

# We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

6,100

Open access books available

167,000

International authors and editors

185M

Downloads

Our authors are among the

154

Countries delivered to

TOP 1%

most cited scientists

12.2%

Contributors from top 500 universities



WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index  
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?  
Contact [book.department@intechopen.com](mailto:book.department@intechopen.com)

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.  
For more information visit [www.intechopen.com](http://www.intechopen.com)



## Chapter

# Ukraine War: Toward a New Global Security Order

*Matteo Frigoli and Maurizio Martellini*

## Abstract

The current conflict in Ukraine has had tremendous repercussions both on the individuals living in the affected territory and around the world. The Ukraine crisis is the latest example of the centuries-old conflict between democracies and autocracies, and the outcome of this war will have a significant impact in determining the future of global politics. From this point of view, one should look at the Ukraine crisis as an important turning point that will determine whether democracies or autocracies will have the upper hand in determining the international order and should think if, in the long term, the effectiveness of the post-cold War global security order is a solid basis for maintaining peace and international order.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, armed conflict, United Nations, UNSC, crisis prevention, United Nations charter, Russia, international security, international politics

## 1. Introduction

On February 24, 2022, the relations between the Russian Federation and Ukraine reached a new level of violence and intensity. The beginning of high-intensity operations conducted by the Russian armed forces has shifted the continuum of the low-intensity conflict started in 2014 by Russia into the proper phase of the full-fledged war.

The war in Ukraine has caused serious shocks to the international system. As it will be discussed, the conflict has unveiled that the landscape of international relations is experiencing serious competition between blocs of states that are related to the United States, China, and Russia. Furthermore, this scenario could also be looked through the lens of a pending, but seemingly inevitable, confrontation between democracies and autocracies in taking the leading role in global affairs.

The conflict in Ukraine has also tested the effectiveness of the current system on international relations in preventing major conflicts even near the decades-long safe area of Europe.

## 2. Understanding the scenario of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine

The nefarious actions of Russia against Ukraine come from a distant past. The illegal annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, the complicity in the creation of

the Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republic, and the actual high-intensity war against Ukraine are only the last remnants of a past of oppression toward Ukraine. Beyond this, the targeted poisoning of journalist or political opponents has made Russia strongly criticized for its conduct undermining international peace and security [1].

In order to understand the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, it is important to look at how Russia perceives the post-soviet space. To this end, the heritages of the old Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union play a key role. These two heritages have a strong significance when looking at Russian-Ukrainian relations. Indeed, Russia considers Ukraine a satellite state part of its exclusive zone of influence [2].

From the point of view of Ukraine, many Ukrainians look at the European Union as a model to aspire and want to shift away from Russian hegemony. Indeed, a relevant number of post-communist states joined the European Union and NATO, and this move was beneficial in terms of improved security, economy, and governance.

When Ukraine signed the EU Eastern Partnership, Putin became alarmed that his plan to restore the image of Russia as a model for the post-communist states was fading. [3]. Putin pressured the then Ukrainian President, Yanukovich, to reorientate Ukrainian policies toward rapprochement with Russia. This was not new; Ukraine was a regular target of economic sanctions by Russia. For example, as early as 1993, when Russia discussed with Ukraine to retain most of the black sea naval fleet, the energy sector has been widely used to force and influence Ukraine. This was an instrument used every time Ukraine's policies were drifting away from Russia's influence. In 2013, just before the Euromaidan revolution, Russia imposed tariffs and restrictions on goods from Ukraine. This caused a deep economic crisis since a quarter of Ukraine's exports were directed to Russia. When Russia imposed the then-president of Ukraine, Yanukovich, to choose the new-born Eurasiatic Custom Union (ECU), instead of the association agreement with the EU, provoking the Euromaidan revolution, gave the picture of how Russia intended and still intends its relations with Ukraine: a hegemony of Russia over Ukraine.

### **3. The global dimension of the regional Ukraine conflict**

The conflict in Ukraine followed by the Russian aggression has been deplored by most part of the states represented in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 2nd March 2022 [4]. Indeed, 141 states voted in favor of the resolution condemning Russia's aggression, 5 states voted against it (including Russia), and 35 states abstained.

Besides the overwhelming numbers in favor of the UNGA resolution, it is relevant to note that the Asiatic superpowers of China and India, together with most parts of the post-soviet states, abstained from the vote. While the resolution is not legally binding, it gave an overview of the standing of the major powers in front of a high-intensity war taking place in Europe, involving tens of thousands of regular and irregular soldiers, potentially undermining the security of the entire European continent.

This fact is vastly important, and it is reminiscent of how international peace and security could become subordinate to the preservation of commercial, political, or diplomatic ties between states. In fact, the economic globalization that followed the end of the cold war is not intrinsically chained to bring international peace. On the contrary, the strife over the impact of globalization on traditional forms of societal organization [4] and the geography of isolation versus globalization [5] produced

a moment of intensified international anarchy. When the cold war ended, there has been a new emergence of lurking geopolitical crises, such as conflicts between ethnic groups, clashes between civilizations [6], and conflicts over access to strategic resources.

In fact, the post-cold war has seen a lot of submerged conflicts being unveiled. Russia has experienced a decline in its role of dominance in the post-soviet space and in its sphere of influence [7] in the area of the former Soviet Union and began to conquer the so-called “near abroad” territories along its borders (parts of Georgia, Crimea, and Eastern Ukraine). The actions of Russia in Ukraine have seriously undermined international peace while being in breach of the Budapest memorandum on security Assurances. Indeed, under the terms of this treaty, signed in 1994, Ukraine obtained assurances of territorial integrity from cosignatory powers, the Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Kingdom, in exchange for giving up its nuclear arsenal and signing the nonproliferation treaty.

Looking at the far east, China not only remained committed to pursuing economic growth but started to engage in great power politics, asserting territorial control over its maritime domain (the South and East China Seas), claiming contested territory from US allies, developing advanced anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) weapons, and enhancing its strike and power projection capabilities in the area [8]. The US role as one of the main strategic actors of maritime Asia, one of the world’s most economically dynamic regions, could be threatened. India, Pakistan, and North Korea have all expanded or modernized their nuclear arsenals and Iran could join the “nuclear club.”

Within the scenario of near-international anarchy, the aggression to Ukraine by Russia is an attempt to maintain, by military force, its political ends of expansion and influence in the so-called Eurasian region. Despite this, as has been discussed above, the level of unacceptability of this move seems to be an inherent element of the European democracies and overseas allies but the far-east powers of China, India together with the post-soviet states have maintained relatively normal relations with Russia, depicting very different ways of understanding international peace and security.

#### **4. Is the war of a superpower in decline?**

The war against Ukraine has been presented in different ways, one sees it as a reaction to the approaching of Ukraine to western-centric models of the EU and NATO, or as a civil war between Ukrainian and Russian speakers [8], for example, the Azov National Guard regiment, which is often criticized as a far-right nationalist unit, is mainly composed of Russian speaking eastern Ukrainians, including people from areas of the Donbas, controlled by Russian proxies [9].

Surely, Ukraine looked with favor to the EU as a model (being also the main cause of the Euromaidan revolution) and to NATO as a security provider after the seizure of Crimea and the creation of the Russian-supported Donetsk and Lugansk Peoples Republic, these are not the main reason of the ongoing aggression.

Indeed, analysts should be aware of Russia’s expansionist ideology inspired by the idea that its territory is intended as a platform pointed toward the European peninsula, especially looking to control large coastal areas of the Baltic and Black Seas, from which naval power might be projected into the Mediterranean and North Sea [10].

These political ends, together with the idea of Ukraine as a failed state [11], pushed his administration to think that Ukraine would easily disintegrate, and a Russian invasion was to be supported by Russian speakers.

In fact, by looking at the core of Russian aggression, one could appreciate its pure nature of territorial conquest; Putin is seeking a territorial link from Russia to Crimea, forming a new region called “Novorossiya” stretched from Kharkiv in the north, through the Donbas in the east and along southern Ukraine [12].

The attempt to rely on a war of conquest, creating new quasi-state entities, in order to forcibly retain its influence on the frontier territory of Ukraine smacks of desperation.

Also, the move of Putin to engage in a high-intensity war, specifically to carry out a large-scale invasion rather than undertaking limited warfare, such as the one conducted by Russian forces in Georgia (2008) and Donbas (2014–2015), constitutes a real gamble. Calculating that the West was too divided and distracted to respond forcefully, Putin relied on an all-out invasion of Ukraine even though they reported almost 200.000 troops massed on the Ukrainian border when the invasion began were not sufficient to maintain Ukraine’s occupation, especially with the eventual insurgencies sustained by foreign support, which Moscow seems to have underrated.

It is relevant to note how much Putin’s Russia is risking in order to retain power over Ukraine. In fact, the same idea purported by Putin about a supposed unity among the eastern Slavs, Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, who all trace their origins to the medieval Kyivan Rus commonwealth has been compromised by the aggression against Ukraine and the enormous life losses of the civilian population [13]. These last elements represent how Russia understands its role in the post-soviet space and it is a signal to all the states in its neighborhood. Furthermore, the fact that Russia is struggling against the Ukrainian forces (supported by western armaments) weakens its leading role as a security provider of the regions of Caucasus and central Asia that could be eroded by China, which has now a deep economic penetration on the countries of the two regions.

The extent to which Russia is committed to not leaving behind its expansionist ends, and its willingness to dominate Ukraine politically, militarily, and economically should be compared with the advantages that Russia could enjoy in becoming a modern state and a reliable partner. This course seems to be so far away from the thinking of the Putin administration that Russia seems to be open to the idea of engaging in a new system of international relations together with China and presumably open to non-western powers [14].

The seriousness of this attempt, coming from a country that is involved in a high-intensity years-long war, could be highly debated, but if one has to draw first impressions, it could be noted that Russia would not have convenience in engaging in such a project as its far-east regions are already economically dependent over China, and this dependency would exponentially grow in a new world order economically led by China to levels that could spark conflict. Furthermore, the adherence of Russia’s historic allies in this project could not be so obvious. For example, the key state of Kazakhstan seems to not be aligned with Moscow in its struggle against Ukraine, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has openly refused to support Russia. Furthermore, Kazakhstan has not recognized the self-proclaimed republics in Ukraine’s Donbas region and the recent annexation of four of Ukraine’s regions by Russia (Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia). In addition, Kazakhstan is not helping Russia to circumvent economic sanctions. Domestically, Kazakhstan has fought any signs of support for Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine among Kazakh society by banning Russian military propaganda symbols and canceling the May 9 victory day parade. In fact, the effort of giving the impression of the existence of the basis for two different world orders reflects the dangerous relations



between the global powers, which are actually divided between democracies and autocracies. Indeed, the willingness to show the incompatibility of these two systems could lead to intolerance of their standing together on the world stage, sparking dangerous preconditions for conflict.

## **5. The role of the UNSC: between failure and reform?**

The aggravation of contemporary international security issues is particularly manifest in the actual scenario brought by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The function of guaranteeing peace and stability is demanded by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), whose composition and instruments are challenged by the fast-paced changing political scenario.

Indeed, the ongoing aggression toward the independent and sovereign Ukrainian state carried out by Russia poses a hard challenge to one of the core duties of the UNSC, which is to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations. In the words of the U.N. Charter, the U.N. is supposed to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war;” Article 2, Section 4 of the Charter, states that all member states “shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state,” the enforcement of this prohibition and others is delegated to the UNSC.

The situation in Ukraine is profoundly troubling. The conflict has already reached an unacceptable level of destruction. The scenario would require a strong response from the international institutions deputed to international peace and stability. Although the UNSC is the U.N. organ that could adopt the relevant resolutions to set out effective measures to guarantee international security, it is nowadays crippled to take action in the Ukrainian context, due to the conflicting interests of the underlying power competition, between its five permanent members (P5) U.S., France, the U.K. on one side, and, on the other one, Russia and China [15].

In fact, the present conflict in Ukraine is a reason for worrying about the effectiveness of the international institutions in case of a conflict directly or indirectly involving P5 members. The Russian government is deeply engaged in the Ukrainian war and seems committed to gaining victory at any cost, ignoring repeated calls by the United Nations General Assembly to cease its military operations, engaging in widespread war crimes against civilians, and openly threatening nuclear war. Furthermore, the Russian government shows no respect for Ukraine’s right to exist as an independent and sovereign nation. The direct or indirect involvement of P5 members in a major high-intensity war depicts the worst-case scenario in which the duty of the UNSC cannot effectively be carried out. This last trend has become prominent in the conflict in Ukraine, where the veto of Russia has substantially blocked every initiative that could be taken within the UNSC to arrest the ongoing war [16].

Of course, on the one hand, today the UNSC is an indispensable organ in which the major powers can engage together in challenging global threats, for example, climate change, human security, environmental security, and access to resources. On the other hand, the structure of the UNSC has been overcome by the fast-changing political relations between the P5, which are shifting from soft-power competition in the field, as an example, of economics and technology to hard-power competition for the control of strategic lands and seas.

Indeed, the structure of the UNSC dates back to the end of World War II, when they then USSR, the U.S., France, China, and the United Kingdom, the great powers that had emerged as the victors, had a key role in determining future world affairs. Therefore, when they set up the security council, they provided themselves with five permanent seats in this body. They also gave each of the permanent members the veto in connection with any international security action it deemed objectionable. As a result, in front of the inaction of the UNSC, the action that the United Nations has been able to do toward ending the current conflict in Ukraine has been to issue non-legally binding statements. In fact, the war in Ukraine has highlighted the importance of the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) as a more moral suasion body on peace and security matters, relative to the inaction of the UNSC. In fact, UNGA voted on three resolutions: a procedural vote and two substantive resolutions on Ukraine (aggression against Ukraine on 2 March and humanitarian consequences of aggression on 24 March). It further adopted a historic resolution on 7 April suspending Russia from the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the first permanent member of the UNSC [17].

For these reasons, the UNSC cannot provide a reliable basis for peace and stability in case of a conflict that touches P5 strategic interests. Of course, as has been said, a high-intensity armed conflict, directly or indirectly, including P5 members is an extreme scenario. Despite this, the eventuality of such a conflict cannot be overruled by the supposed low probability with which such a scenario would happen. Even if there would be a very low probability of a direct or indirect armed conflict between the P5, this issue should be taken seriously since it would imply a potential conflict between the major nuclear powers. Notably, this scenario has evidently manifested in the context of the Ukraine war, where the UNSC structure and veto power have crippled its action.

Furthermore, from a political perspective, the relations of western and eastern powers represented in the UNSC reflect a situation in which political compromise is becoming harder to achieve. In effect, the current international political situation is near to a system in which states form groups with a leading power in it [18], where a minor conflict could easily extend to involve major powers. The UNSC has been created at a time when the emerging bipolar international system was more ordered than now. The same institution must find a way to reform itself and to be capable of preventing or taking action in major and minor conflicts that will eventually come in the future.

## **6. Conclusions**

The high-intensity war in Ukraine has seen Russia's full-fledged offensive strokes descend into a war of attrition. Ukraine's determination to resist, flawed Russian planning and execution, and the rapid delivery of arms to the Ukrainian armed forces have ensured Kyiv's survival. The west support that has enabled Ukraine to survive, however, will not deliver an end to the conflict.

The conflict has compromised the long-supported idea by Putin of a bond between eastern Slavs and its attempt to seek dominance in the post-soviet space. Indeed, by breaking the 1994 Budapest memorandum on security assurances, Russia has shown its determination to use military force in order to retain influence in the post-soviet space, and this signal should sound an alarm for all the nearby states, especially the one with Russian speaking minorities.

The conflict from the Ukrainian point of view is an existential threat. The Ukrainians are fighting for the survival of their state while the Russians are fighting a war that is peripheral and fundamental only to Putin's view of Russia's political ends of dominance. This feature will make eventual future peace talks difficult as Ukraine will not easily make concessions to Russia. Furthermore, the annexation through a highly questionable referendum under military pressure of Ukraine's regions of Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia into Russia poses a fundamental obstacle to negotiation attempts. The western states which are militarily and economically providing key support to Ukraine have strong leverage and could broker a deal but after the recent partial mobilization set out by Russia and the above-mentioned annexation the possibilities of a deal are increasingly eroded. Despite this, even if the war ends, the conflict has shown the submerged political incompatibility between the western states and Russia, which was until now covered by convenience of interests in commerce, especially in the energy sector. Indeed, economic interdependency, as was stated above, is not intrinsically capable to cancel the possibility of conflict between states; conflicts that are now dormant will not necessarily remain in this state. The magnitude of Russia's political ends linked to Ukraine's war, and, most importantly, how it will end, symbolizes both the end of Russia and the foundations of future Russia, whose characteristics are yet to be discerned. The annexations, partial mobilization of Russian man, and, most importantly, the questionable declarations by Russia's officials to the resort of the use of low-yield nuclear weapons could be the nefarious traits of the future Russian statecraft or the elements on which this state could start a new era for itself by refusing this way of conduct in the international scenario.

The vicious circle, in which Putin's Russia's poor military performance is well represented by how superior powers manage peripheral wars, indeed, superior powers do not lose peripheral wars, they simply fail to win them [15, 19].

## Author details


Matteo Frigoli<sup>1\*</sup> and Maurizio Martellini<sup>2</sup>

1 Minter Group S.r.l.-Mondo Interazionale APS, Parma, Italy

2 University of Insubria, Como, Italy

\*Address all correspondence to: [matfrigoli@gmail.com](mailto:matfrigoli@gmail.com)

## IntechOpen

© 2022 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. 



## References

- [1] Kappeler A. Ukraine and Russia, legacies of the imperial past and competing memories. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*. 2014;5(2):107-115. DOI: 10.1016/j.euras.2014.05.005
- [2] Lewis S. Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine. *The RUSI Journal*. 2019;164(1):18-26. DOI: 10.1080/03071847.2019.1605012
- [3] Freedman L. *Ukraine and the Art of Strategy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2019. pp. 66-70. ISBN: 9780190902896 (updf) | ISBN: 9780190902902 (epub)
- [4] Friedman TL. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 1999. pp. 349-378
- [5] Barnett TPM. *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Penguin Group; 2004. pp. 174-179
- [6] Huntington SP. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster; 1996
- [7] Kroenig M, Reality F. Getting NATO ready for a new cold war. *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*. 2015;57(1):52-57
- [8] Elbridge C. Asia goes nuclear. *National Interest*. 2015;135:28-37
- [9] de Ploeg CK. *Ukraine in the Crossfire*. Atlanta: Clarity Press; 2017. ISBN: 099789654X, 9780997896541
- [10] Kuzio T. Russia-Ukraine crisis: The blame game, geopolitics and national identity. *Europe-Asia Studies*. 2008;70:462-473. DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2018.1443643
- [11] Clover C. The unlikely origins of Russia's manifest Destiny. *Foreign Policy*. 2016. Available from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/geopolitics-russia-mackinder-eurasia-heartland-dugin-ukraine-urasianism-manifest-destiny-putin/>
- [12] Text of Putin's speech at NATO Summit. 2008. <https://www.unian.info/world/111033-text-of-putin-s-speech-at-nato-summit-bucharest-april-2-2008.html>
- [13] Shevtsova L. Russia's Ukraine Obsession. *Journal of Democracy*. Jan 2020;31(1):138-147
- [14] Derek Saul. Russia and China are Leading a New 'World Order,' Russian Foreign Minister Says. 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereksaul/2022/03/30/russia-and-china-are-leading-a-new-world-order-russian-foreign-minister-says/?sh=513169dd2756>
- [15] Lakshi PM. The Russia-Ukraine war: The last crisis to break the UN Camel's Back? *OBf Special Report*. 2022;190:1-24
- [16] Russia Vetoes Security Council Resolution Condemning Attempted Annexation of Ukraine Regions. 2022. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1129102>
- [17] See General Assembly Overwhelmingly Adopts Resolution Demanding Russian Federation Immediately End Illegal Use of Force in Ukraine, Withdraw All Troops, available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12407.doc.htm>; Ukraine: General Assembly Passes Resolution Demanding Aid Access, by Large Majority <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114632>; UN General Assembly votes to suspend

*Ukraine War: Toward a New Global Security Order*  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.108926>

Russia from the Human Rights  
Council [https://news.un.org/en/  
story/2022/04/1115782](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115782)

[18] Diesen G. Europe as the Western  
peninsula of greater Eurasia:  
Goeconomic regions in a multipolar  
world. Rowman & Littlefield. 2021:1-18

[19] Robert Cassody. Why Great Powers  
fight Small Wars Badt, Military  
Review. 2000. p. 41. [https://www.  
forbes.com/sites/dereksaul/2022/03/30/  
russia-and-china-are-leading-a-new-  
world-order-russian-foreign-minister-  
says/?sh=513169dd2756](https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereksaul/2022/03/30/russia-and-china-are-leading-a-new-world-order-russian-foreign-minister-says/?sh=513169dd2756)