

One Year of Ukraine War: An Analysis

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Ukraine is a significant but perhaps underappreciated part of the international security system. The nation has been a subject of a great power struggle since 2014 with the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian autonomous republic of Crimea.² Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 represented a major escalation of this eight-year-old conflict.³ The revived hostility has been ongoing for a year and has caused great damage to the global system.

A brief image of the Ukraine war:

On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin conducted what he claims was a "special military operation", dispatching tens of thousands of Russian troops into neighbouring Ukraine from the north, east and south.⁴ As NATO considered including Ukraine as a member in 2008, Russia saw this as a threat to their survival and decided to invade Ukraine. Russian forces advanced on Kyiv, hoping for an immediate triumph, but were ultimately compelled to retire. While Ukraine could withstand this invasion to some extent with the aid of western forces, Russia used a referendum to annex the Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson in September of last year.⁵ In the eastern Donetsk region, Russian soldiers took control of the salt-mining town of Soledar after receiving reinforcements from recruits. The strategic town of

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² Jonathan Masters, "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia," Council on Foreign Relations, February 14, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>.

³ Masters, "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia."

⁴ "1 Year on: A Timeline of the War in Ukraine," World Economic Forum, February 24, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/02/ukraine-war-timeline-one-year/>.

⁵ ANM Muniruzzaman and ANM Muniruzzaman, "Uncertainty Mounts over Ukraine Situation," Prothomalo, February 24, 2023, <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/3uf90o44jz>.

Bakhmut is another area of emphasis.⁶ Early on, the West's financial and military support and hired warriors from the Middle East and Africa helped strengthen Ukraine's position. Meanwhile, Moscow has deployed the Wagner Group's hired militia to solidify its position further.⁷

More than a year since Russia's invasion

How military control of Ukraine has changed during the war



Figure 1- Tracking the situation of the Ukraine war (Source: Institute for the Study of War)

⁶ "1 Year on: A Timeline of the War in Ukraine," World Economic Forum, February 24, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/02/ukraine-war-timeline-one-year/>.

⁷ ANM Muniruzzaman, "Uncertainty Mounts over Ukraine Situation," Prothomalo, February 24, 2023, <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/3uf90a44jz>.

Russian forces are expected to launch a new '*spring offensive*', according to Ukrainian officials, to coincide with the first anniversary of the start of the main conflict.⁸ Russian offensives in the east and south, according to President Zelenskyy, are part of a plan to seize ground before Kyiv receives tanks and other heavy weapons from its partners. Ukraine's army has been readying themselves for a fresh assault from the Russian military as winter gives way to warmer weather on the huge eastern frontier.⁹

Observers in the West have questioned Russia's capacity to execute fresh offensive operations. According to Western officials, Russia's spring offensive in Ukraine appears to have faltered before it "got off the ground".¹⁰

Russia and Ukraine used a strategy for fighting that involved the entire society and went beyond the traditional idea of mobilization. A hybrid war, as defined by NATO as "an interaction or fusion of conventional as well as unconventional weapons of force and tools of subversion," is what the Russian attack in Ukraine comprises. Russia used a variety of active measures at the start of the conflict, including espionage, cyberattacks, and internet-based disinformation.¹¹

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky has said that Russia's extensive attack is a challenge to the 'collective security of Europe' and termed this war the '*war of entire Europe*'.¹² In precise, it can be said that throughout this past year, the Ukraine war has presented a dreadful image to the world.

Analyzing the weaponization of the energy sector:

According to some of the leaders of Europe, Vladimir Putin is using electricity as a weapon this winter to erode their support for Ukraine. From July to September 2022, Russia's weaponization

⁸ David Bond, "Russia's Spring Offensive in Ukraine Has 'Stalled', Say Western Officials," Evening Standard, March 7, 2023, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/ukraine-war-latest-russia-spring-offensive-stalled-western-officials-bakhmut-general-valery-gerasimov-b1065393.html>.

⁹ Bond, "Russia's Spring Offensive in Ukraine Has 'Stalled', Say Western Officials."

¹⁰ *ibid*

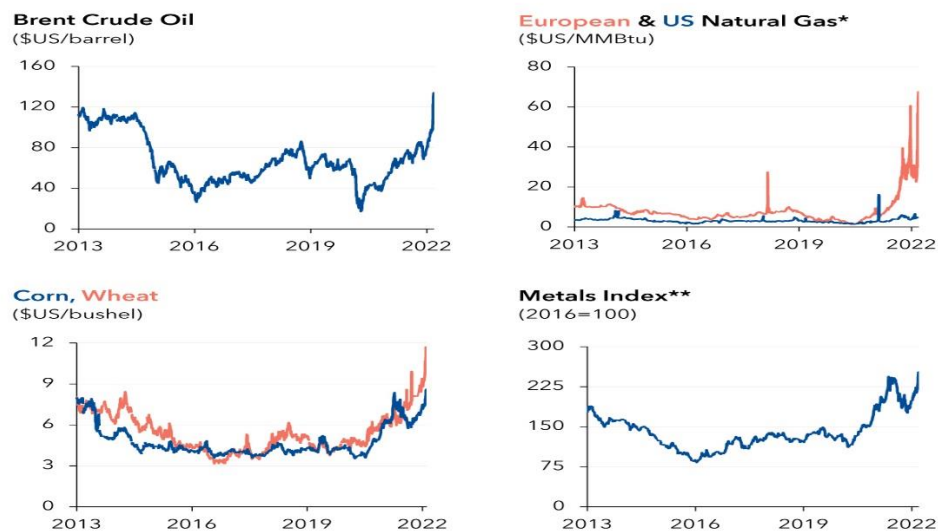
¹¹ Weilong Kong, "Ukraine's Lessons for the Future of Hybrid Warfare," RAND, n.d., <https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/11/ukraines-lessons-for-the-future-of-hybrid-warfare.html>.

¹² ANM Muniruzzaman and ANM Muniruzzaman, "Uncertainty Mounts over Ukraine Situation," Prothomalo, February 24, 2023, <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/3uf90o44jz>.

of its gas supplies to Europe dominated the market for EU gas.¹³ In retribution for Europe's military support for Ukraine, Russia used natural gas supplies as an economic weapon against Europe last year. Russia kept applying pressure on the European gas market by steadily reducing gas quantities. Although that action failed to cause an energy catastrophe on the continent, Moscow is now trying again with oil. In response to the G-7 price cap on oil exports, Russia will reduce production by 500,000 barrels per day, or around 5%.¹⁴ Compared to natural gas, the oil market is far more international. There is a reduction in Russian crude exports, most of which were already heading to purchasers in Asia, which does not directly target Europe.¹⁵

Growing pressures

Prices for energy, grains, and metals soared since the invasion of Ukraine, signaling that inflation rates are poised to accelerate.



Source: Bloomberg, USDA, Datastream, and IMF staff calculations.
 Note: *European & US natural gas prices use the Dutch TTF and Henry Hub as proxies, respectively. **Base Metals Price Index includes aluminum, cobalt, copper, iron ore, lead, molybdenum, nickel, tin, uranium, and zinc.



Figure 2- Growing pressure on the energy sector (Source: Bloomberg, USDA, DataStream and IMF)

Energy is just one aspect of Russia's foreign policy. Still, it has greatly affected the nation's approach to its neighbours and the rest of the globe. It is claimed that in the past also, Russia has

¹³ James Herron, "Russia Tries Another Shot with the Energy Weapon," Bloomberg.com, February 10, 2023, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2023-europe-energy-crisis-updates-russia-tries-again-with-oil-weapon/?leadSource=uverify%20wall>.

¹⁴ Herron, "Russia Tries Another Shot with the Energy Weapon."

¹⁵ *ibid*

used its energy resources as a weapon. Russia's major objective is to demoralize the Ukrainian people by damaging the country's energy and electricity infrastructure.

Assessing the economic ramifications of the Ukrainian conflict:

The international economy still feels the effects one year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted in significant suffering. There are shortages of grain, fertilizer, and oil, as well as increased inflation and economic instability in a globe already struggling to keep up with both. According to the IMF report, the global growth rate will drop from 3.4% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023.¹⁶ The advanced economies will experience a more severe slowdown.

Before the war, the country had stable and promising financial indicators. As a result of the war, Ukraine has experienced severe economic consequences, including a 30% economic decline, 28% inflation, up to 8 million refugees, 30% unemployment, and hundreds of destroyed or damaged businesses and industries.¹⁷ Ukraine's state budget deficit will amount to \$38 billion by 2023.¹⁸ The cost of rehabilitation and the associated economic losses will continue in 2023 due to the ongoing large missile assaults against Ukraine.

Overall, the economic effects of the war in Ukraine have been enormous for Ukraine and the larger region. The battle has slowed economic expansion, disrupted trade, severely damaged infrastructure, and taken money away from other sectors of the economy.

Examining the possibility of heading towards a nuclear war:

In response to Kyiv's demands for contemporary battle tanks and other heavy weapons and the United States getting ready to announce a new supply of military equipment for Ukraine, Moscow issued its usual broadside of threats. Russia's representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that there is still a possibility that Ukraine may create a *'dirty bomb'*.¹⁹ Russia brought the matter up in October when it alerted Western nations of a rumoured Ukrainian

¹⁶ Imf, "IMF / IMF World Economic Outlook January 2023 Update," The NewsMarket, January 30, 2023, <https://mediacenter.imf.org/news/imf---imf-world-economic-outlook-january-2023-update/s/46e363bf-e563-4b35-80b7-2bda96f6ec39>.

¹⁷ Sergii Marchenko, "What Russia's War Is Costing the World," Time, January 12, 2023, <https://time.com/6246070/russia-war-costing-the-world/>.

¹⁸ Marchenko, "What Russia's War Is Costing the World."

¹⁹ "Threat of Ukrainian 'dirty Bomb' Still Exists, Warns Russia," n.d., <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/russia-ukraine-war/threat-of-ukrainian-dirty-bomb-still-exists-warns-russia/2769544>.

conspiracy to use a dirty bomb on its soil and then blamed Moscow.²⁰ With Washington's increased military backing for Ukraine, the Kremlin accused the US of waging a *proxy war* against it.²¹

Russian missile strikes across Ukraine



Source: BBC research, Institute for the Study of War

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Figure 3- Russian missile strikes across Ukraine (Source: BBC Research, Institute for the Study of War)

The Russian government displayed its power. For the next three years, Putin's orders will increase the size of the Russian army by almost 300,000 men, bringing the total to 1.5 million.²² In addition,

²⁰ "Threat of Ukrainian 'dirty Bomb' Still Exists, Warns Russia."

²¹ Al Jazeera, "Russia Accuses US of Fighting Proxy War in Ukraine," Russia-Ukraine War News | Al Jazeera, December 22, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/22/russia-accuses-us-of-fighting-proxy-war-in-ukraine>.

²² CBS News, "As U.S. and Allies Arm Ukraine, Russia Warns That Losing a Conventional War 'Can Trigger a Nuclear War,'" January 19, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-russia-nuclear-war-threat-us-nato-weapons-tanks/>.

he gave instructions to build two military districts close to the borders of Europe and a new army corps.²³ In its 14th large-scale missile strike on February 10, Russia fired dozens of air- and sea-launched cruise missiles at targets throughout Ukraine. In response, President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that this is a *challenge to the collective security of NATO* and that the world should end this terror.²⁴

Russia warns that losing a conventional conflict "*may spark a nuclear war*" as the U.S. and its allies arm Ukraine.²⁵ In the post-World War II era, if nuclear weapons are ever deployed for any cause, warfare will change entirely, and it is impossible to predict whether the looming threat of such a battle can be contained. Additionally, there is concern that this conflict may affect not just Ukraine but also other European nations.

An inevitable global divide:

With Moscow's invasion of Ukraine one year ago, a re-energized Western coalition has united in opposition to Russia. The war has shown a widening global divide and the limits of American power in a world system that is undergoing fast change. There is clear evidence that Putin's isolation has failed, and which is true across the board, not just among those Russian friends who might be expected to support Moscow, like China and Iran. Only 33 nations have implemented sanctions on Russia globally, and a comparable number are providing lethal assistance to Ukraine.²⁶ As the West withdrew, both Russia and China filled the void by actively courting developing nations and seizing the opportunity to capitalize on people's frustration with the United States and Europe by offering a viable alternative to what was viewed as Western hegemony. In this battle for hearts and minds, the Middle East and Africa are major frontlines, along with Asia

²³ CBS News, "As U.S. and Allies Arm Ukraine, Russia Warns That Losing a Conventional War 'Can Trigger a Nuclear War,'" January 19, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-russia-nuclear-war-threat-us-nato-weapons-tanks/>.

²⁴ The Kyiv Independent news desk, "Zelensky: 'Today's Missile Strike Is a Challenge to NATO, Collective Security,'" The Kyiv Independent, February 10, 2023, <https://kyivindependent.com/news-feed/zelensky-todays-missile-strike-is-a-challenge-to-nato-collective-security>.

²⁵ CBS News, "As U.S. and Allies Arm Ukraine, Russia Warns That Losing a Conventional War 'Can Trigger a Nuclear War,'" January 19, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-russia-nuclear-war-threat-us-nato-weapons-tanks/>.

²⁶ Liz Sly, "A Global Divide on the Ukraine War Is Deepening," Washington Post, February 23, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/02/22/global-south-russia-war-divided/>.

and, to a lesser extent, South America, whose fortunes are more geographically linked to those of the United States.²⁷

Support for Russia's activities in Ukraine is undoubtedly divided around the world. While a few nations, especially those with close relations with Russia or a history of hostilities with Ukraine, have supported Russia, many others have denounced Russia's actions and have responded by imposing economic penalties.

Understanding the scenario of sanctions:

The United States has enacted a broad range of sanctions against Russia since it invaded Ukraine in February 2022 to cut it off from the international financial system, decrease the profitability of its oil sector, and weaken its military power. Washington blocked U.S. involvement in most Russian energy enterprises and prohibited the import of Russian coal, liquefied natural gas, and crude oil. The United States has effectively frozen the Russian Central Bank's US-based assets.²⁸



Figure 4 - Countries that have imposed sanctions on Russia (Source: Business Today)

The European Union (EU) has imposed sanctions on Russian banks and persons. Most Russian crude oil and refined oil goods like diesel and gasoline are now prohibited from entering the EU.

²⁷ “3 QUESTIONS - Russia’s Pivot to Asia,” n.d., <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/3-questions-russias-pivot-to-asia/2833755>.

²⁸ Noah Berman, “One Year of War in Ukraine: Are Sanctions Against Russia Making a Difference?,” Council on Foreign Relations, February 22, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/one-year-war-ukraine-are-sanctions-against-russia-making-difference>.

The EU and other governments have imposed sanctions against Russia's military technologies. Russia's membership in the European Council has been revoked, and its veto power in the UN Human Rights Council has been suspended.²⁹

Sanctions have affected Russia's economy a little but haven't led to a generalized collapse or stopped Russia's aggressiveness towards Ukraine. Despite these restrictions, the Russian economy has only declined by a little over 3%. According to the IMF, the Russian economy would rebound by around 0.3% in 2023.³⁰ In need of assistance, Russia has looked too friendly nations like China. Russia's diplomatic efforts and investments are again focused on Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and African countries due to tensions between Moscow and the West.³¹

Considering the context of Bangladesh:

Ukraine conflict, which broke out a year ago 5,800 kilometers away, exposed Bangladesh's economy's endemic flaws. Inflation has averaged 8.14 per cent since the war started on February 24, significantly higher than the expected 5 per cent.³² The government has turned to the International Monetary Fund for assistance due to weaker growth, a 25 per cent decline in the value of the taka, and a 28 per cent decline in reserves.³³

Bangladesh did not participate in the vote when the U.N. General Assembly approved a fresh resolution demanding an end to the conflict in Ukraine. Hence, during a recent meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the Qatar National Convention Center, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the U.N. to take specific and effective actions to end the Ukraine-Russia Conflict as soon as possible, arguing that it would be better for the people if the war ended sooner

²⁹ Berman, "One Year of War in Ukraine: Are Sanctions Against Russia Making a Difference?"

³⁰ ANM Muniruzzaman and ANM Muniruzzaman, "Uncertainty Mounts over Ukraine Situation," Prothomalo, February 24, 2023, <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/3uf90o44jz>.

³¹ Noah Berman, "One Year of War in Ukraine: Are Sanctions Against Russia Making a Difference?," Council on Foreign Relations, February 22, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/one-year-war-ukraine-are-sanctions-against-russia-making-difference>.

³² Akm Zamir Uddin, "One Year Of Ukraine War: Undoing of Bangladesh Economy," The Daily Star, February 25, 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/world/russian-invasion-ukraine/news/one-year-ukraine-war-undoing-bangladesh-economy-3255641>.

³³ Uddin, "One Year Of Ukraine War: Undoing of Bangladesh Economy."

rather than later. Yet, she believed that the nations profiting from the war should aid other nations in lessening their suffering.³⁴

Poorer nations are affected more severely than wealthier ones by the potential disruptions in the supply of energy, food, and commodities caused by the war. So, the pre-existing vulnerabilities in developing nations like Bangladesh are being exacerbated.

Concluding Remarks:

The effects of Russia's attack on Ukraine have already shaken not just Ukraine but also the surrounding region and the entire world. The largest war in Europe since World War II, Russia's conflict in Ukraine has killed thousands of people, forced millions from their homes, and left significant areas of the nation in ruins. It has triggered a humanitarian crisis devastatingly. The conflict has accelerated Ukraine's efforts to ally with Western political organizations, such as the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This conflict between Russia and Ukraine is evidence of revived geopolitical competition between powerful nations. It appears to be in a position that suggests will mark a turning point in forthcoming international relations.

³⁴ Bss, "PM Hasina Urges UN to Take Effective Measures to Stop Ukraine-Russia War," The Business Standard, March 5, 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/pm-hasina-urges-un-take-effective-measures-stop-ukraine-russia-war-594558>.