

ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the causes and effects of Russia - Ukraine war; the study showed that armed conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted in early 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea. The study being a qualitative type, it's employed historical method of data collection and adopted Eco - Violence theory as its theoretical framework. The current conflict has severely strained U.S - Russia relations and increased the risk of a wider European conflict. Tensions are likely to increase between Russia and neighboring NATO member countries that would likely involve the United State due to alliance and security commitments. Additionally, the conflict in Ukraine will have broader ramifications for future cooperation on critical issues like arms control, cyber security, nuclear non - proliferation, energy, security, counter - terrorism among others. The study recommends among others that all countries should keep engaging in multilateral discussions to address urgent global food, energy and financial issues. Delays in collective actions will exacerbate already troubling prospects of the world economy. *Key words; Global, Conflict, Economy, Tensions, Security.*

Introduction

Conflict as a concept is a phenomenon that exists in all relationship and groups and thus needs to be accepted as part of our everyday life. And as such conflict is inevitable, natural and normal. And therefore, the problem doesn't lie in the existence of conflict but how to manage it (Mayer, 2019). Whenever two individuals opine in different ways, a conflict arises. In a layman's language conflict is nothing but a fight either between two individuals or among group members. No two individuals can think alike and there is definitely a difference in their thought process as well as their understanding. Disagreements among individuals lead to conflicts and fights. Conflict arises whenever individuals have different values, opinions, needs, interests and are unable to find a middle way. This is typical of the conflict between two outstanding nations (Russia and Ukraine).

Russia posed a grave danger to the post-Soviet world order with the Russo-Ukrainian war. Whether this was a result of a typical security concern, or whether it had deeper reasons that have not surfaced much should be a topic of inquiry. Russian side, initially, justified the 'intervention' as saving compatriots abroad. Nevertheless, the west knows that even that being the case the war was extremely destabilizing of the established world order.. Realists like

Kenneth Waltz believe that states are concerned with relative gains (Waltz, 2019). Therefore, if the ‘enemy’ is gaining an advantage without harming Russia directly that is still concern and is actually a direct threat to the security of the state. For instance, the territory of Crimea had significant importance for Russia for centuries. It was a geostrategic location that increased Russia’s influence in the Black Sea region. The port of Sevastopol had been serving Russian interests for a long time, and Russia could not have risked losing it. Even though, Russia had a lease till 2042 on its naval base at the Crimean port of Sevastopol, in Real politik this was not a guarantee that one day Ukraine would not expel Russian Black Sea Fleet (Treisman, 2020). As a result of Ukraine’s democratization and westernization, this port could have fallen into the hands of NATO. One can call this a ‘Hobbesian Fear’ (Burchill, 2020).

In this view, Russia as a great power did what it had to do. Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, launching the biggest military offensive in Europe since World War II. Moscow’s incursion into the territory of its south-western neighbour and attempts to capture major cities – notably Kyiv, the capital – have met with firm resistance, thwarting President Vladimir Putin’s reported plans for a quick conquest and installation of a subservient government.

Ukraine and the Russian Federation are among the world’s breadbaskets. They provide around 30 per cent of the world’s wheat and barley, one-fifth of its maize, and over half of its sunflower oil. At the same time, the Russian Federation is the world’s top natural gas exporter, and second-largest oil exporter. Together, neighboring Belarus and the Russian Federation also export around a fifth of the world’s fertilizers (Jensen, 2018).

As a result, commodity prices are reaching record highs across the board. On the 8th of April 2022, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) published its third consecutive record food price index. Food prices are 34% higher than this time last year and have never been this high since FAO started recording them. Similarly, crude oil prices have increased by around 60%, and gas and fertilizer prices have more than doubled. Vulnerable populations in developing countries are particularly exposed to these price swings, as they dedicate the larger share of their income to food and energy. The world’s poorest countries tend to be net food importers and export and import measures on trade can further exacerbate rising food prices. At current price levels, FAO worst-case estimates of increases in undernourishment and food insecurity are also highly likely.

Ongoing disruptions in global supply chains and financial markets further complicate current out-looks. Freight costs even before the war started where at multiples of their historical averages, complicating rerouting efforts and increasing consumer prices and import costs across the board. Furthermore, global inflation rose to a decade high of 5.2% last year, forcing many central banks to signal sooner-than-expected increases in interest rates, leading to higher debt servicing costs for the developing world. According to the Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2022, 60 per cent of least developed and other low-income countries are already at high risk of, or in, debt distress by uneven access to the financial resources countries need to recover from the pandemic. At present, vaccine doses per 100 people stand at 193.6 in high-income countries and at just 22.1 in low-income countries. In combination, global levels of exposure are alarmingly high to this crisis of triple vulnerabilities, which threatens to negatively affect the lives of billions of people around the world (Kuzio & D’Anieri, 2022).

It is obvious that the Russia-Ukraine war has great implications on International politics. This crisis will leave deep and long-lasting scars, and therefore further medium and long-term policy proposals will be needed subsequently. Hence a call on all countries to keep engaging in multilateral solutions to address urgent global food, energy and financial issues. Delays in collective action will exacerbate already troubling prospects for the world economy.

This study seeks to examine remote and immediate causes of Russia and Ukraine war and its implications on International politics.

Methodology

The objectives of this paper include:

- i. Determine the causes of the Russia and Ukraine war.
- ii. Find out the effects of the war on global food, energy and global economy of the world.

Inline, with these objectives the paper, adopted the Ex Post Facto research design involving the use of secondary sources of data obtained from published books, peer-reviewed scholarly works, academic internet sources, journal, newspapers and official documents. Since the focus of the paper is anchored on international relations perspective, data generated was analyzed via content analysis to answer the following research questions:

- i. What are the causes of the Russia and Ukraine war?
- ii. What are the effects of the war on global food, energy and global economy of the world?

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the eclectic approach. It is anchored on eco-violence theory and resource access theory.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is a *sociological* theory associated with Karl Marx. Conflict theory, first purported by Karl Marx, is a theory that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus and conformity. According to conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless. A basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups within society will work to try to maximize their own wealth and power.

Conflict Theory Assumptions

Basically, conflict theory assumes that societies exhibit structural power divisions and resource inequalities leading to conflicting interests. However, the emergence of manifest conflicts is a rather rare phenomenon, since it depends on the mobilization of power resources by social actors and on their social organization. Therefore, conflict theory assumes that societies and other forms of social organization usually exhibit rather stable structures of dominance and coercion, punctuated only infrequently by manifest conflicts (Buchanan, 2008). In current conflict theory, there are four primary assumptions which are helpful to understand: competition, revolution, structural inequality, and war.

Competition

Conflict theorists believe that competition is a constant and, at times, an overwhelming factor in nearly every human relationship and interaction. Competition exists as a result of the scarcity of resources, including material resources—money, property, commodities, and more. Beyond material resources, individuals and groups within a society also compete for intangible resources as well. These can include leisure time, dominance, social status, sexual partners, etc. Conflict theorists assume that competition is the default (rather than cooperation).

Revolution

Given conflict theorists' assumption that conflict occurs between social classes, one outcome of this conflict is a revolutionary event. The idea is that change in a power dynamic between groups does not happen as the result of a gradual adaptation. Rather, it comes about as the symptom of conflict between these groups. In this way, changes to a power dynamic are often abrupt and large in scale, rather than gradual and evolutionary.

Structural Inequality

An important assumption of conflict theory is that human relationships and social structures all experience inequalities of power. In this way, some individuals and groups inherently develop more power and reward than others. Following this, those individuals and groups that benefit from a particular structure of society tend to work to maintain those structures as a way of retaining and enhancing their power.

War

Conflict theorists tend to see war as either a unifier or as a "cleanser" of societies. In conflict theory, war is the result of a cumulative and growing conflict between individuals and groups, and between entire societies. In the context of war, a society may become unified in some ways, but conflict still remains between multiple societies. On the other hand, war may also result in the wholesale end of a society.

Conflict theorists view society as made up of individuals competing for scarce resource which is at the heart of all social relationships. Competition rather than consensus is characteristics of human relationships.

An Overview of the Russia-Ukraine War

The 2014 Ukraine-Russia crisis simultaneously reflects the pattern of trouble stirred in the past decade across the former Soviet Union—the 2007 cyber attacks on Estonia and the 2008 war in Georgia, for example—and sets the stage for the next three to five years. The unrest in Ukraine has become a signal case, as actions lead to reactions across the post-Soviet independent states and beyond. Governments, civil society, and other players from the Baltic States, down through Moldova, across to Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and on to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are watching the instability in Ukraine closely for its potential effects on their own territories. As an example, leaders of Belarus and Kazakhstan, which are members of the Russian-constructed Eurasian Economic Union, withheld endorsement of the Crimea annexation, signaling their concern over President Vladimir Putin's actions toward Ukraine in light of their own domestic and external vulnerabilities (Roberto, 2018).

The Maidan protests that began in Ukraine in 2013, however constructive their intent in demanding alignment with the more prosperous West and an end to rampant government corruption quickly provided an opening for Putin to apply external provocation to exacerbate indigenous instability in pursuit of his goals of greater regional and global influence. Putin's annexation of Crimea and incursion into eastern and southeastern Ukraine caught the West off guard, setting off a scramble to construct a response from the United States, the European Union, and a North Atlantic alliance inclined to retrench after more than a decade at war in Afghanistan. The West's eventual response - diplomatic condemnation, economic sanctions, nonlethal military assistance, and shoring up of military forces along the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - drew outrage and derision from Russia, which cranked up its propaganda and other messaging tactics to suppress or at least confuse erstwhile opponents at home and abroad (Mayer, 2018).

The Russian military stepped up its “exercises” near the Ukraine border. NATO reported repeated surges of Russian equipment and personnel over the border and into contested areas. The Western sanctions, amplified by a sudden drop in world oil and gas prices in the autumn of 2014, hit the Russian economy hard but failed to change Putin’s approach. Whatever influence the penalties might have had on Russia’s financial power brokers and the Russian public was blunted by the regime’s propaganda and suppression techniques. In Ukraine, the October 2014 elections reinforced the pro-European, pro-reform forces in the parliament, and attention turned to the urgent need to reduce corruption and reform the country’s economy to implement its association agreement with the European Union and to collect the international financial support necessary to survive the economic crisis. The elected reformers, including civic activists of the Maidan, had a basis from which to work: More than two hundred experts, civil society organizers, and human rights defenders crafted the Reanimation Package of Reforms earlier in 2014, proposing specific measures to address corruption, make procurement more transparent, and overhaul taxes and the judiciary (Levy, 2019).

Now embedded in the parliament and committed to making good on the goals of the movement, they can carry out those reforms. They are buttressed by Ukrainians’ heightened awareness of their monitoring responsibilities and the consequences of failure.

Russia First Invasion of Ukraine

Russian forces last invaded eastern Ukraine in 2014. As he has this time, Putin claimed the assault was merely a defense of ethnic Russians who live in the eastern Donbas region, many of whom have never supported the country’s relatively new pro-Western government. But Putin used the invasion to claim part of Ukraine for Russia, unilaterally annexing the Crimean Peninsula. The annexation is not recognized by the international community, but Russia has indisputably controlled the territory since 2014 (Schogol & Jeff, 2022).

Since 2014, a proxy war had simmered in Donbas between the Russian-backed separatist forces and the Ukrainian government. A 2015 peace deal largely ended major battles but the fighting continued, leaving more than 14,000 people dead in the process, according to the Ukrainian government. Three days before his latest invasion, Putin unilaterally recognized the independence of two breakaway regions in Donbas - the self-declared “Peoples’ Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk. The move led to the U.S. and its allies imposing new sanctions on Russia.

THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE RUSSIA AND UKRAINE WAR;

The breakup of the Soviet Union

When the Soviet Union broke up in the early’ 90s, Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, had the third largest atomic arsenal in the world. The United States and Russia worked with Ukraine to denuclearize the country and in a series of diplomatic agreements, Kyiv gave its hundreds of Nuclear warheads back to Russia in exchange for security assurances that protected it from a potential Russian attack (Taylor, 2022).

Those assurances were put to the test in 2014, when Russia invaded Ukraine. Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and backed a rebellion led by pro-Russia’s assault grew out of mass protests in Ukraine that toppled the country’s pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich (partially over his abandonment of a trade agreement with the European Union). US diplomats visited the demonstrations, in symbolic gestures that further agitated Putin (Hall & Gavin, 2022).

President Barack Obama, hesitant to escalate tensions with Russia any further, was slow to mobilize a diplomatic response in Europe and did not immediately provide Ukrainians with offensive weapons. “A lot of us were really appalled that not more was done for the violation of that [post-Soviet] agreement,” said Ian Kelly, a career diplomat who served as ambassador to Georgia from 2015 to 2018. “It just basically showed that if you have nuclear weapons” — as Russia does — “you’re inoculated against strong measures by the international community.”

But the very premise of a post-Soviet Europe is also helping to fuel today’s conflict. Putin has been fixated on reclaiming some semblance of empire, lost with the fall of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is central to this vision. Putin has said Ukrainians and Russians “were one people — a single whole,” or at least would be if not for the meddling from outside forces (as in, the West) that has created a “wall” between the two (Dave, 2022).

Ukraine membership of NATO without a formal decision

Ukraine is the fourth largest recipient of military funding from the US, and the intelligence cooperation between the two countries has deepened in response to threats from Russia. Putin and the Kremlin understand that Ukraine will not be a part of NATO, but Ukraine became an informal member of NATO without a formal decision (Ruslan, 2022). Which is why Putin finds Ukraine’s orientation toward the EU and NATO (despite Russian aggression having quite a lot to do with that) untenable to Russia’s national security?

The prospect of Ukraine and Georgia joining NATO has antagonized Putin at least since President George W. Bush expressed support for the idea in 2008. That was a real mistake. It drove the Russians nuts. It created expectations in Ukraine and Georgia, which then were never met. And so, that just made that whole issue of enlargement a complicated one (Steven, 2016).

No country can join the alliance without the unanimous buy-in of all 30 member countries, and many have opposed Ukraine’s membership, in part because it does not meet the conditions on democracy and rule of law. All of this has put Ukraine in an impossible position: an applicant for an alliance that wasn’t going to accept it, while irritating a potential opponent next door, without having any degree of NATO protection (Adeyemi, 2019).

Russia’s recent threat on Ukraine

The Russia-Ukraine crisis is a continuation of the one that began in 2014. But recent political developments within Ukraine, the US, Europe, and Russia help explain why Putin may feel now is the time to act. Among those developments are the 2019 election of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian who played a president on TV and then became the actual president. In addition to the other thing you might remember Zelensky for, he promised during his campaign that he would “reboot” peace talks to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine, including dealing with Putin directly to resolve the conflict. Russia, too, likely thought it could get something out of this: It saw Zelensky, a political novice, as someone who might be more open to Russia’s point of view (Harris, Shane, Sonne & Paul, 2021).

What Russia wants is for Zelensky to implement the 2014 and Minsk agreements, deals that would bring the pro-Russian regions back into Ukraine but would amount to, as one expert said, a “Trojan horse” for Moscow to wield influence and control. No Ukrainian president could accept those terms, and so Zelensky, under continued Russian pressure, has turned to the West for help, talking openly about wanting to join NATO (Coleman, 2018).

Public opinion in Ukraine has also strongly swayed to support for ascension into Western bodies like the EU and NATO. That may have left Russia feeling as though it has exhausted all of its political and diplomatic tools to bring Ukraine back into the fold. Moscow security elites feel that they have to act now because if they don’t, military cooperation between NATO and Ukraine will become even more intense and even more sophisticated. In December,

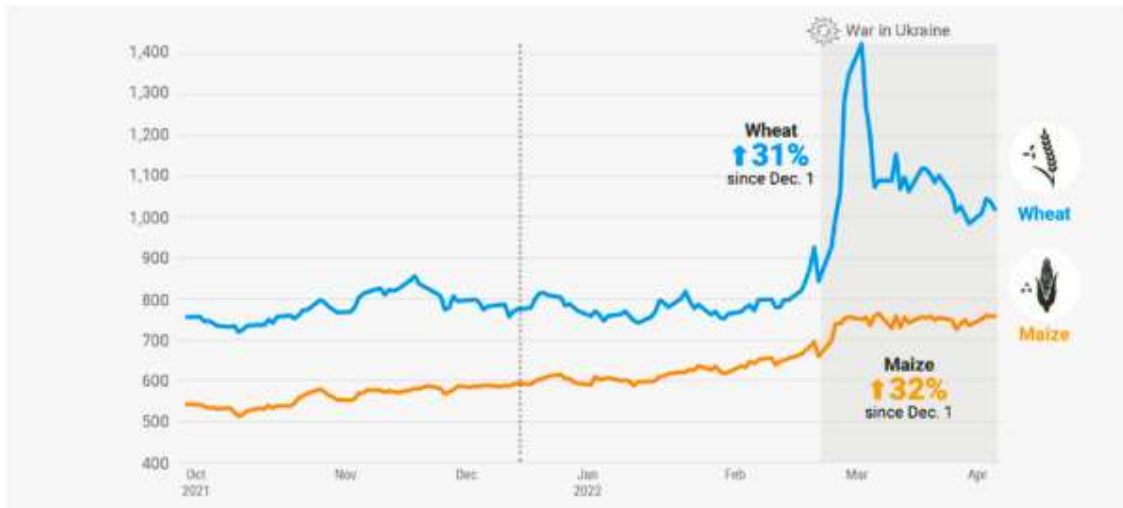
President Biden warned of severe sanctions if Russia invaded Ukraine. Putin has constantly demanded guarantees from the West and Ukraine that it will not join NATO.

Tensions escalated in 2021 when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged US President Joe Biden to let Ukraine join NATO. Ukraine is a democratic country of 44 million people, with over 1,000 years of history. It also happens to be the biggest country in Europe by area after Russia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, it voted for independence from Moscow. Putin deems Ukraine as an artificial creation carved from Russia by enemies. He has also described Ukraine as a puppet of the West. Zelensky's request to be a part of NATO angered Russia and it started placing troops near the Ukraine border (Hosking, 2019).

On November 10, 2021, the US reported unusual Russian troop movements near the Ukrainian border. On November 28, Ukraine said Russia is massing nearly 92,000 troops for an offensive at the end of January or early February. Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a military operation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The forces invaded Ukraine from several directions and this is being seen as the beginning of war in Europe over Russia's demands for an end to NATO's eastward expansion.

Effects of Russia - Ukraine War on global food

The impacts of the war in Ukraine are being felt not only regionally, but around the world because of the region's significant contribution to food and energy supplies. In relation to food, there are production and export challenges: these are already associated with reduced availability and price rises. Food (and energy) import bills are already at record levels, and it seems inevitable that these will continue to rise. This will have widespread impacts that could be far-reaching, but the consequences for poorer and vulnerable people, will be particularly severe. Many food producers are not able to access the agricultural inputs they need, so the impact of current market disturbances may be felt through 2023 (Maurice, 2021).



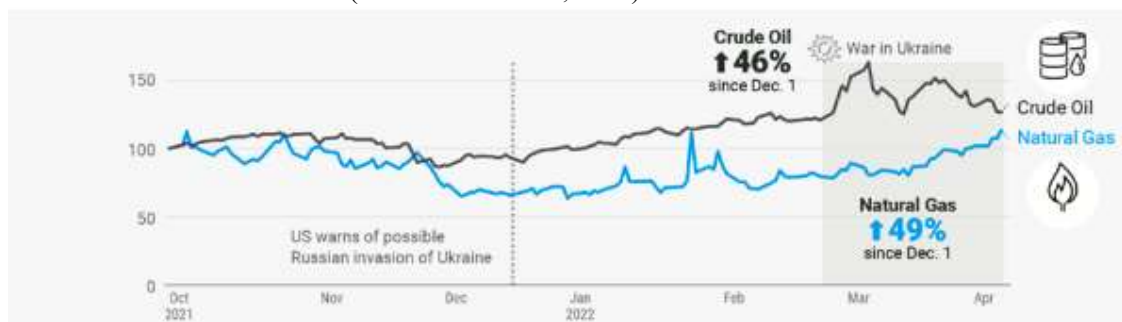
Price increases and volatility in wheat and maize prices (Price in USD)

On top of these food price increases, which affect all net food importing countries, some economies are also directly exposed through import dependence of wheat coming from Russia and Ukraine. Wheat and maize prices have been very volatile since the war started, but are still 30% above their level at the beginning of the year.

Effect of the war on global energy

Energy markets were already tight before the start of the crisis, following strong consumer demand and high GDP growth in 2021. Though crude oil and natural gas are still around 50% above their level at the start of the year, they have witnessed volatile trading sessions following key announcements since

the start of the war and, in particular, the commitment by the United States to release 180 million barrels of oil over the next six months (Waxman & Olivia, 2022).



Price volatility in energy markets: crude oil and gas (Price index, base = 1 October 2021)

The significant increase in oil and gas prices may lead to counteracting effects in the longer term. On the one hand, it may shift investments back into extractive industries and fossil fuel-based energy generation, running the risk of reversing the trend towards decarbonization documented over the past 5-10 years. On the other hand, it can also accelerate the transition towards alternative sources of energy, especially in countries that wish to strengthen their energy resilience by sourcing from more local sources.

Effect of the War on Global Economy

Europe

The toll is already immense in Ukraine. Unprecedented sanctions on Russia will impair financial intermediation and trade, inevitably causing a deep recession there. The ruble's depreciation is fueling inflation, further diminishing living standards for the population. Energy is the main spillover channel for Europe as Russia is a critical source of natural gas imports. Wider supply-chain disruptions may also be consequential. These effects will fuel inflation and slow the recovery from the pandemic. Eastern Europe will see rising financing costs and a refugee surge. It has absorbed most of the 3 million people who recently fled Ukraine, United Nations data show (Paul, 2016).

Caucasus and Central Asia

Beyond Europe, these neighboring nations will feel greater consequences from Russia's recession and the sanctions. Close trade and payment-system links will curb trade, remittances, investment, and tourism, adversely affecting economic growth, inflation, and external and fiscal accounts. While commodity exporters should benefit from higher international prices, they face the risk of reduced energy exports if sanctions extend to pipelines through Russia (Roberto, 2018).

Middle East and North Africa

Major ripple effects from higher food and energy prices and tighter global financial conditions are likely. Egypt, for example, imports about 80 percent of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine. And, as a popular tourist destination for both, it will also see visitor spending shrink. Policies to contain inflation, such as raising government subsidies, could pressure already weak fiscal accounts. In addition, worsening external financing conditions may spur capital outflows and add to growth headwinds for countries with elevated debt levels and large financing needs.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Just as the continent was gradually recovering from the pandemic, this crisis threatens that progress. Many countries in the region are particularly vulnerable to the war's effects, specifically because of higher energy and food prices, reduced tourism, and potential difficulty accessing international capital markets. The conflict comes when most countries have minimal policy space to counter the effects of the shock.

Western Hemisphere

Food and energy prices are the main channel for spillovers, which will be substantial in some cases. High commodity prices are likely to significantly quicken inflation for Latin America and the Caribbean, which already faces an 8 percent average annual rate across five of the largest economies: Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, and Peru. Central banks may have to further defend inflation-fighting credibility. Growth effects of costly commodities vary. Higher oil prices hurt Central American and Caribbean importers, while exporters of oil, copper, iron ore, corn, wheat, and metals can charge more for their products and mitigate the impact on growth.

Asia and the Pacific

Spillovers from Russia are likely limited given the lack of close economic ties, but slower growth in Europe and the global economy will take a heavy toll on major exporters. The biggest effects on current accounts will be in the petroleum importers of ASEAN economies, India, and frontier economies including some Pacific Islands. This could be amplified by declining tourism for nations reliant on Russian visits. For China, immediate effects should be smaller because fiscal stimulus will support this year's 5.5 percent growth goal and Russia buys a relatively small amount of its exports. Still, commodity prices and weakening demand in big export markets add to challenges.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Over a year into the war against Ukraine there is no end in sight and Russia's most recent actions even point to an intensification of the fight. The study concludes that the Russian leadership must stop the aggression and reconsider the unacceptable path it has chosen: for the sake of Ukraine, Russia, Europe and the wider world. Since the beginning of this war on 24 February, four Russian assumptions have proved clearly wrong: that the Ukrainian government would crumble and Russian forces would take Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities swiftly; that the European Union would be at pains to show resolve and respond to this aggression; that the "Western world" would be divided and uncertain in its reaction; and that the broader international community would not condemn Russia's invasion. Instead, the Ukrainian government has rallied the whole nation in a fight against the invasion and has organised a fierce resistance, putting Russian troops in considerable difficulties and pushing back their offensive. Contrary to what President Putin might have expected, this war will be a landmark in the consolidation of Ukraine as a sovereign nation and in the reaffirmation of its identity, separated from that of Russia. In the end, the desired outcome to this war would see the Ukrainians forcing a Russian withdrawal or, at a minimum, getting Moscow to agree to a negotiated settlement on terms acceptable to Kyiv. Ensuring that Russia's aggression fails and that Ukraine achieves one of these outcomes should be primary goals for the West.

The paper recommends that all countries should keep engaging in multilateral discussions to address urgent global food, energy and financial issues. Delays in collective action will exacerbate already troubling prospects for the world economy. Likewise, Super Powers and international organizations should make immediate and efficient use of all the

existing mechanisms to address both the conflict and the countries directly suffering from the war(Ukraine and the neighbouring countries)

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Figure 1 – Map of Russia and Ukraine and their conflict areas



Source: <https://mapamundi.org.br/2021/crimea-entre-a-ucrania-e-a-russia/>
After the incorporation of Crimea into Russia, regions of eastern Ukraine, with a Russian