

Understanding the Plight in Ukraine: How Humanitarian and Food Crises Impact International Security?

By

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In the history of global wars, the Second World War, one of the deadliest wars, is popularly recollected for certain crucial outcomes like the fall of Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan and Fascist Italy (victory of the Allied Forces), decolonisation of Asia and Africa and the decline of the European international clout. However, the extent of destruction that it displayed still, in view of many observers, is unparalleled. The estimated death sums up to 40 to 50 million,¹ out of which, around 20 million deaths occurred owing to hunger and hunger-related factors.² Besides, there were around 21 to 25 million deaths that could be attributed to military causes.³ The devastation of the war was so massive that the casualty estimates extensively differed. With the end of the Second World War, the failure of the League of Nations, which became glaringly visible, paved the way for the establishment of the United Nations (UN). The UN was formed with the aim and belief that a confrontation on the scale of the Second World War or even worse would not take place in future. Nevertheless, the world experienced the onset of the Cold War that continued for more than four decades and witnessed the critical Korean War and the bloody Vietnam War.

The twentieth century experienced wars and conflicts at varying levels that exhibited conventional threats alongside nuclear risk. The military or conventional threats, traditionally faced by nations such as the attack on sovereign integrity, maritime space, issues related to trade or matters pertaining to international law were well depicted during the Cold War. However, there has been a significant shift in the threat outcomes of wars and conflicts in the twenty-first century. The concept of 'security' became

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synonymous or at times supplanted terms like 'defence', 'war' or 'strategy' both among policymakers and academic discourses. During the Cold War, security tended to mean national or bloc security and the primary threat was perceived to be an armed attack from an enemy nation or bloc.⁴ Having said that the twentieth-century wars and conflicts did have non-conventional outcomes, those generally did not get adequate attention as has been the case in the twenty-first century. During the Korean War (1950-53), an estimated 2.5 million lives were lost⁵ and an illness termed as Korean haemorrhagic fever caused by Hantavirus was prevalent during the Korean War.⁶ About 2 million Vietnamese civilian casualties were recorded during the Vietnam War (1954-75);⁷ 14 million tons of explosives were used by the American forces that destroyed dams, canals and farmlands and around 500,000 South Vietnamese women turned prostitutes during the war.⁸ A herbicide and defoliant chemical, Agent Orange, was used by the US military during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971, leading to severe health hazards amongst generations of Vietnamese people as well as killing or grossly affecting the health of US soldiers who served the war. These two wars during the Cold War period specifically underscored the importance of alternative referents of security that affect the surroundings quite as much as the conventional outcomes.

End of Cold War: Understanding Security Complex

With the end of the Cold War, the nature and character of armed conflicts underwent several changes. Part of this transformation was driven by further development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the increasing integration of modern technology with the military apparatus of major nation-states.⁹ Unlike the nature of confrontation that characterised most of the twentieth century, open conflicts were largely avoided by the major powers. Within the broader security environment, the threat of use of WMD paved the way for new geopolitical arrangements whereby the possibility of direct war decreases but that of non-conventional forms of conflict increases.¹⁰ This is not to exclude the possibility of a direct war between states, but as far as the collective human experience in the twenty-first century has been, conflicts between big powers seemed unlikely. The conflict between smaller states, however, has carried on intermittently, like the Second Congo War (1998-2003), the Syrian Civil War (ongoing since 2011) and the Darfur Conflict (2003). But this only serves to reinforce the previous argument that major states have avoided fighting with one another. The absence of conventional threats to security has now resulted in a situation where the very definition of security has to confront emerging realities like climate change, the incidence of epidemics and scarcity of food. In fact, as the Cold War ended, it indicated 'security' to be an essentially contested idea devoid of a generally accepted definition; not essentially universal or positive yet could be dependent on subject and context, also could be negative at times.¹¹ It is within the context of these new realities that analysts and researchers have to focus on the complex and interconnected nature of interactions and exchanges between a

number of actors (including but not limited to nation-states) on a domestic, regional and international scale which constitute the behaviour of geopolitical rivalries that in turn play a large role in shaping this century.

The free movement of capital and labour within and between states, and the enormous improvement in Information and Communication Technology have led to the development of complex trade networks and supply chains that often span across territories and geographies. Amitav Acharya has observed that the economic rise of states throughout Asia¹² and the relative decline in the US hegemony has ushered in a world where competition, cooperation and conflict occur simultaneously at several levels, leading to a multiplex world.¹³ States have become economically interdependent to a degree, but the issue of distrust, competition and eventual conflict continue to influence strategic thinking at a national level. International actors now confront two distinct yet related realities. While economic exchange is now an important factor for the survival and well-being of states, security-related complexities threaten to disrupt the fragile international order.

Throughout the major part of the twentieth century, we found global wars being predominantly constricted to continental Europe; the ones that were fought in Asia or Africa were proxy wars. For instance, the war in Afghanistan (Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) in 1979, a proxy war between the American and the Soviet forces, was one of the turning points that brought an end to the Soviet regime and the Cold War. From the traditional perspective, the invasion had led to several thousand casualties and had brutally affected Afghan society; and, this is still evident. Nevertheless, the outcome of this invasion was not only life losses but also rendered a large number of people homeless and displaced many, bearing a deep impact on the surrounding region; however, the crucial development was the birth of terrorist forces in South Asia. The Mujahideen (later became the Taliban) became a force to reckon with throughout the region during the initial aftermath of the war and later culminated to the ghastly terrorist activity at the beginning of the twenty-first century (the September 11 attacks) that thoroughly altered the concept and status of global security. As a matter of fact, the conceptualisation of security changed massively; surveillance activities within and among Muslim communities increased, often connecting them with terrorism because 'they' suit a particular profile.¹⁴

As the non-traditional outcome of war, terrorism, which ravaged the region and the world, led to other associated humanitarian crises. In the years after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, Yugoslavia experienced localised terror activities in the form of ethnic clashes. The theatre of war, which in the twentieth century was restricted to Europe, got significantly altered in the twenty-first century; the ramifications of a conflict are now felt both regionally and globally. The twenty-first-century wars impacted and continue to affect the everyday lives of human beings around the world. The most disturbing and perplexing aspect of the conflicts of this century is the proliferative nature of security-related issues that stem from them. These security issues transmogrify into further complications that

slowly become unmanageable. While the case of Afghanistan is significant due to its role in the destabilisation of the entire South Asian region and indeed parts of West Asia, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has set off a chain reaction whereby the already fragile post-pandemic geo-economic order has come under enormous strain. The economic devastation coupled with the humanitarian crises has sent shockwaves throughout the region and the world, whereby the possibility of food shortages and migrant crises can lead to global instability. The following sections will go into a detailed analysis of this issue and its subsets.

Outline of the Ukrainian Crisis

Russia and Ukraine have a long common past that dates back to over a millennium to the creation of the first Slavic state, Kyivan Rus, in parts of what are today Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Although in 1918, Ukraine became independent, in 1921, the Red Army captured most of it making Ukraine a republic within the Soviet Union. In the 1930s, Soviet policies led to the man-made famine known as the Holodomor, which killed an estimated 7 million Ukrainians, and this incident sharpened the Ukrainian sense of national identity. In 1991, with the breakdown of the Soviet regime, Ukraine regained its independence. However, over the years, relations between both countries were never easy. In early 2014, Russia supported the seizure and annexation of Crimea by the pro-Moscow separatist groups in Ukraine. The crisis claimed an estimated 14,000 lives.¹⁵

Since February 2015, France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine have tried to undergo negotiations for bringing an end to the violence under the regulations of the Minsk Accords, which, however, were largely unsuccessful. The prelude to the Minsk Accords can be traced back to the conflict that began with the capture of large swathes of territory in Eastern Ukraine by Russia-backed separatists. Following large-scale destruction and casualties, the representatives of the states of Russia, Ukraine, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the separatist leaders, Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky, consensually arrived at a plan for ceasefire based on 12 points. This was the Minsk One Deal, signed in Belarus in 2014.¹⁶ Its provisions focused on initiating prisoner exchanges, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and the simultaneous withdrawal of heavy weapons. The sanctity of the agreement, however, was short-lived, and with escalating conflict, the necessity of a successor agreement arose. In February 2015, Minsk Two was signed between Russian President Vladimir Putin and the then Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, mediated by the erstwhile French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. By far, the most important provision of this argument was to initiate a process of dialogue for the process of setting up interim self-government in the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk.¹⁷ The most important issue with the Minsk accords was the divergent and often conflicting interpretations of the same by Russia and Ukraine, leading to a period of tenuous peace which international observers described as the Minsk conundrum. The developments

that ensued did little to create lasting conditions for peace. In April 2016, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) notified the rollout of four battalions to Eastern Europe, rotating troops through Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland, to put off possible upcoming Russian aggression anywhere in the continent, particularly in the Baltics. NATO's presence was further strengthened in the region in September 2017, when two US Army tank brigades were sent to Poland. In October 2018, Ukraine along with the United States and seven other NATO countries carried out a series of large-scale air exercises in western Ukraine.

It was on February 24, 2022 that the Russian military forces attacked a largely underprepared Ukraine; Russian President Putin called it a 'special military operation' aimed at demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine.¹⁸ With accusations against the Ukrainian government of "genocide" against ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers in the Donbas, Putin justified the invasion which led to displacing a total of at least 12 million¹⁹ Ukrainians (till the end of August 2022). What must be noted here is that historically, the Russian view of Ukraine has always been one of identification. The people of Ukraine and Belarus were considered as ethnically and culturally Russian. The problems with territoriality began after First World War, especially after the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1918, Ukraine declared its independence from the disintegrating Russian Empire in the wake of its disastrous performance in the First World War. The declaration proved to be short-lived, as Soviet forces overthrew its government²⁰ and established the Ukrainian Soviet Socialistic Republic in 1921.²¹ Relations between Moscow and Ukraine reached a nadir when the Stalinist policy of 'collectivisation' resulted in a devastating famine in Ukraine leading to the deaths of millions of people. However, the actual bone of contention in the relationship is the lack of settled borders and a volatile territorial arrangement whereby both Russia and Ukraine claim parts of the other's territory as their own. Notwithstanding the fraught historical trajectory of relations between the two states, it would seem that geography and territory have been the major contributing factors in the Russia-Ukraine conflict; the territory has again played the role of a catalyst in the current conflagration. The extent and complexity of the ongoing Ukraine crisis have not only sent shockwaves throughout continental Europe and the world, but the fact that a major conflict could take place in the continent in the twenty-first century has also opened the lid of serious conventional as well as non-conventional threats that impact the world at large.

Local and Global Impact of the Crisis

Since the Second World War, the Russian attack on Ukraine has been the greatest humanitarian crisis in Europe. The decision-making elite and political brass on the continent had resolved to never let a crisis like Second World War ever break out. With the march of Russian troops into Ukraine, the failure of that particular resolve is laid bare. The most immediate impact of the conflict can be studied at the local level, with countless refugees fleeing the war-torn areas into other parts of continental Europe, setting off a chain

reaction with the European states compelled to manage their economies under the dual effect of a post-pandemic world with slowing economic growth and an influx of people in the form of those escaping the war. In order for a holistic appreciation of the situation, certain facts need to be recognised. The economic outlook of the European Union, indeed Europe itself, was not very promising throughout the decade of 2010.

With economic engines slowing down, the incidence of declining birth rates and the challenge of accommodating refugees, the ongoing war in Ukraine, which has completed seven months, has pushed millions of civilians, irrespective of their economic condition, to become homeless refugees (either to Poland, Romania, Moldova and other adjacent countries) or internally displaced persons (to other parts of the country where military assault is limited). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has also mentioned that over 2 million Ukrainians²² have taken refuge in Russia. Many Ukrainians are still forced to live without access to food, water, health care and other essential supplies; innumerable people have lost their income creating a severe humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Data shows that till mid-September over 7 million refugees²³ from Ukraine have moved across Europe. According to the latest report of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine, over 3 million IDPs are being hosted in 21 oblasts (administrative divisions or regions in Ukraine).²⁴ In a report published by the IOM in June 2022, it was stated that there has been a significant amount of increase in the number of returnees to war-torn Ukraine—primarily people from different locations of Ukraine, particularly Kyiv and the northern part, who returned to their homes; only 10 per cent people are returning to Ukraine from other countries.²⁵ According to UNHCR data, recorded until mid-July 2022, 3.7 million Ukrainians had registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe; with more than 1.2 million beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTPs), Poland stands as the main destination country, followed by Germany (670,000), the Czech Republic (396,000) and Italy (143,000).²⁶ This has resulted in an increase in the secondary mobility of Ukrainian refugees in other European countries.

In the initial phase of the outbreak of the war, Ukraine imposed martial law across the country that prevented men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country. This led to the first waves of the Ukrainian refugee movement predominantly consisting of the elderly, women and children—a section that cannot be considered as the highly productive labour workforce. With the passage of time, young men have also fled Ukraine for a safe and better future. However, with EU countries providing Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to facilitate the entry and stay of Ukrainian refugees, it has offered an opportunity to the refugees to get hold of work without any prohibitions or delay as and when they get their residence permit or provisional certificates. Nevertheless, this war has exerted huge stress on the job and labour markets of other European countries that have also played host to refugees from Ukraine. The labour markets have been adversely affected by a dual problem: the replacement of a skilled pool of Ukrainian

workers with groups of low-skilled and unskilled labourers from Ukraine, which have accompanied the steady influx of refugees in other European states. This has created fractious economic structures, where the number of people competing for low-skilled jobs has increased exponentially. It has coupled with ethnic strife and the eventual polarisation of the society, polity and economy as a whole. The collapse of the labour markets through shrinking economic growth and the pressure of catering to a growing number of refugees has resulted in ripple effects on the economic integration of Europe and the fragile socio-political linkages holding Europe.

If Europe is suffering from humanitarian crises owing to the Russian attack on Ukraine, the Central Asian states are no less affected. The landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs),²⁷ which are acutely dependent on Russia for the labour market, export routes and many infrastructure projects, a protracted conflict between Russia-Ukraine and the resultant global isolation of Russia holds immense difficulties for them. The flow of remittances has been interrupted, impacting the states of Central Asia, especially Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, which severely depend on remittances sent by their migrant workforce. According to a study, remittances, being the significant income source for most of the CARs, are expected to fall by 25 per cent in 2022. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are expected to face a huge blow with a 22 per cent and 33 percent decline in remittances respectively.²⁸ For economically under-developed Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, such a decline in remittances makes them vulnerable to an economic crisis. Moreover, following the footsteps of a Russian ban on the export of grain and white sugar to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) since March 10, 2022, Kazakhstan has also decided to stop wheat exports to countries like Kyrgyzstan, which is primarily dependent on Russia and Kazakhstan for its major wheat imports. This ongoing Ukraine crisis has the potential to augment frustration amongst its unemployed youth that could lead to civil unrest and exhaustive instability, particularly in poor CARs like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, thus broadening the ethnic fault lines in the region.²⁹ It is also significant to note here that the Ukrainian refugee crisis has underscored the argument that there remains a difference in approach to refugee management or acceptance of refugees into Europe. Regarding the level of acceptance that the Ukrainians had while moving into other European countries, records suggest that in the past, Syrian or Moroccan refugees were not openly accepted by European countries. As unfortunate as it could be, it reflects a sharp departure from the idea of equality and justice for all.

The War and Sustainability

A dire situation like the Ukraine war brings into perspective three very important realities, related to one another. The first concerns the status of security of vulnerable groups within Europe, especially Eastern Europe. This issue appeared to be settled until the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This point will be further expanded and expounded upon in the following sections. The second reality is the fragile state of the Sustainable Development Goals

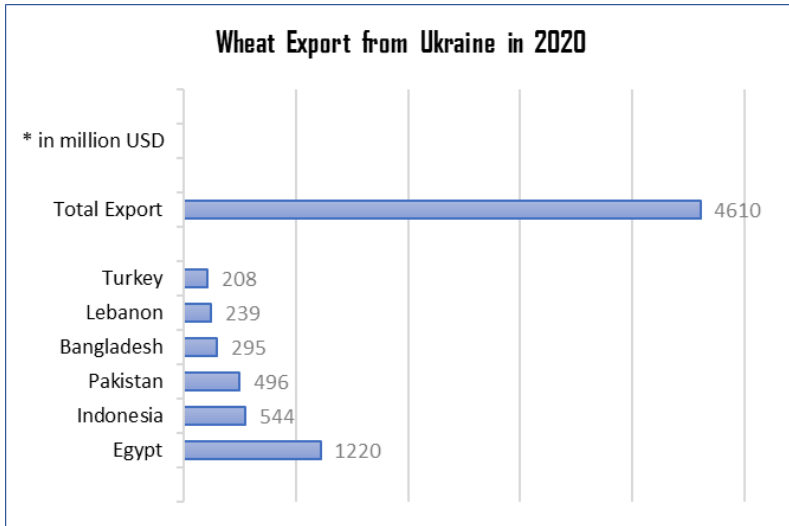
(SDGs) and the lack of any commitment towards them on the part of political leaders around the world. The SDGs were an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, which itself was the result of a process of negotiations conducted by member nations of the United Nations General Assembly among and between themselves. The consensus that was arrived at, as a result of the aforementioned negotiations, laid out 17 SDGs. The details of these goals will be elaborated upon as this article progresses, but the factor that relates the SDGs to the Ukraine crisis is the array of non-conventional security threats. As the war in Ukraine has transpired, it has become increasingly clear that while the security concerns of territorial nation-states are important problems to ponder upon by policymakers, strategists and analysts, the security of people and vulnerable or marginalised groups is often ignored, leading to several problems. Therefore, the SDGs and the factor of non-conventional security are related. The 17 SDGs are as follows:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequality
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Since 2015, global efforts undertaken to achieve these goals have not been sufficient and the status of these goals remains frangible and frail. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has reinforced the notion that the nation states, particularly the major powers, are unconcerned about the fructification of the SDGs and are more interested in territorial concerns, geopolitical power competition and self-preservation. States come into being to attain these ends, and the interests of citizens and people around the world are not prioritised.

In June 2022 the chief of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) warned the world of the upcoming fierce food shortages and starvation if the war did not stop.³⁰ While the impact of the pandemic had led to food price rises across the world, the extension of the war in Ukraine has completely failed to attain the second SDG that aimed to tackle global hunger. In fact, the rising food insecurity does not stay limited to the failure of not achieving the second SDG; it also affects other goals pertaining to inequality and poverty.

Ukraine feeds millions of stomachs across the world and this war has jeopardised the import of foodgrains, especially wheat and maize and sunflower oil by many Asian and African countries.



Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity³¹

According to statements by Ukraine's agriculture ministry till mid-August, its grain exports are down in the 2022–23 season by 46 per cent since last year during the same time.³² As the data of the State Customs Service of Ukraine show that since the start of 2022-23 MY (July 1) and as of August 31, Ukraine has exported 3.946 million tons of grains and pulses, which includes 2.264 million tons in August,³³ it hints at the dip in the harvesting land and lower grain yields as acres of land has been lost to the Russian military forces. Grain exports from Ukraine have slumped as the war began leading to the blocking of the Black Sea ports—a key route for shipments to and fro Ukraine, shooting up food prices across the globe and triggering fears of food shortages in Africa and the Middle East. Egypt is a key importer of wheat from Ukraine—82 per cent of its wheat imports throughout the last five years came from Russia (59.7 per cent) and Ukraine (22.3 per cent). The war in Ukraine has led to a shortage of wheat imports—during the Egyptian calendar year (CY) 2022 (January to May), wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine amounted to 3.32 million metric tons against 4.35 million metric tons in CY 2021 during the same period.³⁴ This war-induced decline is driving wheat prices to unmatched levels and soaring market volatility. Subsequently, the high inflation rates across the globe due to the war make things worse for the poor inevery society. An increase in food prices leads to the inaccessibility of basic food items, thus bringing the third SDG for good health and well-being under the scanner. Currently, going through a plethora of crises—climate change, after-effects of the pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine—pushing millions of people throughout the world at risk of being driven into starvation, the SDG Agenda 2030 is doomed to fail.

The economic outlook of the globe had not been favourable owing to the pandemic and its effect on supply chains. As states initiated lockdowns and restrictions on the free flow of human beings and capital among and between themselves, normal trade and trade-related activities ceased, slowing down economic growth. The first SDG that focuses on zero poverty was compromised even before the war started. With the onset of the conflict and the ensuing energy crisis, the cost of living has soared. The rise of inflation has led to a decrease in real incomes of people, and understandably the poor have been the hardest hit with them having to choose between two sets of essential items micronutrient-rich food and life-saving medicines. The vicious cycle of poverty is such that the lack of resources translates into a lack of choices pertaining to individual and collective lifestyles. Constrained life choices of communities around the world mean that almost 71 million people³⁵ have fallen into poverty since the start of the Ukraine War. Sharply rising commodity prices are forcing the economically marginalised to spend a major part of their real incomes on a few items, leading to a decrease in savings which means that in a moment of health emergency the poor are being left without protection.³⁶ The goal of zero poverty is currently relegated to the status of a utopian fantasy. As a matter of fact, the uneven picture of the labour market owing to the war has also questioned the SDG on decent work and growth, alongside the one on industry and infrastructure. This situation further reinforces the argument that the state's commitment to the fructification of the SDGs is capricious at best.

As most global leaders, international observers and analysts have been reiterating that the war must stop soon, it not only shows their humanitarian concern but also the fear of worse things to come. A prolonged war would adversely affect other essential elements of living and livelihood such as oil and energy, the huge demand and high prices of which have already appeared to haunt the European countries. To put things into perspective, sustainability is an overarching idea that fulfils the requirements of current generations without compromising the requirements of upcoming ones, while striking a balance between economic development, environmental protection and social well-being. Any one element of sustenance, if compromised, would disrupt the larger aim.

Subsequent Non-Traditional Security Concerns

The previous section devoted to the analysis and explanation of the critical linkages and relations between the effects of the war and the achievement of the SDGs has actually highlighted the failure of states to attain the objectives of the Sustainable Development Program. The preceding section of the paper argues that the failure to achieve the SDGs is closely connected with the emergence of non-traditional security issues. The issue of non-traditional security revolves around several key components. The origin of these threats is not caused by the shifting balance of power equations among and between states, nor is the aspect of competition that states engage in can be said to be responsible for the emergence of these threats. These threats almost always

have a distinct socio-economic and politico-cultural dimension and stem from changes in climate and scarcity of food and energy. Interestingly, an entire gamut³⁷ of human security concerns can be observed in this context and the onset of the new millennium and the concomitant development of a globalised world with unrestrained movement of people have only added to the complexity. An important point that needs to be noted here is that while the debates surrounding access to human rights have contemporary significance, Non-Traditional Security (NTS) issues have led to renewed interest in the questions surrounding human rights, especially in the relatively less prosperous and developed regions of the world as compared to the developed countries.

In the context of the Russia-Ukraine War, while the standards of living and the quality of life of Europe can be said to be appreciatively higher than in most parts of the world, the triple effect of economic downturn in a post-pandemic world, unstable and volatile labour markets and the sudden influx of refugees have completely altered the settled geopolitical and geo-economic arrangements that were crucial to the sustenance of the idea of a united and harmonious Europe. The vortex of socio-economic tensions released or created as a result of the outbreak of conflict can lead to several crises. As a matter of fact, the non-traditional crises will not be specifically limited to Europe but will be felt across the world sooner or later. History holds anecdotes of food scarcity, inequality, poverty or social injustice leading to the creation of misanthropic groups, which had affected global peace and stability. Moreover, social injustices and socio-economic crises instigate religious fanaticism as victims of inequality or injustice can be misled or economically lured easily. Therefore, the possibility and propensity of extreme social tension owing to the collective alienation and marginalisation of groups appear as an extremely serious issue. In the case of Europe, fragile economic systems that have come into being as a result of unstable labour markets and the steady movement of refugees into other regions of Europe, putting pressure on the already stressed socio-economic setups recovering from the pandemic, can ultimately lead to the creation of socially static and hostile groups. These groups will then engage in intense social strife with each other, scrambling over limited resources and space. An important point here is that the destabilisation of the economy and the polarisation of society go hand in hand. The fact that most major European states have overblown defence budgets, confirms the suspicion that the military-industrial complex benefits tremendously from the war. At the expense of the life and prolonged well-being of vulnerable people, the viability and sustainability of the arms industry remain one of the most important facilitator and catalysts of conflicts on the European continent.

The deepening social strife will ultimately compromise the internal security of the European states. State response in the form of conventional securitisation will only seek to reify the influence of arms manufacturers and destroy the scope of conciliation and solidarity between the social groups which are susceptible to militant contests with one another. The final status of the problem will be the reversal of integration, one that Europe painstakingly

undertook as a process over decades. As Europe will strengthen its borders, the casualty of human development will have a proliferative impact on the regional neighbourhood, especially the West Asian, North African and Central Asian regions. Thus, the cumulative impact of an armed conflict can be seen to have multiple complex manifestations. At the most immediate level, it has created a massive humanitarian crisis, unprecedented since the Second World War. As the crisis has progressed, aspects of security which were hitherto ignored by states have emerged to the extent that these crises have the potential to negatively and irreversibly alter the systemic and structural set-up of the European continent.

Furthermore, the impact of snowballing non-conventional security issues will adversely affect the stability, peace and security of the wider region. This warlike situation characterised by intense armed conflict, in an almost paradoxical yet cyclical manner, gives rise to several non-traditional security issues which in turn crystallise into problems that compel states to engage in conflict with one another in a separate geographic theatre. The only common thread here is the sacrifice of human life and the lack of a well-defined regional and status architecture that secures the interests and lives of citizens and marginalised groups.

Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, competition amongst and between states is a common phenomenon in international politics. However, wars or conflicts emanating from that sense of competition are unjustifiable even through the lens of realism; it is the people who are worst hit and the resulting humanitarian crisis not only remains restricted to the duration and the territorial expanse of the conflict but engulfs much beyond. Wars in the twenty-first century are bound to raise probing questions about the global security framework. This is not because it holds a significant impact on the global population and economy but it certainly challenges the basic premise of globalisation.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is comparatively a smaller conflict than the First World War or even lesser in scale than the atrocious humanitarian crisis of the Second World War. Nevertheless, the clash is a colossal step away from globalisation and, unlike the First World War, its timing is such when the world has already been shifting away from economic integration, the multiplier effect of the Russia-Ukraine war and post-pandemic economic order has resulted in massive currency fluctuations around the world.³⁸ As a result of these fluctuations, the dollar has appreciated tremendously in comparison to other currencies³⁹ setting off a chain of events which may lead to a decline in global economic growth⁴⁰ and eventually usher in a recession. The palpable decline in global growth has been actually reflected by the reports of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development that has downgraded the rate of global growth from 2.8 per cent to 2.2 per cent in 2022 with the Eurozone witnessing an even more steep

decline in economic growth from 3.1 per cent in 2022 and expected to fall even lower to 0.3 per cent in 2023.⁴¹

Globalisation was mandated with the critical task of integrating the world into one cohesive entity—encompassing economy, culture and society—obscuring differences amongst states and establishing a ‘global community’. The war has challenged this idea of a global community in more than one way. If sustainability is a ground of community sentiment, the very being of human dignity offers a community feeling. Refugee influx from Syria has been a pressing concern for Europe over the last few years, hence another refugee crisis in Ukraine not only overburdens Europe but the entire world. Also, as the war has impacted Ukrainian agriculture, in the food-deficient Middle East, prices for food are already soaring and will rise, even more, reflecting on how the war is failing the concept of globalisation. Food shortages are affecting Asian and African states as well. Globalisation means more than just ‘global supply chains’, highlighting on the movement of cheap raw materials and constituents to assembly units on the periphery of industrial centres. Therefore, the collapse of low-cost off-shore manufacturing units points to the disruption of global supply chains. Subsequently, any disruption in the supply chain is bound to have serious ramifications for the global population, interrupting the functioning and parameters of social justice.

As global security underlines ‘what is best for all’,⁴² it is in the interest of all that the war in Ukraine comes to an end at the earliest. With the onset of winter, in terms of energy requirements in Europe, food shortage across the world and humanitarian crises, the tension between Russia and Ukraine must end and the way is through cooperation and the attempt to work together. States must understand that no national security mechanism has the scope to manage by itself alone, therefore, they need to call for the cooperation of states. As fear or sense of security threat breeds rivalry between or among states, the global interconnectedness, interdependence and cooperation that the world has experienced amongst states and continues to do so since the end of the Cold War, holds the remedy for such rivalry.

Notes

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