



KALINGA INSTITUTE OF
INDO-PACIFIC STUDIES

**Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies
KIIPS EVENT REPORT**

24th March, 2022 KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDO-PACIFIC STUDIES invites all to a Panel discussion on Thursday, 5 PM IST

Ukraine under Spotlight: War and Consequences

Speakers:

Dr. Ernest Rockwell (USA)
Prof. Yoichiro Sato (Japan)
Prof. Malgorzata Bonikowska (Poland)

Speakers:

Prof. Stanislav L. Tkachenko (Russia)
Prof. Jonathan Ping (Australia)
Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra (India)

Moderator:
Dr. Monish Tourangbam (India)

On 24 March 2022, the Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies organised a panel discussion on the theme ‘**Ukraine under Spotlight: War and Consequences**’ with experts from Russia, the United states, Japan, Poland, Australia and India. The discussion was inclusive and holistic, bringing together diverse perspectives to help better understand the positions of different stakeholders of the Ukraine War, which is significant in its causes and consequences. The political, economic and security ramifications of the war which has historical, contemporary and future relevance was brought out succinctly during the discussion.

Some of the primary takeaways of the discussion were the following:

Russian Perspective (Prof. Stanislav L. Tkachenko)

- Russia’s actions in Ukraine was contended to be a result of Moscow’s perception of the West’s geopolitical advances. The recent actions of Russia reflect a new thrust of its policy, driven by the willingness to protect vital interests in the former Soviet republics.
- The Russian Federation sees itself as a major geopolitical player rising after many decades of military and economic decline and aims to consolidate its great power potential inherited from the USSR. It was also contended that only after months of deploying troops along the Ukrainian border and holding military drills, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the Russian army to move into Ukraine.

- Russia's strong military response to Ukraine came after President Putin repeatedly expressed his opposition to the NATO's membership expansion to countries bordering Russia. Russia's motivations in the region are fuelled by its apprehensiveness of the US increasingly pushing its agenda in Europe through NATO.

American Perspective (Dr. Ernest Rockwell)

- Following its aggression, Russia received nothing more than a few sanctions and a slap on the wrist from the West, does leading to a dangerous appeasement. At the Bucharest summit, western leaders were tiptoeing around concerns on offending Russia. NATO did not admit states on the immediate periphery of Russia, even though the precedent had already been set with the admission of the Baltic States.
- Russia is clearly in the error by breaking the Budapest Memorandum. The West, particularly the U.S. and the UK, have not lived up to the full extent of their obligation to Ukraine under this particular memorandum. Aside from shipping weapons and extending moral support and haphazard sanctions, the West has adopted no stringent course of action.
- This is the perfect opportunity for China to observe Western responses and predict their reactions to the possible invasion of Taiwan. All four members of the Quad are not on the same page, with India being the most reluctant to comment. Australia and Japan have been offering economic opportunities and new partnerships to bolster India's response.
- Russia will now exercise a growing extent of economic dependence on China, which will only exploit this situation as it has with the debt-trap. Due to Indian over-reliance on Russian arms, it cannot stand up to Russian aggression and must fall in line with Western appeasement. This should be a wakeup call for the United States, which despite growing defence cooperation with India has shown reluctance on scaling up technology transfers and co-production.

Japanese Perspective (Prof. Yoichiro Sato)

- The NATO members are walking a tightrope by not treating Ukraine as an ally but by extending support during the Russian invasion. India's different take on the crisis, calls into question the coherence of the QUAD. India is not a direct ally of the U.S. in the Ukraine crisis and this puts it in a different grouping from Australia and Japan. In light of this, efforts are being taken to maintain the solidarity of the grouping. The most prominent being the Japanese Prime Minister Kishida's visit to India.
- There is not guarantee that China will extend support and assist Russia. In fact, China has already been showing signs of hesitance. For example, at the UNSC it abstained from voting in favour of Russia. Moreover, China has not yet commented on whether it would sell semiconductors and airplane components to Russia. Should the West impose sanctions on Russian oil, then China will simply take advantage of the situation. It will become a monopoly buyer from Russia, and will not pay the market price for oil.

- Japan is substantially dependent on Russia for oil and gas imports. Japan hopes to drive a wedge between Russia and China since both countries held joint naval and air exercise along the Senkaku Islands.

Australian Perspective (Prof. Jonathan Ping)

- Australia is geographically far away from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and it would not have any immediate impact on Australia but it is to be seen in terms of its systemic impact. It will affect the statecraft in terms of alliances, cost to the economy and human rights. It might have an impact on the upcoming Federal Elections in Australia, where security context is a major issue.
- Australia had been active in terms of supplying humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and had been in touch with the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA) on the larger paradigm. The conflict has played the catalytic role for the AUKUS. USA Secretary of State Anthony Blinken visited Australia and there was sign of promise that Australia would get access to nuclear submarines quickly as possible; the conflict also results in some amount of acceleration in the QUAD as well.
- The conflict will strengthen the relationship between Russia and China. China would get oil and wheat from Russia and due to this China would get more discounts. China is benefitting from a lot of fence sitting. China is clear about the long held non-interference to the sovereign states, where they are inviting discussions on Ukraine in relation to Hong Kong, Taiwan and Xinxiang. In terms of the global politics and security is concerned, it puts a sharp focus on the danger of authoritarian regimes.

Polish Perspective (Prof. Malgorzata Bonikowska)

- Poland, which welcomed President Joe Biden on 24 March as part of his emergency mission to shore up NATO's defences following Russia's brutal invasion, is once again torn between the East and the West. Throughout its turbulent twentieth-century history, the country was repeatedly conquered, ruled by foreign tyrants, and saw millions of its citizens purged or driven as refugees from homes destroyed by war.
- Poland is once again on the front lines of a conflict. It sits on the dividing line between NATO members, to which it has recently been admitted, and President Vladimir Putin's Russian orbit, which includes Belarus, another Polish neighbour.
- Although Poland desires peaceful coexistence with its neighbours, Russia has stated unequivocally that it will not allow the world to be organised in a Western fashion. And it is prepared to use all available means to reclaim the influence that the USSR once held. This is a game for a new world order that Russia has openly opposed and is now openly challenging. It cannot be ignored that Russia is a global player, and it is not alone. In Poland's view, Russia is not a toothless country; it is the world's largest - in terms of territory - and a country with nuclear capabilities. Russia will not give up because it has nothing to lose.

- It was also expressed that the West's consolidation is crucial and that it must recognise that this is not just about Ukraine; it is part of a larger game that could last for years. Moreover, it was contended that the War has unleashed a new phase and rethinking in terms of the strategic autonomy of the European nations in managing such crises, in the presence of NATO and the United States as a security guarantor.

Indian Perspective (Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra)

- As a result of India's response coming under global scrutiny, it was felt imperative to assess the expectation from India by the international community (particularly the West), the exact nature of the conflict, winners and losers from the war as well as the Indian position on the war. From the role of arms manufacturers to the propaganda war, as well the economic impact and implications for the energy sector, the Ukraine war is clearly a multifaceted one.
- In the propaganda war, the West is accusing Russia of interventionism and infringing the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine whereas the latter is accusing the former and its military alliance NATO of interfering in Russia's sphere of influence leading to unwanted security expansionist measures. It is also media war wherein the West has been successful in banning Russian sources of media such that most of the analysis and reporting is sourced from the Western media, with the Indian media putting forward the same set of reporting. The West has been successful in crippling Russian economy by way of imposing sanctions with the damage only intensifying as we move ahead in an economic war.
- It has definitely brought about significant changes in the structure and functionality of the European nations, with Germany witnessing an unprecedented rise in its military expenditure, export of lethal weapons to Ukraine and the UK siding with the EU completely in this regard. The period also proved UN General Assembly to be a toothless body, which could not prevent the humanitarian crisis-taking place in Ukraine resulting in flooding of refugees to the EU countries. With the Federal Reserve rates peaking, the stocks getting stumbled, supply chains getting disrupted and energy prices reaching sky high, it goes without saying that the consequences of the war extend beyond Europe. The war between Russia and Ukraine, which has been understood as proxy war between the US and Russia, has clearly defined winners and losers.
- Europe as a continent is directly threatened resulting in the rise of defence expenditure and thereby a showing signal of cuts in the domains of the budget comprising of soft politics initiatives signifying a clear cut shift from soft politics to hard politics areas. Under these circumstances, Russia will definitely acquire a stronger position in the post war period whereas Ukraine losing its lives and livelihoods will remain the worst affected of all.
- Emphasising on to India's role, the events speak for themselves that how India abstained from voting against Russia on the UNSC resolution and UN Human Rights Council resolution creating disappointment amongst the Western Countries. However,

the reasons behind the posture was inclusive of the safety of the twenty two thousands citizens who were stuck in Ukraine at such a crucial time and therefore it was more important to take care of the same and not indulge in taking sides in a war which has background dating back to the Cold war years .

- The fact that the Russia –Ukraine war does not have a direct impact on India, it should not deviate New Delhi from the real dangers of the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, India should not be faulted for not condemning the war as India’s requirements does not expect it to do the same. India has always called for dialogue and diplomacy and as such has been active in sending humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. India cannot afford to intervene in the war as it has its own requirements attached to both US and Russia and considering the nature of the war being a proxy one and reminiscent of the previous wars, India finds no good in interfering in the same.
- Considering the nature of the linkages owing interconnectedness of the global economy, the attempts of disorganising or sanctioning will serve no purpose and any attempt to pursue the same will take us nowhere. India-US strategic partnership will continue but India will always choose the path of “Atmanirbhar Bharat” or “self-reliance” and as such, it can never be an ally to the US in line with the East Asian countries and would instead have its own form of strategic autonomy.