Russian generals. Commercially available smartphone messaging applications have been used to coordinate operations primarily against

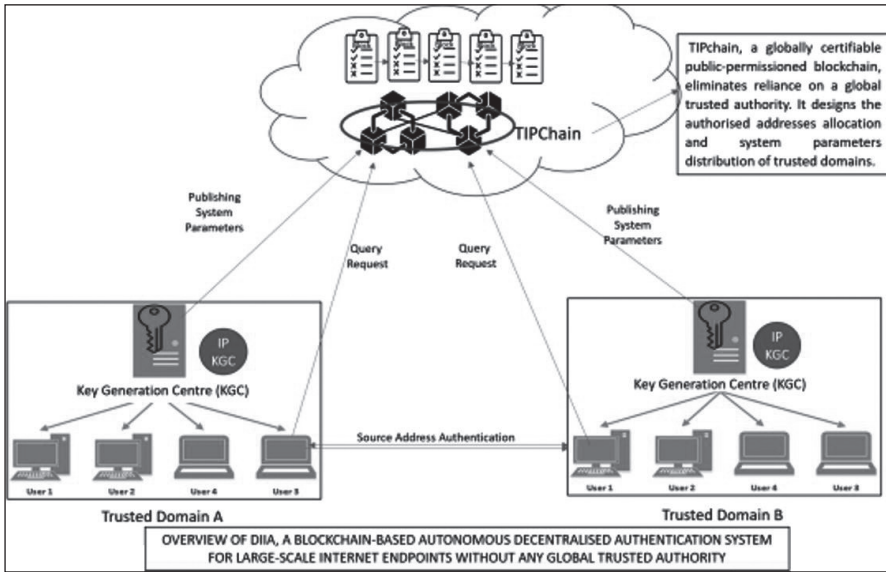
the separatist forces aligned with Russia. The application also reports on bomb and air alerts besides looking at the citizen's logistics and medical needs. The adaptation of digital technology to defend citizens has been the defining war feature.

How do Smartphones and Decentralised Infrastructure for Internet Accountability Applications Work?

Location information is one of the prime data bits that any application tries to capture. Though blocking location tracking through granular control on i-Phone Operating System (iOS) or Android is feasible, few applications like Meta, Apple, and Google have a long reach. The location services offered by iOS or Android are uninstallable systems that fuse data from multiple sources to determine location. The key component of such a service is a database that maps location from high-power sensors such as GPS to the signature of low-power sensors (such as WiFi and cell towers). The location can then be determined by using WiFi and cell tower connections for phone operation to look up the actual location. Hence, the cell phone Operating Systems crowdsources this database by sending GPS signal strength mappings from phones. It is important to note that the database entries do not need a place, photos, or ratings and do not need to be associated with a particular user.

A network is encountered with the need to fix the traffic sources' identity, integrity, and accountability. It is possible by selectively filtering the abusive or non-compliant traffic from malicious sources based on its origin and intention mapping basis. Cryptography-based internet accountability and authenticity algorithms are used to bind an IP address or prefix to its owner. DIIA uses a public-permission blockchain called TIPchain as a decentralised trust anchor. It helps verify IP addresses in different domains besides isolation of the trusted domain. It provides autonomous control of the key distribution of the IP addresses under the jurisdiction of each domain. A trustworthy address revocation and status verification mechanism provide layered security. Thus, it eliminates the possibility of compromise between a system or a specific domain (Figure 1). An Identity (ID) scheme is usually linked to nationalism, modernity, and development ideas. The communications surveillance systems help the government improve national security by enabling the surveillance of anyone who is an asset or risk to the state. SIM card registration measures are not fool-proof in combatting crime, but they help identify the patterns, and any can be excluded from services.

Figure 1: Overview of DIIA Architecture



Influencing Information Terrain

MDT has collaborated with Google and technology Multinational Companies (MNCs) to suffocate information space to prevent the misinformation campaign from going viral on social media. Machines are the first line of defence to curate and sieve legitimate content before the people can see it. To fight misinformation and disinformation, Twitter and Meta have restricted opportunities for disseminating Russia’s false propaganda on social media. Instagram and YouTube have also implemented methods to restrict Russian propaganda aggression.⁸ To counter western information manipulation, Russia has gone ahead in making its technical applications like VKontakte to counter Facebook, Rossgram against Insta, and Russia’s Gazprom Media launched Yappy as a domestic rival to video-sharing platform TikTok.⁹ However, the halting of businesses by Qualcomm and Intel will affect the semiconductor shortages in Russia, and a prolonged conflict will impede Russian influence capability.

Early Warning and Targetting

The digital footprint within the country provides Ukrainian Army to deploy and use the “kamikaze” drones like Switchblade 600 that dives and explodes on impact.¹⁰ These are light single-use drones, of which the US has promised 700. These drones cruise 100 kilometre per hour and use real-time GPS coordinates

and video for precise targetting with low collateral damage. Since all smartphones are GPS-based, sharing real-time data puts Russian tanks, artillery pieces, and helicopters at risk. Man-portable air-defence systems like Thales Stratstreak Manpads have been grided to prevent air superiority to Russian forces. The large citizen group armed with a smartphone and unhackable communication poses a big threat to the Russian frontline troops. The inability of Russia to enforce denial of services is proving costly in terms of loss of surprise and casualty to men and material.

Conclusion

Technology is a weapon. The brouhaha over spyware like Pegasus took the world by storm. Analysts claimed that it has the potential to derail democracies. Grand strategy is always about hitting the depth in non-linear operations. Each citizen holding a smartphone is exposed to cyber threats. People who were earlier protected from external threats are now equally exposed as frontline troops. Nations working to strengthen digital infrastructure with outsourced technologies are fraught with consequences. It is evident that the technological advances designed to benefit mankind find new use to kill in every war. Creativity in warfare will be defined by repurposing the technology terrain over which people are dependent.

Brigadier Vivek Verma is commanding an Artillery Brigade in Northern Sector. Views expressed are personal.

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Special Operations by Russia Against Ukraine Conflict around Kyiv

P K CHAKRAVORTY

Introduction

Russia commenced the war on February 24, 2022 along with Belarus. The moot question which everyone will ask is, “Was the war avoidable?” As per President Putin, there would be no war if Ukraine would have categorically assured that it was not becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The War is currently in its seventh month. It is difficult to predict when it would

Map 1



Source: Institute for the study of War Through BBC

be over. It would be pertinent to note what is the impact of this War and these are as enumerated as under:

- Militarily, Russia has achieved possibly all its objectives as shown in Map 1. It is in control of the Black Sea. It has captured the important port—Mariupol. The Russian-dominated areas of Donetsk and Luhansk are under their control. They are sporadically using missiles, artillery, drones, and firepower to destroy key communication centres, Air Defence sites, and other military installations. They are also planning to target NATO convoys. Russia has used hypersonic weapons which certainly are extremely effective.
- The political aim is Ukraine should not join NATO and European Union. Further, they must remain a neutral country. Russia will remain in Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk, the latter would be independent republics.
- The War has produced about 5 million refugees. This figure is in contrast to the Ukrainian Ambassador in New Delhi's statement on television channels, wherein he claims there are a total of 10 million refugees which works out to almost 22 percent of the population of 44 million.
- The aid from NATO is at best for untrained small teams who can do very little against multi domain no contact operations.
- Russia has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD1.34 trillion and a population of about 144 million with the biggest land mass in the world (twice the size of Canada). Its main exports are oil and arms. Despite sanctions, Russia continues to export oil to all countries except the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Canada, Japan, and South Korea.
- NATO is deeply divided on the sanctions issue. Oil prices have gone up by 79 cents per gallon in the US and it is understood that Russian oil is finding its way into North America covertly. Many Republican party leaders including former US President Donald Trump feel it is Russia's internal affair. Economically the world is experiencing inflationary trends which could lead to stagflation.
- The talks in Turkey have been on but Russia feels that there is still a long way to go. Meanwhile on March 24, 2022, a Russian spokesman said if the need arises nuclear weapons would be used. Russia is already using phosphorous and accused the US of having biological laboratories in Ukraine. Such usage could lead to further escalation of events.
- The US must not underestimate Russia and stop encouraging Ukraine to increase its casualties. The US currently will not intervene in any military operation and must not let another Afghanistan-like situation occur in Ukraine.
- The QUAD has India as a neutral partner despite pressure from the US.

- All countries are now planning their defence, particularly Germany as they don't trust NATO or the US anymore.
- China has supported Russia and is possibly planning for an earlier military operation on Taiwan. Previously their planning was after 3 years (though the US intelligence says 6 years). Viewing the declining power of the US, they are craftily calculating their manoeuvres in the present context.
- The United Nations (UN) has been reduced to a talk shop and Turkey (a member of NATO, under US sanctions for buying S400 from Russia; keen to become a member of the European Union) has emerged as a mediator. Turkey is opposing the entry of Sweden and Finland into NATO.
- Yet no one is certain when the War will end. President Zelensky of Ukraine has stated that 20 percent of Ukrainian territory has been captured by Russia.

Why Kyiv?

Kyiv is the capital of Ukraine. The Russians launched a five-pronged offensive into Ukraine. The Russians did not expect that the Ukrainians would fight and possibly welcome the Russian Army. It is the incorrect assessment that led to an incorrect assessment of the situation during the initial operations. It would be pertinent to note that Russians are extremely flexible in the conduct of operations and are aware that intelligence assessments often go wrong and strategic corrections must be applied during a campaign. The Ukrainians are even today offering resistance and the Russians are accordingly modifying their objectives.

Operations in Kyiv

Operations in Kyiv commenced on the first day of the Russian launch of special operations on February 24, 2022. The Operations were preceded by artillery and missile strikes. At 08:00 hours local time, about 20 to 34 Russian military helicopters which were possibly Mi-8 escorted by Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopter flew south from the Belarus-Ukraine border and approached the town of Hostomel.¹ It is reported that the paratroopers may have come from the 11th Guards Air Assault Brigade. The paratroopers intended to capture the airport with a 2.17 mile (about 3.5 kilometre) long runway. As per the Ukrainians, the Russians seized control of the airport. The Force was launched on the basis that the Ukrainians would not respond. Sadly, this was not true. The helicopters faced numerous short-range heat-seeking anti-aircrafts and heat-seeking missiles. There were reportedly three helicopter crashes.

The Russians had inserted about 300 paratroopers. Without artillery and armour, the Force could easily be tackled by the Ukrainians. It was also reported that eighteen IL-76 troop transports bound for Kyiv had taken off from the Pskov

base of the 76th Guards Air Assault Division. The veracity of this report is difficult to confirm. It is believed that the local militia and troops from the 3rd Special Purpose Regiment attacked the airport hampering Russian efforts.

The Ukrainians responded quickly. The 4th Rapid Response Brigade of the Ukrainian National Guard surrounded the airport. This was equipped with infantry, a battalion of T-64 BV tanks, an artillery battery, and supporting surveillance drones. The Russians without artillery depended on Su-25 Frogfoot Ground attack jets but Ukrainian Mig-29 and Su24 were able to counter them. Gradually the para troopers were edged out of the airfield and the complex remained unusable to both sides. A renewed airborne assault was launched a day after the initial attack. With Russian mechanised units achieving a breakthrough at nearby Ivankiv, they were able to advance and capture the airport after a combined ground-based assault. Despite their success, the airport was deemed inoperable. This ruled out the chances of a swift capitulation of Kyiv.

It would be pertinent to discuss the operations from Belarus to Kyiv. These were from the North and on February 24, they moved along the banks of the Dnipro river. The aim was to isolate Kyiv. Two Division sized spearheads moved along the east bank of the River and about four regiments (15,000 to 20,000) along the west bank of the River. The Forces captured the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the ghost city of Pripyat. Thereafter the Russian forces were held at Ivankiv, a northern suburb of Kyiv. It is reported that some Russian mechanised units had advanced to within 32 kilometre of Kyiv on the first day of the offensive. The Russian advance was greatly hindered by logistical difficulties. This was caused by dissident Belarusian railway workers and cyber hackers. Russian forces continued to advance on Kyiv from the northwest, capturing Bucha, Hostomel, and Vorzel though Irpin remained contested even on March 9, 2022.

The Ukrainians began their counter-offensive on March 25, 2022. They retook several towns to the east and west of Kyiv, including Makariv. Russian troops also gradually withdrew from Bucha by the end of March 2022. By the first week of April, Russia started withdrawing its forces and focussed on the southern and eastern portions where it wanted to fully capture Donetsk, Luhansk, and the Crimean portion.

It is pertinent to note that Russia was quick to judge that it lacked the capability to attack a city of 2.5 million people who were willing to fight. Consequently, the Russian government decided to abandon the siege of Kyiv and move the bulk of its forces to the Donbas region. This was a strategic choice made by Russia and not on dictation by Ukraine.²

The Russian Government decided to abandon the siege of Kyiv after heavy resistance and move the bulk of its forces to the Donbas region. This was a strategic choice by Russia and not dictated by tactical losses.

Lessons

The important lessons from the Battle of Kyiv are enumerated next:

- Intelligence Assessment is the most important factor prior to the launch of operations. The Russian government was incorrect in its assessment that it would have support from the people of Ukraine. The citizens of Ukraine contested the Russian forces and they were unable to attain their objectives.
- In any offensive operations, it is extremely important to have an Axis of Maintenance that would enable logistics to be provided. This was not catered for and it proved to be a costly mistake.
- Proper reconnaissance by the Russian forces was not undertaken resulting in poor preparation in fighting urban battles in Kyiv for which they were just not prepared.
- The other important lesson is to know when to quit. Russians learnt this lesson in Afghanistan and once they realised the difficulties in capturing Kyiv, they changed their plans and focussed on eastern and southern Ukraine. This was a correct way of being flexible as operations progressed.
- There is a need for dominating Air Space. Russia did not correctly suppress Ukrainian Air Defence and this hampered their capabilities in the initial stages of the campaign.
- The use of drones by the Ukrainian forces proved to be extremely effective. The Puma Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) in combination with the Switchblade Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) proved to be effective. As operations progressed Russian drones gathered momentum. Counter drone operations proved to be extremely important.
- Russian artillery and missiles played an important role in decimating the Ukrainians. They were effective against all structures and caused immense damage to Ukrainian equipment.
- Russia did not use its cyber and electronic capabilities in a synergised manner. They are now using the same effectively.
- Overall Russian Army was not well-trained and comprised a large number of conscripts. The need of the hour is training in multi-domain operations which both armies lacked.
- Satellites were used extensively by both sides and they in conjunction with drones provided a correct common operating picture to troops on the front line.

The Russian Government was incorrect in their assessment at start of conflict that they would have support from the people of Ukraine. The citizens contested the Russian forces and Russians were unable to attain their objectives.

Way Ahead

Russia has analysed the situation correctly and moved operations to eastern and southern Ukraine. Russia has realised that in these regions, the local population is supportive and they are using artillery and missiles in large numbers in areas where they expect mercenaries or Ukrainian soldiers to be hiding. This has paid great dividends. On the 116th day of the War, Russian officials stated that their forces are fighting for the complete liberation of Donbas which refers to Ukraine's eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk where Russian-backed separatists held some territory before the invasion. They would gradually capture the entire region.³ By now everyone has realised that Russia means business. They are controlling most of Donbas and would like to negotiate. The West must see the reality and possibly commence diplomatic negotiations.

Conclusion

Russia attacked Kyiv expecting a warm welcome from the citizens of Ukraine. Their intelligence assessment was incorrect. They realised their fault and moved away from Kyiv. They correctly focussed on eastern and southern Ukraine where they received support from locals. They have almost captured the Donbas region. The western countries must end the fighting and start negotiations. This would relieve the entire world. Diplomatic negotiations are the only answer to the current situation. India has maintained its stand on this issue and it is high time that hostilities cease and negotiations begin.

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Outmoded Yes, But are Tanks Obsolete? An Analysis

RAJ MEHTA

Tanks are like dinner jackets. You don't need them very often, but when you do, nothing else will do.

Australian Major General Kathryn Toohey (2019)

Strategic Backdrop

Cleverly dressed up as bench-marked and neutral reportage, the linear one-sided war coverage of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War was orchestrated by Western Information Warfare (IW) led by the United States (US) with an unerring focus on severely degrading Russia's mechanised forces as a powerful global "second-to-none" entity. From the War's commencement on February 24, 2022 and for unbroken weeks on end, the startling news that clogged world headlines with frequent "breaking news" interjections was the unparalleled success of the fledgling "David" sized US/North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-trained Ukrainian forces (aided by cutting edge Western anti-tank technologies) against "Goliath" Russia and its primarily mechanised Army. The heady success achieved was attributed to the soldierly quality of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians trained since 2014 in modern Western warfighting methods. Readers may recall that 2014 was a turning point because it marked the (uncontested) loss of the Crimean Peninsula, a strategic Ukrainian territory to Russia.

These "21st century NATO-standard" Ukrainian forces, Western IW claimed, were trained and equipped with layered Ukrainian anti-tank systems. They were encouraged to operate with an "act independently but within specified constraints" directive style of command anchored in an initiative. This was radically different from the hierarchical "obey my orders" centralised system of operational command and control that Ukraine had inherited from the erstwhile Soviet Union (USSR) and which continues to be the Russian system. By implication, the Russians remained largely a "20th century Soviet entity" in the operational, ideological, and physical battle space.

Has the War Rendered Tanks Obsolete?

From the commencement till mid-April 2022, Russian armoured vehicles/logistics convoys suffered heavy losses against the unexpectedly lethal Ukrainian combination of Artificial Intelligence (AI) embedded state-of-the-art anti-tank and anti-personnel weapons, killer drones, artillery canister shells, and other aerial platforms delivering cluster bombs each with destructive smart anti-tank capability and Early Warning (EW) including cyber intelligence that created a killing environment for the Ukrainians while denying similar status to the Russians. It also degraded Russian retaliatory systems including their Air Force, Air Defence (AD), anti-drone, logistics, and mobility restoration bridging systems. Whether it was the pinpoint Global Positioning System (GPS) location and high-resolution satellite photos from the US government agencies and/or Western private agency satellite outputs, it wasn't just Russian tank and logistics clusters but also twelve Russian senior mechanised commanders who were taken out. 24 × 7 US Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) has been available to Ukraine from Day 1 of the War and publicly acknowledged by it. The western opinion made much of this euphoric period portraying the Ukrainians as outright winners and Russians as poor losers because of positive battle reports. The frequent “we are winning” messages and graphics of wanton tank destruction by media-savvy current Ukrainian President Zelenskyy underscored the belief that tanks were obsolete—Russian tanks certainly were.

The Russian Driven Revolution in Military Affairs was to Blame

Analysts convinced themselves and their followers that the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) ironically triggered off by the Russians in 1973 had come back to haunt them. They had ingeniously developed and supplied thousands of inexpensive but deadly, simple-to-operate *Malutka* (Sagger) “suitcase” missiles to embattle the Egyptian Infantry during the epochal Yom Kippur War. With rudimentary training, the Infantry took out attacking but unaware and unprepared Israeli tanks in droves. Similar astonishing success—West driven in 2022—enabled Ukrainian forces to degrade the Russian mechanised forces besieging Kiev and Kharkov Oblasts. Daily images of burnt-out Russian tank clusters minus turrets and smashed, charred tracked vehicles hogged media front pages and were “breaking news” for weeks on end.

The turnaround in Opinion: Tanks have Vulnerabilities that are Correctable

Making major changes top downward from Commanding General down to tank crew replacement by substituting conscript crews with regular soldiers, getting Air defence (AD), Air Force, and Artillery (integrated arms concept) into place, the Russians de-wormed their Special Operations handling. Their Kiev-Kharkiv forces were reassigned to the Donbas with a corresponding change in operational art from the earlier “gung ho” non-tactical advance by mechanised forces astride key road arteries to slow, gritty tactical “scorched earth advance” with non-stop use of artillery and missiles, AD, EW, and anti-drone measures/other force multipliers.

The Russian armoured vehicles/logistics convoys losses were reduced by replacing conscript crews with regular soldiers and integrating air defence, artillery and Air Force to tackle Ukrainian counter attack

With the Russians now following their Deep Strike doctrine earlier given short shrift, the “tanks are passé” Ukrainian conviction floundered. The Donbas is largely industrialised undulating prairie land interspersed with rivers and their tributaries besides prime farmland where wheat/grains produced make it Europe’s breadbasket. Pulverised by Russian shelling, there was no cover for the Kiev/Kharkiv anti-tank successes to be replicated...just death, injury, mayhem, and Russian forces advancing with their operational logistics in place. Media on August 01, 2022 reported President Zelenskyy ordering retreat this time from Donetsk city of Donetsk Oblast “to avoid further civilian losses”. This is at a time when 60 percent of the Donbas—hub of Ukraine’s industrial, agricultural might, and major Gross Domestic Product (GDP) earner is with Russia.

A Neutral Reality Check

A dispassionate examination of tank evolution over a hundred years reveals that tanks have *invariably been outmoded but never obsolete*. Invented to assist the infantry in crossing trenches and wire obstacles, tanks, post-World War I despite their visionary theorists Captain Liddell Hart and General JFC Fuller projecting tanks as offensive, battle-winning weapons, sceptical Britain in 1928 disbanded its armoured units. However, German Generals Manstein and Guderian evolved the revolutionary British tank theories into the unholy duo of *panzers* and *stukas: Blitzkrieg*. It was an RMA where the tank-aircraft combination wrecked offensive havoc on the enemy, in return seeking close Infantry protection. The Battle of Kursk involving 6,000 tanks and 2 million soldiers stopped the German offensive deep in Russia, turning the tide for the Soviet forces. That notwithstanding,

frustrated wartime British PM Churchill, felt tanks hadn't delivered enough in Southern Italy calling them "finished". Liddell Hart in 1960 noted with asperity that for 40 years the tank had been pronounced "dead or dying" with critics proved wrong each time; something which was the Israeli experience too after their 1973 *Yom Kippur* tank losses.

The issue, therefore, is whether there is a continued role for mobile, protected lethality on the future battlefield and, if so, urgent ways of protecting/upgrading the tank "to enable it to do what only it can do" are required.

Tank development post-Yom Kippur produced protective measures against conventional frontal 60-degree arc attacks by bringing in a sandwich or composite armour—installing explosive reactive armour "bricks" filled with charges that exploded on contact, harmlessly dissipating the oncoming missile shards/shaped charge explosive jets. A passive Laser Warning System (LWS) capable of spotting and taking evasive action by various onboard tank systems against oncoming missiles/rounds became part of tank defence as also Arena/Afghanit anti-missile systems. Onboard mortars and Smoke Grenade Dischargers (SGDs) further made the tank capable of degrading conventional anti-tank attacks. However, today tanks operate in a hostile EW and AI driven environment dominated by a lethal combination of state-of-the-art top attack munitions. Against them, the ploy of hastily constructed Russian "coping cages" over their tank turrets offers only nominal defence against Ukrainian top attack weaponry.

Notwithstanding the sobering challenges tanks face in ensuring battlefield survivability, note that no country has classified its tank holdings as obsolete. Veteran journalist and op-ed writer Prakash Nanda writing on August 1, 2022 for *The Eurasian Times* mentioned that "Tanks are Tanking" muses whether tanks have a future. He concludes that though the answer at first glance appears negative, closer scrutiny suggests that "while the war has exposed the vehicle's vulnerabilities, these can be overcome". This explains why the US and its NATO allies are using/upgrading "quality" tanks like the US Abrams M1A2 SEP, French Nr8 *Leclerc*, Germany's Leopard 2, and Israel's Merkava. Russia has its state-of-the-art Armata tank as a successor to the T-90. Poland is set to buy 1,000 South Korean K2 tanks and 648 K9 SP Howitzers. The United Kingdom (UK) is planning to make 148 upgraded Challenger-3 tanks. The need for tanks isn't thus contrived but very real.

Why the Stark Initial Russian Failure?

Developed in the 1920/30 period by Russian strategists Vladimir Triandafillov and Tukhachevskii among others, the "Deep Strike" formulation envisaged "destroying, suppressing, or disorganising enemy forces not only at line of contact but also throughout the depth of the battlefield". The aim was to inflict a decisive

defeat on the enemy’s logistical abilities rendering frontline defence irrelevant. The Doctrine stressed combined arms cooperation at strategic, operational, and tactical levels—the “operational level” being a doctrinal innovation termed “operational art”.

Graphic 1: Russian Bulid Up Against Ukraine



Source: The Hindu

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine presumably with Deep Strike in mind began on the morning of February 24, when Putin announced “special military operations” to “demilitarise and de-Nazify” Ukraine. 1,90,000 Russian troops with an equal number of reservists had 120 battalion tactical groups. Each had armour and artillery and was backed by superior air support. The self-proclaimed Russian-backed people’s Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk had 20,000 and 14,000 pro-Russian troops, respectively. Besides, Belarus was a willing launch pad and logistics provider for Russia. Ukraine in comparison had 1,96,000 troops with 1,02,000 reservists but with a sizeable percentage of Western-trained/equipped troops. Both countries are using militia. Ukraine has the Azov Neo-Nazi Brigade and Russia its Chechen/Donbas rebels in addition (Graphic 1).

The Russian attacks were launched on a northern front from Belarus towards Kyiv—a north-eastern front towards Kharkiv, a southern front from Crimea, and

a south-eastern front from the cities of Luhansk and Donetsk. In March, Ukraine stopped the Russian advance towards Kyiv. Amidst heavy losses, Russian troops retreated from Kyiv Oblast by April 03. By May 13, a Ukraine counter-offensive had driven back the Russians from Kharkiv.

The Russian weaknesses got exposed as their much-vaunted multi-pronged Deep Strike went into a tailspin due to very cautious use of their Air Force, poor situational awareness; absence of anti-drone systems, poor internal/external lines of logistics supply, and largely conscript manning. The better-armed/motivated Ukrainians propped up by pinpoint US intelligence and lethal Western anti-tank weapons, top-attack drones and artillery fires shocked the “liberating” Russians. Zelenskyy, till then a nonentity, suddenly developed a larger-than-life image created by Western IW.

The Russians suffered high initial tank losses due to very cautious use of their Air Force, poor situational awareness; absence of anti-drone systems, poor internal/external lines of logistics supply and largely conscript manning

Graphic 2: A Russian T-72 Destroyed by a Top Attack Missile Hit



The majority of tanks in use were the ubiquitous T-72/derivatives and earlier Soviet legacy tanks. Mass-produced, the 1970s T-72, considered the “Toyota Corolla of tanks” first saw combat in Iraq’s war with Iran in 1980 with Iraqi crews handling it well against British tanks. With largely conscripted crews in Ukraine, this capable tank initially performed inadequately (Graphic 2). Compact in

design with a three-man crew with an ammunition carousel replacing the fourth crew member, the tank under top attack destructs along with the crew, there being no blast separators between ammunition and crew.

Russia as per a neutral source Oryx which is tracking the War has lost at least 774 tanks since invading Ukraine. That is a realistic assessment as compared to the 2,000 tanks and more number of tracked vehicles/Infantry Combat vehicles (ICVs) Western media claims destroyed. Breaking down the vehicles between destroyed/captured/abandoned, one realises that even the 776 tanks probably had only around half that number destroyed—the balance being attributable to poor crewing, absence of integrated force multipliers, and poor operational logistics planning. The reasons for failure, besides the military weaknesses pointed out are also attributable to mindset. The Russians headed for Kiev and Kharkiv en masse as “liberators”. Expecting to be welcomed, and feted, they entered under-prepared and in disjointed, uncoordinated mode with neither, Army, Air Force nor commanders prepared to fight a twenty-first-century NATO-standard Ukrainian force. Poor intelligence about Western assistance and abysmal situational awareness led to grim losses and credibility loss.

Shell shocked but recovering quickly, Russia placed its forces in Eastern and Southern Ukraine under canny, pragmatic, battle-scarred General Aleksandr Dvornikov and changed track. The General attacked the Donbas effective from April 19 across a 500-kilometre front extending from Kharkiv to Mariupol. By May 20, strategic Mariupol fell and on June 02, there were mass Ukrainian surrenders. That trend has continued with Russian losses no longer noteworthy although Ukrainian losses are now the focus of world attention.

Ironically the key to defeating loitering munitions/*kamikaze* drones’ lies in Active Protection Systems (APS) and it was the Soviets who developed the first such system, *Drozd*. It was designed as an addition to passive/reactive armour against anti-tank weapons using shaped charge technology. The current Russian APS is called Arena, a hard-kill system like *Drozd*, that is designed to destroy incoming missile warheads through the use of munitions before it reaches the target vehicle. It is inexplicable why the Russians didn’t use these systems.

That Ukrainian euphoric “kill” Ukrainian phase has post-April shifted to a “scorched earth” war for which Ukraine is ill-equipped. With around 200 Ukrainian soldiers being lost per day for months now, NATO-standard Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) are also deficient. Battle-hardened veterans have suffered serious losses and recruits facing Donbas challenges aren’t of the earlier Kiev/Kharkiv class. Truncated weapon training isn’t giving desired results with new equipment tardy in coming. Ukrainian Brigadier General Volodymyr Karpenko recently estimated that units have suffered 50 percent losses. Endless shelling, exhaustion, deaths, and injuries are causing insubordination,

desertion, and clashes between old and new soldiers. In addition, the UAF command structure has become more centralised as resources become scarce.

Ukraine's Twenty-First Century Battlefield Enablers

The state-of-the-art enablers that caused the initial Russian destruction need both explanation and understanding in the succeeding paragraphs.

The Bayraktar TB2 Drone

The Turkish Bayraktar TB2 is a Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) with remotely controlled/autonomous flight operations. The drone carries 4xL3 Hornet bomb-racks—smart micro-munitions with a provision of carrying laser-guided bombs, anti-tank missiles, laser-guided rockets, and GPS/INS guided 81mm mortars.

Each TB2 is configured with six aerial vehicle platforms, two GCS, three Ground Data Terminals (GDT), two Remote Video Terminals (RVT), and ground support equipment. The drone has met with success during the Libyan and Syrian civil wars with Azerbaijan in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war and Ukrainian forces in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War and is posited as a “tactical game changer”.

During the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War, drones made a noteworthy initial impact. Although at the start of the invasion Ukrainian drones caused severe damage to Russian forces, by summer 2022 they had become less effective in this role. The initially disorganised Russians set up proper air defences. Consequently, Ukrainian Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have been downed with increasing frequency. On July 25, 2022, BBC reported that the drones are now easy targets with many shot down.

The United States Made Switchblade 300 and 600 Loitering Killer Drones

Switchblade 600 represents the next generation of extended-range loitering missiles featuring high-precision optics, over 40 minutes of loitering endurance, and an anti-armour warhead (Graphic 3). Man-portable and operational in 10 minutes via tube launch, it can fly, track, and engage non-line-of-sight targets and armoured vehicles with lethal effects without external assets.

A “kamikaze” drone, Switchblade merges the functions of a target-seeking UAV and target-killing missile. Launched by an infantry squad, Switchblade can be operated remotely. The US confirmed in April 2022 that the Pentagon will provide Ukraine with 700 such drones. 100 have been in use since May 2022.

Graphic 3: The US Switchblade 600 “Kamikaze” Drone



The United States Javelin and Swedish Next generation Light Anti Tank Weapons (NLAW)

American anti-tank guided weapons FGM-148 Javelin and Swedish-British NLAW are hi-tech weapons. Though MBTs use advanced armour technology for protecting against ATGMs, this technology hasn't worked against the Javelin/NLAW missiles which hit a tank in "top attack" mode where the armour is thinnest. The missiles can also be used in "direct fire" mode against less well-armoured

Graphic 4. Ukrainian Soldiers using Javelin Missiles



vehicles, such as ICVs or even low-flying helicopters with devastating results. Perhaps the greatest advantage of anti-tank missiles is their range and ease of use. They are relatively lightweight (between 10 kg and 25 kg depending on the model), can be used by a single soldier, and require (relatively) lesser training to handle. They are also extremely difficult to detect, due to their size and mobility.

These missiles are fully guided “fire-and-forget” weapons (Graphics 4 and 5). The projectile locks on to the target and guides itself once fired. In the case of a Javelin, this is achieved using infrared technology, wherein the missile locks onto any heat signature present in the tanks. NLAW missiles use “predictive line of sight” technology which calculates both the distance and the target’s speed. NLAWs have a range of up to 1 km, while the Javelin has a maximum effective range of 4.5 km. Javelins are, therefore, much more expensive with a single missile costing the US \$80,000.

Graphic 5. Ukrainian soldiers firing an NLAW missile. AP



Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/17/the-weapons-being-sent-to-ukraine-and-why-they-may-not-be-enough>

Thus, anti-tank missiles pose a significant and, crucially, difficult-to-detect threat to Russian armoured columns. Ukrainians have used the two missiles in tandem. NLAW is excellent at close range from 20 to 600 metre, so it is indispensable in urban areas. Javelin is best at a range of 1 to 2.5 km. The missiles pierce through the top attack “coping cages” now welded on Russian turrets easily.

New Tank Developments

The Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) is a European effort to develop a future land warfare system, a key component of which will likely be a new European MBT. The UK is reportedly interested in joining MGCS as are Italy, Poland, and Spain. In 2012, France and Germany decided to launch a joint initiative to design and develop a future land warfare system. The MGCS conceptually seeks a multi-platform concept that may involve both manned and unmanned ground vehicles as well as UAVs. Deliveries are expected to commence by 2035.

Other Developments

Russia expects to commence deliveries of its T-14 Armata MBT in 2022. The T-14 is part of the Armata Universal Combat Platform, which includes the T-15 IFV and T-16 ARV. It is unknown whether China is developing a successor to its ZTZ-99 MBT which entered service in 2001. A 2015 derivative Type 99A is produced by Norinco which has also come up with the ZTQ-15 (aka Type 15) light tank.

Reflections Affecting India

- **The Soldier:** Careful study of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war reveals the unquestioned need for quality and well-trained soldiers from *Jawan* to General. At tactical levels, sub-units and units need trained and steady NCOs and JCOs besides junior- and middle-level officers who are not just well-trained but equally well-educated to fight and win wars with minimum loss of men and war materiel. Officers from NCO onward also have to get increasingly adapted to the directive style of command where initiative and awareness of the senior commander's intent is an entry qualification. There is a need for integrated as opposed to single-service dominant war if new threats are to be handled successfully.
- **Our equipment Profile/Self-sufficiency Projections**
 - A well-researched research paper by Money Sharma/Aadil Sud for Institut Montaigne: Indian Military Dependence on Russia of July 05, 2022 shared by the veteran/global blogger Major General PK Mallick lays threadbare India's nuanced neutral United Nations (UN) stand on Russia though bitterly criticised by the West. With 90 percent of Army weapons/equipment coming from Russia, 40 percent of Navy ships/equipment, and 70 percent of IAF aircraft/equipment ex-Russia, India's neutrality during the War is diplomatically and militarily nuanced and commendable.

- The larger point is that largely Russian tanks possessed are of top quality when manned by competent crews operating under an integrated arms concept encompassing all force multipliers including sister service components when needed. Note that Pakistan has 2,814 tanks, China 5,250, India 4,616, and all these tanks that India possesses including Arjun tanks will function optimally after required upgrades against emerging battlefield threats as explained. This will also be needed for the 1,700 Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCV) along with our light tank needs for the LAC.
- **Self-sufficiency (*Atmanirbharta*) in Tank Protection is a Critical Need:** There is a need for taking Israeli assistance, to begin with since their successful *Trophy* APS system is in use for a decade now. It is being procured by the British for Challenger 3. It creates a neutralisation bubble around the vehicle which in near real-time detects, classifies and engages all known chemical energy threats including recoilless rifles, ATGMs, AT rockets, HEAT rounds, and RPGs. It successfully neutralises the enemy's anti-tank teams. There is a need to seek a strong military-private industry-civil IIT/IISC technology/digital interface.
- **Digital Transformation:** Elon Musk's SpaceX has provided high-speed internet services to Ukraine using swarms of small satellites in low Earth orbit resulting in battlefield digital transformation. Similarly, the US has provided "over-the-phone" technical support for new technology weapons gifted to Ukraine often civilian led. Both these initiatives need Army/Civil integration in India.

Afterword

In the long race between the tank and detractors, anti-tank forces currently have the edge. Vulnerability is, however, not obsolescence. Armies need something that can move quickly, break through enemy lines, lead the way for infantry, and destroy enemy armoured vehicles. If the tank does not do these jobs, something else must. That alternative will, in turn, become prey to the same technologies and tactics.

Tanks are here to stay. They won't die and keep evolving.

Major General Raj Mehta, AVSM, VSM (Retd) is a regular contributor. Views expressed are personal.

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SCHOLAR WARRIOR

SECTION II

COMMENTARIES AND
BOOK REVIEWS

CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES

Iron Beam: Lethal Yet Cost Effective Solution

ASHWANI GUPTA

Introduction

The adoption of resolution 181 by the United Nations (UN) also known as the Partition Plan, led to the creation of Israel on May 14, 1948, and was followed by the first Arab-Israeli War. Since its independence, Israel has been constantly involved in conflicts in the neighbourhood leading to a near war-like state regularly (Map 1). The regular mortar, artillery, and missile attacks by Hezbollah

Map 1: Rockets Fired into Israel



Source: www.Geology.com/worldmaps/Israel

and Hamas targeting the Israeli population led to the development of the first interception system known as the “Iron Dome” and now the “Iron Beam” is the latest shield created by the Israelis to safeguard their citizens against the incoming arsenal.

The earlier missile defence system was based on interceptor missiles and “Iron Dome”, an air defence system that could destroy missiles at a range of 70 kilometre (km). The main factor was the cost. Hamas could easily launch large numbers of missiles and mortar shells from Gaza Strip and the cost of destruction of each missile was more than the US \$1,00,000 which was cost prohibitive. Thus, by launching rockets costing a few hundred dollars, Hamas was able to inflict a much greater economic cost on Israel besides the psychological trauma, daily stress of injuries, and fatigue to the Israeli population. The intensity of the rockets fired also kept increasing. Starting with Qassam rockets in 2001 targeting the town of Sderot and other communities bordering Gaza, Hamas and Hezbollah fired sophisticated rockets into Israel since 2009 like Grad and Katshuya reaching the cities of Ashdod and Barsheeba. By 2012, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv were being targeted by locally made M-75 rockets. The security apparatus needed a system that could intercept and destroy the incoming barrage of rockets.

The Evolution

Israel has a multi-layer air defence system to protect the country from incoming missiles. The shortest tier before the advent of Iron Beam was the Iron Dome. The Iron Dome system was jointly developed by Israeli Aerospace Industries and Rafael Advance Defence Systems and became operational in March 2011. Designed to intercept and destroy missiles, artillery shells and rockets fired from ranges of -four km to 70 km, the system consisted of a Detection and Tracking Radar, Missile Firing Unit, and Battle Management and Weapon Control System. The Iron Dome had an interception rate of almost 90 percent by successfully destroying missile or artillery shells that would have otherwise landed in Israeli populated areas. However, the biggest drawback was the cost of each interception. Hamas and Hezbollah had sufficient quantities of modified small vehicles which would launch large quantities of artillery shells and rockets into Israeli territory. Their interception would lead to the firing of a number of missiles due to the heavy volume of the incoming fire. The high cost of firing each missile was enabling Hamas and Hezbollah to bleed Israel economically even if the majority of the rockets and missiles were being intercepted. The Israeli planners felt the need for a cost-effective system that could destroy the incoming arsenal while at the same time was cost-effective for frequent and continuous use.

The Iron Beam

The Iron Beam (Hebrew name, *Karen Barzel*) or the Light Shield is based on a solid state fibre laser system designed to destroy short-range rockets, artillery shells, and mortar bombs effectively up to seven km. It constitutes the fifth element of Israel's integrated air defence system in addition to Arrow 2,¹ Arrow 3,² David's Sling,³ and the Iron Dome. The Iron Beam system has been manufactured by Rafael Advanced Defence Systems and was first time unveiled in 2014 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Iron Beam's High Power Laser System



Source: www.defense-update.com/ 17 March 2022

The technology demonstrator had carried out a series of tests in April 2022 where the successful firing of the system had destroyed a drone, rocket shell, and a mortar round at an undisclosed location in the Negev desert. According to Brig-Gen Yaniv Rotem, head of the Defense Ministry's Military R&D, the ground system will be capable of destroying targets at a range of 8 to 10 km using a 100 kilowatt (KW) laser.⁴ It would be prudent to mention that low-energy lasers less than 1 KW are used for jamming or destruction of sensors. The medium energy lasers from 10 KW to 100 KW are generally applied for the destruction of optoelectronic devices and high energy lasers greater than 100 KW are used for the destruction of material structure.⁵

The current Israeli Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, while approving significant funding for the development had stated that:

Today we are advancing towards a dramatic change in the battlefield and enhancing Israel's security in the face of growing threats emanating from Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, supported by Iran and terrorist organizations.⁶

The current Israeli Prime Minister Neftali Bennet announced the success of the tests on April 14, 2022. He described the Iron Beam as a strategic game

changer and pledged to surround Israel with a laser wall.⁷ He further stated that the cost of interception is the cost of power required to operate the system, being about the US \$3.5 per shot. The biggest advantage of Iron Beam according to the Prime Minister was to neutralise Iran's efforts to destabilise Israel. He stated that "The equation will be overturned; They will invest much...and ..we little".⁸ Presently, only a prototype has been tested and the system is only likely to be operational by 2025.

Cheaper and Better Alternative

The Iron Dome system suffered from two major drawbacks, namely, poor cost-efficiency and vulnerability to swarm tactics. The 2014 Gaza conflict effectively showed the vulnerability of the Iron Dome system when Hamas launched more than 4,000 rockets and mortar shells into Israel. The terrorist group successfully exploited the Iron Dome's weakness through saturated strikes by launching over 2,800 rockets simultaneously along the Israeli border in July 2014 when Israel began "Operation Protective Edge." The Israeli planners are of the view that Iron Beam will be able to counter the swarm tactics due to its short interception time and a seemingly endless supply of ammunition. Being a directed energy weapon, the Iron Beam laser is invisible and leads to the destruction of the incoming arsenal without any collateral damage. Initially intended as a ground-based weapon system, it will also be deployed on sea and aerial platforms.

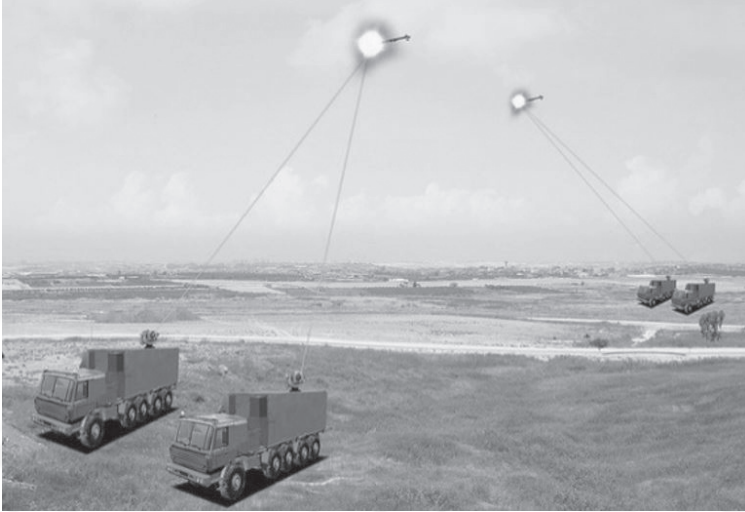
Iron Beam will be the lowest layer of air defence umbrella designed to destroy mortar bombs and short-range rockets, fired at very short ranges which require very short interception time. The present three layers of Israel's air defence system rely on missiles for interception of incoming rockets or mortar shells and the interceptions are expensive. According to one Israeli estimate, a full-fledged rocket barrage would necessitate 30,000 Iron Dome interceptors valued at billions of dollars.⁹ Whereas, the laser system will continue to fire till the time it has an electrical supply, never running out of ammunition. Though the cost of each interception has been stated as costing the US \$3.5, it is likely to be around the US \$2,000 taking into account the maintenance and other issues though still much cheaper than an air defence missile which costs about the US \$1,00,000 to 1,50,000 per interception.¹⁰ It will be a cost-effective solution besides imposing a heavier cost on the terrorist groups.

Composition of Iron Beam System

The Iron Beam battery consists of an air defence radar, a control unit, and two high energy lasers (Figure 2). The detection of the incoming rocket or mortar is carried out by the Iron Beams' radar and after detection, the thermal camera takes

over the tracking till the rocket is engaged by two high-energy lasers. The lasers focus their beams on an area about the size of a coin leading to the destruction of the rocket. The Iron Beam battery is likely to cover the same geographical area as an Iron Dome battery—150 square km.

Figure 2: Likely Deployment of Iron Beam Battery



Source: Israel21C.org/August 11,2014

Efficacy of Laser Weapons

The Iron Beam in itself cannot be a stand-alone solution due to the inherent problems of laser weapons. The lasers are susceptible to atmosphere effects, which distorts the beam leading to loss of focus. Atmospheric particles like water vapour, dust, sand, or pollution can lead to refraction/absorption of laser energy leading to less energy at the target end. The efficacy of lasers is highly reduced during a cloud cover limiting the target acquisition and interception. Also, materials with the anti-laser coating will render the laser beam ineffective to a great degree. Terrorist groups will come up with these solutions in the future to thwart the effectiveness of Iron Beam by launching rockets/mortar shells during poor weather conditions.

On the other hand, the transmission at the speed of light allows laser weapons to engage targets immediately after detection. Also, lasers are silent, invisible to the human eye, and hard to detect. Given the short flight time from Gaza Strip into Israeli territory, Iron Beam is likely to engage and destroy the launched shells before they hit their intended targets due to the high transmission speed of the laser beam.

Conclusion

The Iron Beam system is an alternative air defence system with a low operational cost to intercept and destroy rockets/air targets within a short interception time. Terrorist groups are ever innovating and finding means to develop weapon systems with minimal costs. The low-cost threats world over in form of off-the-shelf modified commercially available drones or assembled rockets besides the higher chances of success have a high interception cost which indirectly leads to higher economic costs for the targetted country. Laser-based weapon systems will lower interception costs besides higher success of interception. Their integration into the existing air defence shield or even stand-alone operation will provide a protective umbrella cover to the troops or the intended targets.

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Notes

1. Arrow 2 is a missile-based system designed to intercept medium-range ballistic missiles up to 200 km range.
2. Arrow 3 is an interception system against ballistic missiles especially those carrying weapons of mass destruction at an altitude of over 100 km. It was operationalised in 2017.
3. David's Sling is a two stage missile interception system to intercept enemy aircraft, drones, tactical ballistic missiles, and medium- to long-range cruise missiles from 40 km to 300 km distance. It was first time used in combat in 2018.
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Insurgency Based Conflict: Inter-Generational Perceptions

BRUCE FERNANDEZ

*Revolution is an inalienable right of mankind.
Freedom is an imperishable birthright of all.*

– Bhagat Singh

Introduction

Disagreements/conflict dimensions range from social movements, insurgencies, armed struggles, and all-out wars. Intensities of these conflicts vary—some dissipate in intensity with the shifting of objectives, influenced by changing perceptions of stakeholders. All independence and self-determination endeavours are also characterised by their nature and are dynamic with no universally accepted formula to resolve them. The outcome of any movement largely depends on the response of the people and the contesting governments/powers. In most cases, it is seen that governmental reactions to such movements are mainly an amalgamation of ad-hoc policies based on emotional judgements and misperceptions. It has been seen over time most conflicts for independence and self-determination are rooted in culture, history, identity, deprivation, religion, and political dimensions in which they take place. Divergent views and differences in these shaping elements cause fissures within communities and governments leading to disagreement/conflict. In addition, are the ever-increasing expectations of people and the failure of systems to keep pace with these expectations.

Nations have been battling insurgency for centuries in different forms. Engaging the insurgent has been one of the most difficult challenges for governments across the world, especially governments of the post-colonial era, following their independence. However, as events presented themselves in the journey towards growth and maturity of various insurgent movements, it became

very tricky for consecutive governments in various nations facing this complex issue, to ignore the inherent identity, independence, and self-determination overtures, and where attempts to yield the desired outcomes using brute force have failed. This is evidenced by various nations' efforts in entering ceasefire deals and political negotiations with the nationalist movement groups albeit with limited success. Resolution of such movements still eludes the people who generally have borne the brunt, with the loss of loved ones coupled with the lack of development and opportunity to lead a prosperous life. In addition, the absence of space for political dialogue, influenced by socio-cultural dynamics disrupted the political process, resulting in the emergence of numerous power centres and stakeholders. However, on the other hand, the passage of time, the spread of education, and the naturally growing economic prosperity within nations, give the next generation a different opportunity and perspective, making them more aspirational, seeking a life of progress and opportunity, examine the relevance of the movement itself and endeavours for self-determination, while the older generations remain frozen in their socio-cultural tradition and struggle for independence. However, tradition and culture hinder any such expression privately or in public by either generation. The paper is an attempt to bring to the fore a fresh dimension related to the aspirations of generations brought up in insurgencies, especially the younger generation contextualised to conflict theory, generational perceptions, and the overall demands of the various stakeholders towards the resolution of the problems.

Conflict Theory in the Context of Self-determination

The roots of modern theories of conflict can be traced back to Max Weber, Karl Max, Sigmund Freud, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, and Adam Smith are also important writers on the conflict in the western tradition.¹ The term conflict as defined by Roderick Ogle is an incompatibility in the aim, goals, or interests of two or more individuals, groups, or other units.² Some thinkers define conflict as a state of mutual antagonism or hostility between two or more parties' analysis.³ Conflict is also generally considered as a tendency to perform two or more incompatible responses at the same time, resulting in dissonance on emotional, mental, and physical levels. The incompatibility and dissonance may originate within individuals, or between, two or more individuals or within groups or two or more groups. Kenneth Boulding says, conflict exists when any potential positions of two behaviour units are mutually incompatible.⁴ Conflict can be classified by its form and structure. Some different types of conflicts are individual, class, economic, environmental, social, religious, and international.⁵

Ho-won Jeong, an international peace researcher, pointed out that relative deprivation, dissatisfaction with basic needs, failure of organisational functions,

asymmetric power relations, and dominant social structures are important components in the origin of conflict.⁶ Relative deprivation exists when people feel that their expectations of conditions for life have not been satisfied. If people's hopes and desires far exceed what they can realise, they may have more dissatisfaction with their current situations. In addition, the expectation to improve unsatisfied economic and social conditions also tends to go up with time. However, if the economic and social capacity to meet these expectations does not increase simultaneously, these expectations are likely to rise disproportionately to what society can provide. The frustration deepens when manifested reality does not match anticipated reality sparking triggers of conflict. The basic requirements of human beings are both physical and psychological. The need for food, shelter, and other basic material necessities are needed for physical survival. Love, affection, security, and self-esteem satisfy psychological needs. The lack of this physical and psychological conditioning of human beings are also responsible for conflicts.⁷

Alongside conflict is the issue of identity—while identities are generally considered plural there are several factors responsible for the rise of singular identities that can result in assertive ethnic identity conflicts. Amartya Sen says, for one thing, identity can be a source of richness and warmth as well as violence and terror, and it would make little sense to treat identity as a general evil.⁸ Rather, we must draw on the understanding that the force of a bellicose identity can be challenged by the power of competing identities. These can, of course, include the broad commonality of shared humanity, but also many other identities that everyone simultaneously has leading to other ways of classifying people, which can restrain the exploitation of specifically aggressive use of one categorisation. A person's citizenship, residence, geographic origin, gender, class, politics, profession, employment, food habits, sports interests, taste in music, social commitments, etc., make him/her member of a variety of groups. Each of these collectivities, to all which this person simultaneously belongs, gives him/her a particular identity. None of them can be taken to be the person's only identity or singular membership category.⁹ The sense of identity can make an important contribution to the strength and the warmth of person's relations with others, such as neighbours, members of the same community, fellow citizens, or followers of the same religion. The focus on identities can enrich bonding and make people do many things for each other and help to take this beyond self-centred lives.¹⁰ The recent literature on social capital, powerfully explored by Robert Putnam and others, has brought out clearly how an identity with others in the same social community can make the lives of all go much better in that community—a sense of belonging to a community is thus seen as a resource like capital.¹¹

Application of the theories propounded to a holistic understanding of insurgencies can never be complete without understanding the historical and contemporary dimensions of the insurgencies. Some of the oldest movements for self-determination based on identity and ethno-nationalism have resulted in some of the most protracted insurgency movements in the world that followed at the onset of the process of decolonisation by the British, in their various territories, after the Second World War. Towards the end of the British colonial rule in the various parts of the world, a small group of socio-culturally distinct tribes inhabiting their traditional territorial domains firmly and purposefully challenged the claim by newly independent governments to inherit their territories which the British held as a colonial legacy and rose in a rebellion that led to a number of violent military confrontations with respective governments across the globe.

The nationalists (insurgents) formed their authentic political organisation and laid claim that they had never been a part of the dominions of these new governments either by conquest or agreement and therefore the government's administration over their territory was forceful and illegal imposition of an alien authority and as a "people" have a history of their own, distinct from the history of the new nation.¹² Moreover, the nationalists claimed there was nothing in common between them and the rest of the people in the new nations in terms of culture, traditions, religion, and social beliefs and they constituted a distinct nation themselves. These assertions remained strong across the globe in the post-colonial era and have given rise to a number of formidable insurgency movements in the postcolonial world. The violence has over the years deprived populations in these insurgency-afflicted areas especially the younger population of development and opportunities, causing physical and psychological frustration resulting in a felt need to revisit the original objectives of the movement and its relevance today. The sense of this thought and accompanied frustration, post many years of violent confrontation with intervening periods of peace and negotiations, the government of these countries and the major groups claiming to represent people's interests, signed truce agreements allowing them to enter into negotiations and peace talks to bring about amicable political settlements. While settlements have eluded the people in a majority of these insurgencies, the movements as such stand at a critical juncture, due to the impact of globalisation, which has not only shrunk the world but has made borders fragile, making all stakeholders relentlessly pursue amicable solutions.

Generational Gap

Besides the issues as stated earlier, along with political and cultural boundaries which are most evident when it comes to these insurgencies, these people hold

on to their narratives dearly. They continued to propagate the idea, that neither their land had ever been occupied by any power nor were they assimilated into any nation.¹³ The fundamental reason for this, according to them, is the socio-cultural difference between the highly stratified societies and the egalitarian socio-cultural structures of these societies. The “people” asserted that despite these differences, governments have forcibly occupied their traditional inherited lands and continue to hold them with force against their natural right and will to decide their destiny.¹⁴ In the process, governments with their powers in various insurgencies, have committed untold atrocities on innocent people, killing scores, burning their villages, and suppressing their cultural and religious identities.¹⁵ These contemporary movements are internally more complex as they over time have also got characterised by internal strife and disputes between contesting socio-cultural structures. In addition, these movements have over time also fomented fear among the people that their socio-cultural identity will be overwhelmed by outside influence, stressing that it is therefore imperative to preserve their socio-cultural identity and safeguard their economic aspirations,¹⁶ a ground on which these movements’ leaders draw their legitimacy of leading the people.

The movement leaders have further propounded that the governments are insensitive to the plight of the common man. It is therefore the duty of every member of the community to espouse the movement’s cause and fight with them. The leaders thus gain even more legitimacy, as they project themselves, and are seen, as fighting for the marginalised and even oppressed common man.¹⁷ This narrative is the underlying force sustaining insurgencies in the world, especially in the post-colonial era. In this backdrop, military and administrative measures alone have limited utility, as these narratives are nurtured and ingrained deep in the psyche of the people over generations and therefore resolutions lie in other domains.

Further, governments in various nations with adhoc policies have failed to provide necessities of life, and encouraging state and non-state actors to exploit their vulnerabilities thereby making the situation more complex.¹⁸ The identity and socio-cultural divide remains the anthropological view of the contesting cohort. Against this backdrop, there is also a need to put in perspective the historical setting and the genesis of these conflicts, where generally not a single family is spared from the ills of such conflict zones. There is always someone or the other who has died during the conflict, and the scars of the conflict always remain fresh in their minds. The insurgents generally cannot directly take on the powerful governments; however, the common man continues to bear the brunt due to the extended timelines for any kind of resolution. Besides those who have served for the betterment of the insurgent afflicted zones suffer the

maximum and will continue to suffer till a resolution is found.¹⁹ Such conflicts over time develop deep animosity; however, it must be highlighted that hatred is unlikely to yield positive results. Therefore, the human dimension of conflict needs more focus, which can be achieved probably by addressing the aspirations of the people, especially the younger generation. To do so, the voice of the various sections/strata of society and student bodies would need to be seriously heard if a resolution is to be reached.

On further examination and carrying out analyses of factors, another major factor is the transformation of society from a traditional to modern society. Societies globally have tended to transcend through various phases from being hunters and cultivators, with limited education in traditional schooling methods, to today, where exposure to a more modern, advanced, and prosperous transformation in all domains influence their perceptions about what they desire from their lives and futures. An ethnographic representation, however, still reveals such movements so to speak have been about seeking a distinct identity for itself, as such communities generally believe they were culturally distinct, and their origins were from a different genetic stock than the imposing nation. The larger nation's environment both pre- and post-Independence from colonial dominance probably omitted this basic distinction, giving a slight bias to the larger political active population of the nation. As a result, for many decades post breaking up of British colonies such societies and their people have been living in a perpetual state of disturbance, bloodshed, fear, and fraud. This phenomenon has also led to a gap being created among different generations.

Therefore, the time has probably come for insurgencies to reconcile, that much water has flowed under the bridge since the start of their movements, and the current geo-political dynamics of the world will probably not allow for the erstwhile demands to be accepted by the dominating nations. Apropos it would only be in the interest of such people to evolve to the new environment (read to accept being part of the dominating nation) and work toward prosperity through social and economic development in the realms of the dominating nation's political structure.²⁰ The younger generations like the younger populations across the world are aspirational. It is essential for the old guard to understand this, coupled with a higher understanding of the modern geo-politics, if there is to be an amicable resolution to any insurgency.

Findings

Given the conflict dimension and the generational perspective as discussed earlier, it is felt that Identity, Ethnicity, History, Culture, and Geography are enduring elements that remain associated with people. From time immemorial,

it is people who have determined their destinies based on the earlier-mentioned elements. Preservation of one's identity is a natural instinct of the human race and geography has been a major determinant for establishing these identities. The paper hypothesis was aimed at developing an understanding of these elements contextualised to the perceptual differences that would likely have developed between generations of people with regard to their aspirations of self-determination based on their core identities, caused by the passage of time, development, and increased aspirations of the younger generation. A wide variety of queries were structured to draw conclusions to prove/disprove the hypothesis. Identity, socio-cultural structure, independence movement, development/modernisation, and aspirations of the people were given pre-eminence in the questionnaire since they were the prime factors being explored for their role in the problem and its resolution. Key findings based on the discussion in previous paragraphs and analysis of a survey undertaken to a limited set of people in different age groups with sufficient knowledge about insurgencies the world over are covered in the succeeding paragraph.

On being asked about what they perceive about insurgency-based conflicts between generations, a large majority of respondents (48.3 percent) have stated the perceptions of generations about insurgency-based conflicts have changed, with a balanced set of respondents stating the perception has evolved (21.2 percent) and some stating it has partially changed (22.5 percent). On analysis of the data, it also emerged that a very large percentage of respondents (59.6) agreed that the perception between different age groups differs considerably in insurgency-based conflicts. On being queried on the impact insurgency based conflicts have on the development of such regions, the majority of respondents (49 percent) felt the conflicts stymie the development, while 27.8 percent stated it partially affects the development. Amongst the five major factors (socio-cultural structure, identity, independence movement, development/modernisation, and aspirations of the people) identified, lack of education and development has caused the perception shift, while socio-cultural structures remain very important to the people of such regions (78.8 percent). More than 80 percent of respondents have agreed that the resolution to any insurgency-based conflict must give the region and people, viz., peace, security, and political stability, economic, and social prosperity. However, a large number of respondents continue to feel that self-determination will always be the core demand.

The primary data collected for the research in the form of a questionnaire supports the line of argument, which is, that there is a perception gap between the generations of the insurgency-afflicted populations on the issue of self-determination. Hence, the recommendations for resolution have been aligned with the output of the survey and the findings of the research.

Recommendations

The research survey makes it imperative to recognise that there is a generational gap in the understanding and outcome of insurgency-based conflicts, therefore any resolution needs to factor in this gap while exploring options for resolution of the problem. Given the aforesaid, any peace process attempting conflict resolution in such regions of the world must meet the following conditions:

- The solution should be acceptable to all generations and stakeholders in the region.
- The aspirations of all socio-cultural groups need to be met especially keeping in mind the aspiration of the younger generation of leading a prosperous life.
- Programmes to ensure development and economic prosperity supported by mechanisms to provide good quality education and security to the common people need primacy.

Conclusion

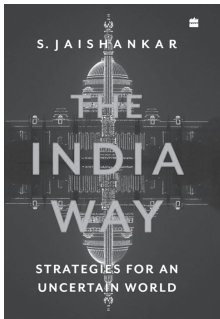
Many nations have the distinction of successfully resolving ethnicity and identity-based insurgency conflicts. While no model can be considered as a classic case, to show-case the benefits of peaceful development after giving up arms, however, failure to put in place well-structured developmental programmes following the culmination of the conflict phase has prevented replication of peaceful development in some regions where insurgency-based conflicts prevail. Besides the complexities involved in the resolution of such conflicts, there is always a need for a whole government approach at multiple levels with expertise, and wide active participation of all stakeholders, especially women's bodies, student organisation representing the younger generations' aspiration, and civil groups with the undying philosophy of "unity amongst generations". The *sine qua non* of the solution, the aspirations of the future generations, as they will reap the maximum benefit from whatever is decided today.

Brigadier Bruce Fernandez is a Research Scholar pursuing PhD programme with a leading Indian University. Views expressed are personal.

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The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World

S Jaishankar

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The current world order is witnessing a significant paradigm shift mainly because of the rise in China's economic and military power, the inward-looking policy of the United States (US), its pull-out from various sensitive regions of the world, and the rise of middle powers like India, Brazil, Russia, Germany, and Japan. The current world order is mainly multipolar with an inclination toward Asian countries. In such a testing environment, the Indian Foreign Policy needs a relevant strategy to match its expectation and national interest. Dr. S Jaishankar, India's External Minister, seeks to address how India would shape such a policy in *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*.

As a seasoned diplomat, the incumbent Indian Foreign Minister reverberates for a more pragmatic way of dealing with the countries in the changing world. The key argument is to secure India's regional interest and project itself as an instrumental player in international relations. He advocates for India's way of dealing with international players where he neither supports the alliance system nor favours non-alignment, where India's action must be driven by *Kishana's choice*, i.e. following the dharma of the state. Multiple engagements in the multipolar world are vital for achieving India's national interest and preserving its strategic goal. In doing so, the West must accept that India's growing posture in the international arena is in the western and global interest.

In eight chapters, derived from his lectures in various national and international forums, Dr. Jaishankar recalls many historical events and drives various lessons that must be learned to project India as a global player. His allusion to the Satyajit Ray film "*Shatranj Ke Khilari*" (*The Chess Players*) points out that India is now fully aware of its capabilities and the changing geopolitical environment. The Book addresses the challenge of China's rise and its likely impact on India's regional and global interests. When he says, "This is time to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play," he advocates for a multilateral approach to deal with the situation. Also, while he writes, "a shared interest in securing the global commons and contributing to global goods has brought about a convergence between very

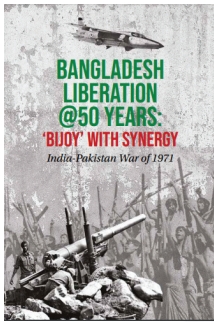
different politics,” he points to the mutual co-existence of both countries despite border disputes. While writing about China’s shrewd diplomacy, he writes, “But for two decades, China had been winning without fighting, while the US was fighting without winning.” He advocates for calculated risk-taking abilities and enhancing economic capabilities to address such concerns. He further writes, “economy drives diplomacy, not the other way around,” on the scope of rising economic capabilities. Thus, enhancing economic capability and advocating multilateralism is the way forward in dealing with China in the coming times.

Finally, this Book offers insight into the south block’s perception of the changing geo-political and geo-economic situation. The Book focuses on looking inwards while facing the changing times as the author writes, “as Indians prepare for greater contributions, they must rely on their own traditions to equip them in facing a tumultuous world.” India has long neglected its cultural heritage and traditional intellect in shaping the Indian foreign policy initiative. In stating that the real challenge that New Delhi faces is its approach, he said it is a “dogma of Delhi” in forging relationships with international players. Therefore, he is advocating for more bold and pragmatic foreign policy initiatives in dealing with the world.

Besides being a well-written Book by the policymaker himself, the Book does not articulate India’s future course of action. In a nutshell, the “How” factor of Indian foreign policy is missing. While written before the Galwan Incident, the layout approach mentioned in the Book does not find a place in New Delhi’s due course of action other than military. Also, the Book does not address the challenges arising from India’s neighbourhoods. Therefore, India needs an ecosystem to translate the Book’s idea into reality effectively. An ecosystem that derives its power from India’s pluralistic society, democratic framework, and political will.

All in all, the Book is a must-read for all foreign policy enthusiasts, international relations students, and Indian diplomats. The Book is undoubtedly an addition to resources available on Indian foreign policy perspectives.

Vaibhav Kullashri is a Research Assistant at CLAWS, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.



**Bangladesh Liberation @50 Years:
'Bijoy' with Synergy
*India-Pakistan War of 1971***

Eds. VK Ahluwalia and AN Jha

KW Publishers Pvt Ltd 2021

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The geopolitics during the build-up to the 1971 War, the operations by the Indian Armed Forces, and the Bangladeshi *Muktijoddhas* (freedom fighters), stories illustrating human emotions both on and off the battlefield, post-War developments, India-Bangladesh relations at the moment, and 50 years hence—all this and much more is what one is enriched with, on reading *Bangladesh Liberation@50 Years—'Bijoy' with Synergy: India-Pakistan War 1971*. It has been co-edited by Lieutenant General (Dr) V.K. Ahluwalia and Brigadier A.N. Jha and published by KW Publishers Pvt Ltd in December 2021. The “unique selling proposition” of the Book is the accounts of the operations and the experiences of the *Muktijoddhas*—some authored by the *Muktijoddhas* themselves. It contains messages by the Defence Minister of India and the Chief of Army Staff of India, and a foreword by the President, India International Centre, New Delhi, in addition to blurbs by General N.C. Vij and Air Marshal V.K. Bhatia. The Book, indeed, is a fitting tribute to the Bangladeshi people, the *Muktijoddhas* in particular, in the Golden Jubilee year of their liberation.

The Book dives deep into the geopolitics of the Cold War era covering crucial facets that impacted the War, such as the importance of the Indian Ocean Region, the Ping Pong Diplomacy, the United Kingdom's denial of Oberon-class submarines to India, France's sale of Daphne-class submarines to Pakistan, and the benefits that accrued to Pakistan as a member of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organisation. Of particular interest are the portions on the gargantuan challenges faced by a Western-trained Indian Navy re-orienting to the Soviet Bloc, which, according to the author, “opened the door to a syncretic approach, much like eclecticism, that enriched the Navy in particular.” While geopolitics has been covered fairly exhaustively, a brief mention of the situation in Sikkim, which was not a part of India then, could perhaps have been included.

Being mainly a collection of personal accounts, the Book takes the reader through a roller coaster of emotions—a “greenhorn” getting battle-hardened immediately on commissioning, the unwavering resolve of a soldier who does not stop despite losing both his legs, “victory rolls” post a mission well-accomplished, display of sterling qualities of ethics and leadership, the determined advance on a mine-ridden path, the horror of the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army, war-cries filling the injured with a new lease of life, are but a few examples. The story of Sepoy Baldev who lost both his legs and right arm is a living example of the magnitude of personal sacrifice and stoicism that one must be willing to pay for the nation.

The operations of the Indian Armed Forces and the *Muktijoddhas*, mostly first-hand accounts by veterans, give an idea of “synergy”—not just between the Indian Armed Forces, but also between the Indian Armed Forces and the Bangladeshi Forces. Assaults, where air power and artillery played pivotal roles (Battle of Govindganj) to uniquely infantry-assaults sans artillery, air, or mortar support (Battle of Chatlapore); battles involving attacking the enemy with no indirect fire support, and limited troops, arms and ammunition (attack on Kalachara Tea Garden) to bold, day-time assaults (attack on Three Pimples); amphibious operations (landing at Cox’s Bazar) and heliborne operations (crossing of the Meghna river, capture of Sylhet) to purely naval operations (missile-boat attacks on Karachi)—the narrations bring the battle-field alive. However, clearer and more reader-friendly maps would have accentuated the experience. The combined Indian Army-*Muktijoddha* operation in Dhanmondi to rescue the “First Family” (family of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) being held captive by the Pakistani Army, which culminated with the Bangladeshi flag being unfurled atop the house, deserves a special mention. The humorous interludes are not to be missed either—be it a hungry officer chasing a wild rooster, personnel finding boiled eggs in an abandoned vehicle and feasting on them, an officer collecting his souvenirs from a newly-liberated Bangladesh, or an injured officer experiencing his moment of *marne ke pehle ichha puri* (desire fulfilled before death)! It should be stated in the same breath, though, that these instances are also somber reminders of the harsh realities of a combat zone.

The portion on *Muktijoddhas* throws light on how they trained in less-than-ideal facilities, and the constraints faced initially due to their reliance on Chinese weapons for which India could not provide ammunition. However, such impediments were not greater than the resolve and motivation of the *Muktijoddhas* to liberate their motherland from the “occupation forces”. The chapters by Bengali officers who relinquished their association with the Pakistan Army and fought for the liberation of Bangladesh are absolutely captivating! The

reader can sympathise with the emotions that made them revolt and “disregard military oath and protocols.” In one such account, the author describes the ordeals he went through as a Prisoner of War and how Pakistan Army personnel tried to kill him twice while he was being treated for injuries. His act of refusing to turn a State Approver while being interrogated and the fact that he calls his physical disability (a result of his war-time injuries) “a source of pride” leaves the reader in awe.

The chapters dealing with the Indian reverses on the battlefield are especially significant. The change in operational plans (from an offensive posture to a defensive one and vice versa) a surprising four times, was a portent for what eventually unfolded in the case of Chammb. In the case of Hussainiwala Enclave, the author lucidly brings out how the non-availability of armour and the sympathetic detonation sealed the fate of the Indian forces. It is while reading these accounts that one finds the need for a separate chapter exclusively dealing with the territorial reverses of both countries along with the significance of the lost/captured territories. Furthermore, a critical analysis of the political compulsions that led to lost territories not being reclaimed would have been welcome.

The trivia and snippets contained in the Book are equally fascinating; to quote one—Colonel Osmani, member of the Bangladesh Government-in-Exile and Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladeshi Forces, was one of the architects of Operation Grand Slam. Other interesting information, such as, why 1 JAK RIF received Battle Honour Shyamganj and Theatre Honour East Pakistan 1971 only in 1979, who the highest ranking Pakistani officer to be captured in the entire Western Theatre was, why a Veteran thanks the British Broadcasting Corporation for a battle-victory, who got an on-the-spot Vir Chakra and for what reason, who remains the senior-most officer from either country to have died in any India-Pakistani conflict, which Unit earned the title “Akhaura Tigers,” and why Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s address declaring the War was delayed, are contained in the Book.

The Book concludes with a section devoted to India-Bangladesh relations and areas of engagement going forward. It contains some highly relevant, policy-centric recommendations on how India can build its Soft Power, and domains for India-Bangladesh cooperation, viz., connectivity, agriculture, trade and transit, media reporting, water-sharing, and a new paradigm to turn borders into “connector zones.”

Given its content, comprising geopolitics, military operations, leadership, personal accounts, and policy-centric recommendations, *Bangladesh Liberation @50 Years—‘Bijoy’ with Synergy: India–Pakistan War 1971*, would benefit Indian and Bangladeshi students, military personnel, politicians, policymakers, and

SCHOLAR WARRIOR

the general public interested in the subject. It would be an invaluable resource for news-media personnel and documentary filmmakers pursuing/planning to pursue the theme. The Book will make the youth in both countries value their shared “golden” history.

Kanchana Ramanujam is Former Research Assistant at CLAWS, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.





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ISSUE BRIEF

No. 295 June 2021

A Case for Expanding Nuclear Energy in India



Manish Handari is a Research Assistant at CLAWS, has done a Master's Degree in International and Area Studies from Anna Maria College and a doctorate's Degree in Commerce at JNU University of Delhi. He has previously worked as an analyst at Privatization/Corporate Social (PAC), the office of local issues (International Area Studies), India's Foreign & Strategic Studies Centre, Institute South Asia Studies (ISAS) of Bangladesh Studies and Nepal and Non-Traditional Security in South Asia.

Introduction

Energy has been key for the growth of human civilisation from a long time now, with time, humans moved towards fossil fuels for meeting their energy needs. However, with the advent of cheap renewable electricity, wind, hydro, and electric based technologies, fossil fuels are being increasingly replaced, be it in industry or otherwise. This implies that the future form of energy is mainly electric.

India had a considerably low electricity consumption of approx. 1200 kWh per capita per annum in 2020¹, as compared to USA which had approx. 12,235 kWh or even the world average of approx. 3,216 kWh per capita per annum for the same year.² As India grows economically, its electricity consumption is bound to increase manifold. Electricity

Key Points

- India is expected to witness a sharp rise in power demand in the next two decades, owing to an exponential economic and increasing electrification of transport and residential sectors.
- How much energy power demand is met will directly affect India's contribution towards global efforts against climate change.
- Nuclear Energy makes a compelling argument for a clean and efficient, baseload capacity solution, helping in achieving a reliable and consistent electricity.
- Emerging technologies like the small modular reactors can hold the key to nuclear energy's future in India with suitable modifications to the existing fleet, while working with large conventional reactors.
- Government's support in way of improved funding and better policy in terms of nuclear, different financing methods like the Meritaxi model of Finland, allowing greater private sector involvement and a carbon tax, can provide the needed thrust to the nuclear industry in India.

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an independent think tank dealing with national security and international aspects of land warfare, including conventional & non-conventional conflict and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is beneficial to national and public interest in general.
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Tejusvi Shukla

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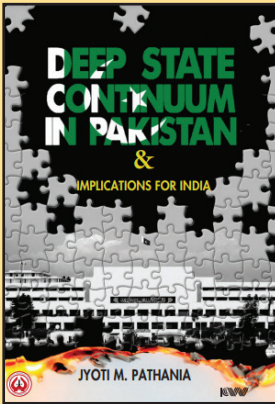
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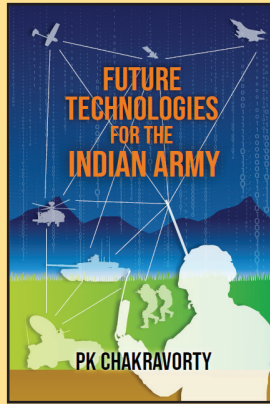


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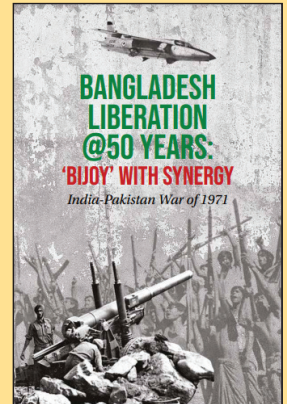
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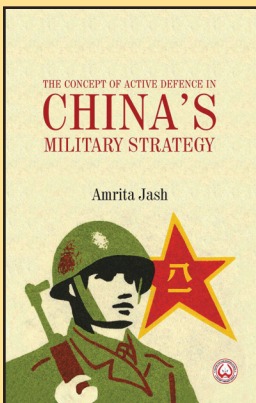
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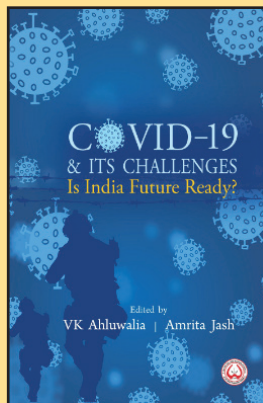
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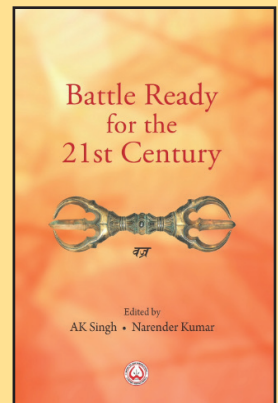
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