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The Impact of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on International Peace and Security

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Abstract ;

The Russian invasion of Ukraine had deep impact for international peace and security that lead to a clear violation of the principles of international law. This conflict has contributed to raising tensions between major powers, mainly between Russia and NATO; threatening global stability through international confrontation and arming race.

The invasion also exposed the limited effectiveness of the collective security system, due to the UN Security Council's inability to make important decisions because of the use of the veto, which has weakened the UN's role in maintaining international peace and security. The conflict has caused successive global crises for developed countries. Consequently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was not merely a regional conflict but evolved into a comprehensive international crisis, raising the problem of the future of the international system and its ability to ensure security and peace in the face of the dominance of power over international legitimacy.

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Introduction

In February 2022 , the Russian invasion of Ukraine witnessed one of the most serious international crises of the 21st century because of its political, security, economic, and humanitarian dimensions that extended beyond the borders and affected various parts of the international system. This conflict has brought the logic of rivalry among major powers back to the forefront and raised serious questions about the extent to which the principles of international law are respected, foremost among them the principle of state sovereignty and the non-use of force in international relations. The invasion also contributed to threatening international peace and security through the escalation of military tensions and the disruption of collective security mechanisms, particularly within the UN Security Council, as well as its dangerous repercussions on the global economy, energy and food crises. Accordingly, the following research question can be set:

To what extent has the Russian invasion of Ukraine affected international peace and security?

This research paper attempts to answer a series of sub-questions as follows:

1- What is meant by international peace and security?

2- What are the implications of the invasion for global political and military balances?

3- How has the conflict contributed to the deepening of global economic and humanitarian crises?

4- What impact has the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the future of the international system?

To understand the most significant implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we propose the following hypotheses:

* The Russian invasion of Ukraine led to a direct threat to international peace and security by raising tensions among major powers.

* The invasion had economic and humanitarian consequences that affected global stability, particularly in developing countries.

Aims of the study:

The Russian's repercussions invasion of Ukraine on international security and peace lies in the fact that it represents one of the most serious challenges faced by the contemporary international system, given its far-reaching political, military, economic, and humanitarian implications. This invasion has reignited the issue of respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity, threatened the foundations upon which the United Nations Charter was established, and contributed to destabilizing the international order and deepening polarization among major

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powers. Its significance also lies in its direct impact on global security, through escalating military tensions, the spread of an arms race, and the potential for the conflict to expand to broader regional or international dimensions. In addition, this crisis has given rise to non-traditional challenges, such as disruptions to global food and energy security and the exacerbation of humanitarian crises.

This study attempts to investigate the importance of understanding the changes in the international system, anticipating the future of international security and peace, and seeking effective mechanisms to maintain global stability.

The First section: **The Concept of International Peace and Security from the Perspective of the United Nations Charter**

I. Definition of International Peace and Security

The main objective of The United Nations is maintaining peace and security which is mentioned in numerous articles of the Charter. It is referenced in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter:

"We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which but once in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind..."[1]

Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter also provides for the maintenance of international peace and security. To this end, the Organization should take effective measures to prevent the causes that threaten them, in accordance with the authority conferred upon it under Chapter VII of the Charter.

It is claimed that the Charter links the maintenance of peace with the international security, since it is not sufficient to maintain peace without international security. Therefore, we will attempt to address these concepts as set forth in Chapter VII, namely:

1- Threats to peace and breaches of peace: Article 39 of the United Nations Charter states: "... ...if a threat to the peace or a breach of the peace has occurred...", and it should be noted that the Charter does not provide a clear definition of the concept "threat to the peace or breach of the peace" and leaves the classification of such cases to the Security Council alone, which enjoys relatively broad discretionary authority in this regard.

2- Acts of Aggression: According to Chapter VII of the Charter, aggression constitutes the most serious threat to international peace and security, requiring the adoption of coercive measures to counter it. Although the Charter succeeded in establishing punitive measures against aggression, it failed to provide a definition for it, and it appears this was intentional, intended to grant the Security Council broad discretion in characterizing acts of aggression and determining the

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recommendations and measures necessary to maintain international peace and security, thereby ensuring that major powers retain control over decision-making to safeguard their interests.[2]

Many scholars of international law, researchers and thinkers have defined international peace, among them is Anis L. Claude: "It is the absence of war and the replacement of coercive means with amicable means to resolve disputes arising from demands to change the status between states."[3]

According to Anselm L. Claude, the destiny of the international community depends on establishing peace among its members to avoid the specter of war—a traditional method of resolving conflicts that are bound to arise among them. Such wars cannot be avoided; rather, an alternative must be found, and this task falls to the international organization represented by the United Nations, which provides a range of peaceful alternatives to resorting to violence, available for use by the parties to the conflict.

II: Areas of Expansion of the Concept of International Security and Peace

The United Nations has been called upon to define its methods of operation and update the procedures it adopts to address various international issues and crises. The organization has sought to activate its role by assuming several responsibilities it had never previously exercised, Thus, its activities have expanded from peacekeeping operations to good offices and humanitarian assistance missions, extending to major economic, social, and environmental conferences, not to mention its efforts to combat violence and terrorism, enforce respect for human rights, and promote democracy. In this way, new principles have been established and a new generation of peacekeeping operations has been introduced.

1- The Humanitarian Dimension:

The work of the United Nations grants it the authority to intervene to halt human rights violations and remove them from the domestic jurisdiction of states, thereby opening the door to intervention by individual states that do not even have a mandate. The right to Humanitarian intervention in its new form, as reflected in the 2005 United Nations General Assembly resolution, is the Responsibility to Protect, which is the cornerstone of the international legal system and the fundamental guarantee for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Security Council expressed its concern over the repression faced by civilians, the consequences of which threatened international peace and security in Iraq in particular and the world in general. This intervention was evident from the outset with Resolution 688, issued on April 5, 1990[4].

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2- Democracy:

The Security Council has also sought to intervene to establish and protect democracy, a recent trend within the United Nations that calls for the condemnation of military coups that overthrow existing governments.[5]

3- International Terrorism:

"Terrorism" is one of the most complex and dangerous phenomenon on the international stage because of its destructive consequences, including the murder of innocent civilians, the sabotage of vital economic and social infrastructure, and the spreading of terror, fear, and instability within societies. Therefore, since the late 1980s, the Security Council has consistently characterized terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as representing the gravest threat to international peace and security. This was first stated in the preamble to Resolution 635, adopted on July 14, 1989: "... Aware of the repercussions and effects of terrorist acts on international peace and security...".[6]

As the Security Council is the principal executive body responsible for maintaining international peace and security through its broad powers in this area, it has addressed terrorism and countered it through numerous resolutions, including diplomatic, political, and economic sanctions. This was clearly confirmed after September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., when the Security Council issued Resolution 1368, which granted the United States the legal authority to respond militarily.[7]

Second section: **The Implications of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

After many years of research and investigation, the world is witnessing a major crisis against the backdrop of the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war on February 24, 2022, that have extended beyond the parties involved to encompass the world and its various regions, and this is what this research will attempt to address in this section.

I- The International Implications of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

The Russian-Ukrainian war has caused alarming global repercussions, just as the world was beginning to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic—which had the most severe impact on developing countries. The most notable repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian war are fluctuations in energy prices, particularly for oil and gas. Another major impact is the crisis in food prices, mainly wheat, which increases an imminent global food crisis.

Before addressing the full scope of these repercussions, we must first understand the causes of the 2022 Russian war on Ukraine. Russia's attack on Ukraine has a number of intertwined causes. Since late 2021,

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military tensions between Moscow and Kyiv have escalated amid accusations that Russia was massing troops along the border with Ukraine, while the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, accused the Ukrainian authorities of military buildup along the contact line in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. Russia also opposes Ukraine's accession to NATO, fearing the deployment of U.S. missiles on Ukrainian territory. As far as Russia is concerned, Ukraine is supposed to remain neutral in its conflict with its international adversaries, rather than becoming a front for threatening Russia.

On November 30, 2021, the Russian president announced that expanding NATO's presence in Ukraine—particularly the deployment of long-range missiles capable of striking Moscow or missile defense systems similar to those in Romania and Poland—would be a red line for the Kremlin. The NATO Secretary General responded to the Russian President's remarks by stating that it is Ukraine and its 30 NATO allies who decide when Ukraine will join NATO, and that Russia has no veto power.

The rising tension between Russia and Ukraine, along with Ukraine's attempt to control the use of Russian gas supply routes to Europe, has prompted Russia to seek alternatives for supplying gas to the West by implementing mega-projects such as Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2, which traverse the Baltic Sea and span 1,200 km. The implementation of these projects resulted in Ukraine—which had served as a transit country for Russian gas—losing economic pillars that generated billions of dollars, as well as, strategic advantages related to its location on the border of the European Union. The United States exploited these circumstances to pressure Western nations to halt imports of Russian gas, arguing that Moscow uses energy as a strategic weapon to reinforce the West's dependence on it, as well as to advance Washington's desire to find markets for American gas. This turned the Nord Stream 2 project into a battleground between Moscow and Washington, with the latter attempting to derail the pipeline, which led to political tension between the United States and Germany, which considers the pipeline to be in its strategic interest. Among this Western—and particularly American—pressure on Russia and NATO's advance toward the Russian border, Russia felt the time had come to beat the drums of war by demanding that the West provide it with immediate, legally binding security guarantees.

In response to what Russia considers a threat to its strategic security, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in a televised statement early on February 24, 2022, that he had "decided to launch a special military operation" in Ukraine[8].

The main objectives of this war, as announced by the Russians, were outlined in Putin's declaration of war before the

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State Duma on February 24, 2022. Putin defined the goals of his special military operation as follows:

1- To eradicate Nazism.

2-To disarm Ukraine

3-Maintaining control of the Donbas region.

4-Supporting the independence of the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, which Russia recognized as independent in February 2022.

5-Weakening the Ukrainian political leadership and transforming Ukraine into a neutral state.

6- Preventing Ukraine from joining NATO.

7- Weakening Ukraine's military strength so that it no longer poses a threat to the separatists in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine[9].

Although Russia's economic ties, Russia's entry into a war that results in sanctions against it will have numerous economic consequences—not only for the parties to the conflict but also for the global economy—as it is explained below:

The Russian-Ukrainian war has led to a rise in oil and natural gas prices, with crude oil prices rebounding from their lowest levels since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID-19), with the monthly change in the global average price of crude oil rising by 20.3% at the end of March 2022 compared to February 2022, reaching $113 per barrel, and increasing by 76.1% compared to the price in March 2021. According to the latest edition of the World Bank's "Commodity Market Outlook" published on May 3, 2022, the monthly change in the global average crude oil price declined by 0.8% in April 2022 compared to March[10], as illustrated in the following figure:

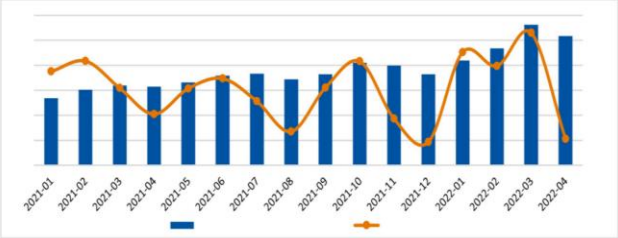
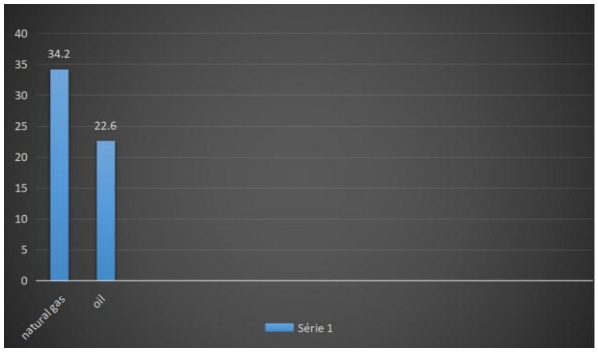


Figure 1: The global monthly average crude oil price (USD/barrel) and monthly change (%).

Russia is the world's largest oil exporter, and the European Union is the second-largest importer and the largest buyer of Russian oil in the world. If oil trade between the European Union and Russia were to cease, approximately 3 million barrels per day of Russian supplies and about 1 million barrels per day of petroleum products would be halted, which could cause a global supply shock in the near term. The European Union uses imported crude oil to produce refined petroleum products for export, not just for domestic consumption. It exports about 28% of total production on a net basis, refines only 11% of the crude oil it imports, and imports the rest[11]. This is illustrated in the following figure:

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Figure 2: The share of the European Union's energy imports from Russia (%).



Despite the European reliance on energy exports from Russia, it did not prevent the EU from imposing economic sanctions, particularly oil imports from Russia. As a practical measure, industrialized nations, acting within the framework of the International Energy Agency, withdrew approximately 72.7 million barrels from their strategic oil reserves to mitigate the impact of a potential disruption in energy supplies from Russia. As an initial plan, this came before the agency announced the largest-ever drawdown of oil reserves in its history, amounting to approximately 120 million barrels over six months, starting in May 2022. This is also the agency's attempt to curb record-high oil prices, particularly in the United States, However, this pressure on the Russian oil and gas sector, several countries, such as India and China, have announced their desire to purchase Russian oil and gas, which has been a factor in maintaining the pace of their unprecedented rise, as stated in a report released by the Energy and Clean Air Research Centre, based in Finland, which said that Russia continues to earn huge sums through the sale of oil and gas, despite the sanctions imposed on it[12].

In addition, it can be said that the impact of the energy crisis on the economic activity of Western countries in general, and the European Union in particular, stems from fears of a disruption in supplies of Russian oil and gas—which form the backbone of Europe's economy. Many EU member states rely on energy imports from Russia to the tune of more than 90%, making them entirely dependent on the Russian energy sector.

Natural gas prices have also risen alongside the restrictions imposed on Russian gas. The rise in gas prices has increased the appeal of oil as an alternative for heating and electricity generation. According to data released by the World Bank, the natural gas index rose to 273.1 points in March 2022, A monthly increase of 38.24% and a year-over-year increase of 316.1% compared to March 2021, as the price of natural gas in Europe rose to $42.4/ million metric British thermal units (MMBtu) in March 2022, a monthly increase of 55.7% compared to the previous month and a year-over-year increase of 591.9% compared to the same month in 2021, when the price was $6.1/MMBtu[13].

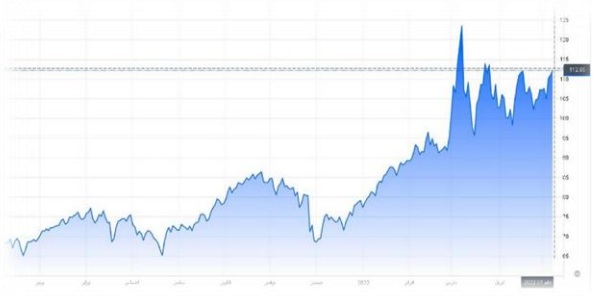
The Russian war on Ukraine has also caused humanitarian crises, migration, and the displacement of refugees, as well as additional negative risks to the global economy, which is still reeling from the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The direct effects of reduced remittance

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flows and the indirect effects of rising prices for food, fuel, and fertilizer have increased the risks of food insecurity and rising poverty rates in many low-income countries[14].

As for the Middle East and North Africa region, hydrocarbon-exporting countries such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, and Algeria might see improvements in their public finances and balance of payments, as well as stronger growth rates, The war will have a significant and negative impact on several economies in the Middle East and North Africa, such as Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, as these countries rely heavily on Ukraine and/or Russia for their food imports, especially wheat. The crisis will disrupt grain supply chains, drive

up food prices, and cause a significant rise in local production costs in the agricultural sector. Lower crop yields and incomes—particularly among smallholder farmers—will have negative.



effects on livelihoods, potentially impacting the poorest and most vulnerable populations who depend on Agriculture as a source of livelihood for many. Egypt will also be affected by the decline in tourism; the sector is expected to experience a slump, as Russians and Ukrainians account for at least one-third of its incoming tourists.

As for China, the direct impacts are expected to be smaller due to the fiscal stimulus package that will support the 2022 growth target of 5.5%. However, there remains the challenge of rising raw material prices and weak demand in major export markets .

Finally, the Russian war on Ukraine, which broke out on February 24, 2022, had a clear impact on the global economy. This is due to the importance of Russian exports and its trade relations with various countries—particularly in the energy sector—on the one hand, and the importance of Ukrainian exports, especially regarding basic commodities (such as wheat), on the other. This has caused the global economy to face numerous challenges, such as securing energy and food supplies, combating inflation, and maintaining purchasing power, among others.

II- The Regional Implications of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Russia has restored its geopolitical role in the region and ensured that these countries do not expand their military-political alliances with the West, which can be viewed as an act of Eurasian geopolitics. Accordingly, the most significant implications or effects of geopolitical considerations on the relationship between

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Russia and its neighboring countries can be summarized as follows:

1- Southern Borders:

A. Central Asian Countries:

The importance of the Central Asian region (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) to Russia stems from its status as Russia's backyard within the broader Eurasian sphere. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of those former republics, a geopolitical vacuum emerged in the region due to the declining priority of Central Asian states on Russia's foreign policy agenda, and the international actor that moved to fill this vacuum was the United States of America. At that time, Russia was in no position to mount a response, as it was preoccupied with domestic issues following the Soviet Union's dissolution and a split in its foreign policy orientation between Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian approaches.

Applying these geopolitical factors to Russia, we find that the importance of the Central Asian region to Russia is determined by:

- Securing geographical borders: due to the absence of any geographical barriers between Russia and the Central Asian states, Russia had to secure its borders and prevent terrorist threats and political divisions originating from the region from reaching its territory. This was in addition to the importance of clearing Russia's southern borders of U.S. military presence. The United States had established military bases in the Central Asian republics in 2001 during the war against Afghanistan. In 2005, the U.S. military presence at the "Karshi khanabad" base in Uzbekistan was terminated.

In 2009, the former Kyrgyz president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, announced his intention to close the American Manas Air Base following a meeting with the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. It was indeed closed in the same year, after the Russian Federation promised Kyrgyzstan financial aid of $2 billion in exchange for closing the base.

-Concerning the region's waterways, Russia, along with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Iran, signed the Caspian Sea Agreement in August 2018 (the Caspian Sea is the world's largest enclosed body of water; it is not subject to international laws governing either seas or lakes, and it contains the world's second-largest oil reserves). The economic significance of the agreement—which aims to distribute the wealth and resources among the five states—is not the most important aspect at all, as it merely codifies a pre-existing situation. Rather, the true significance, which takes on a geopolitical and international dimension, lies in securing the entire Caspian Sea region from any foreign military presence. The five states have pledged to reserve the

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rights to exploit the sea's resources exclusively for themselves and not to permit any foreign military presence under any pretext. The countries of the region possess vast natural resources in the energy sector .

B. China:

According to the geopolitical determinants mentioned above, we find that they do not apply to China's importance to Russia. Besides, China is considered as a geopolitical significance for Russia in the Eurasian region aimed at creating a strategic balance against Western power, in addition to the two countries' agreement to shift the global order toward multi polarity. The implications of this geopolitical factor between Russia and China can be highlighted as follows:

- Keeping the same political position at the United Nations (on North Korea, Syria, Iran, and other issues).

- Exporting advanced Russian military equipment, including S-400 surface-to-air missiles, to China which angered the United States and lead to impose sanctions on China in September 2018. Russia and China were subjected to U.S. sanctions as a result of the former's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the latter's purchase of Russian weapons. In response, Russia has recently converted a significant portion of its foreign exchange reserves into Chinese currency as a hedge against U.S. sanctions, and China has increased its investment in the Russian economy in reaction to Western sanctions against Russia.

- The reliance of Russian economy on energy exports, China as one of the world's biggest importers of natural gas—has invested $12 billion in the Yamal gas field, one of the world's largest natural gas projects, which will double Russia's production by 2022. (50%) of the project is owned by the Russian company, 20% by China National Petroleum Corporation, and 10% by the Silk Road Fund .

-The military relationship between the two countries has been taken to a new level through joint military exercises (along with Mongolia), called "Vostok 2018." The significance of these exercises lies in their geopolitical implications; they are the largest of their kind since the "Zabad 1981" exercises. Furthermore, the participation of Russia, the world's second-largest military, and China, which has the world's second-largest economy and third-strongest military, in these exercises is likely to shift the military balance in Asia and the world.

-Membership of the two countries in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The founding charter of the organization was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on September 19, 2003. It comprises China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the world's largest regional organization in terms of its geographical

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area, spanning approximately 37 million km², covering three-fifths of Eurasia and comprising four nuclear-armed states .

Both Russia and China have shown remarkable efforts to avoid competition and develop a cooperative framework for managing divergent interests, the two countries have long-term interests in the same geographical area, reflecting Beijing's integrated vision for the Eurasian region. China has a specific geo-economic vision centered on completing the Silk Road Economic Belt, finding markets for its products, and strengthening geostrategic relations with the European Union, while Russia seeks to serve as the security for the Eurasian region and the leader of a new world order.

2. Eastern Border (Japan)

Geopolitical considerations play an important role in determining Japan's significance to Russia. First, Japan is a member of NATO and hosts a U.S. military base. Second, the issue of sovereignty over the Kuril Islands has been a major obstacle preventing the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries since 1945.

These islands are situated between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean. The Russian refers to them as the Kuril Islands, while the Japanese considers them the Northern Territories. Furthermore, Russia's sovereignty over these islands began after Russian Empress Catherine the Great announced the discovery of the islands in 1786, and the border between Russia and Japan was drawn in 1855. Although Japan controlled the southern half of Sakhalin Island after defeating Moscow in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Moscow managed to regain the islands under the decisions of the Potsdam Conference in 1945.

In 1956, the two countries signed an agreement "providing for the division of the four southern islands so that each would receive two islands; Japan considers the Southern Kuril Islands to be its territory, however, Moscow claims that these islands became part of the Soviet Union following the war. Russia's claims to these islands are based on geopolitical considerations, the most important of which are:

- Strategic importance based on converting these islands into military and naval bases. Russia maintains military bases on the archipelago and has deployed missile systems on the islands.

- Due to Russia's possession of these four islands, it controls the Yekaterina Strait—between the islands of Kunashir and Iturup—which does not freeze in winter. As it allows its fleet access to the open sea, it constitutes a vital area for Russia's access to warm waters.

- Russia owns the Vladivostok's port which serves as the base for the Russian Pacific Fleet, and cannot allow the activities of its strategic nuclear submarines in the region to be hindered.

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- The President Vladimir Putin claimed Russia's geopolitical interest in the islands at the International Economic Forum held in Bompo in 2017 in which he acknowledged that a scenario in which the islands return to Japan would pose a security problem, as they could become an ideal location for the deployment of North Korean ballistic missiles. Furthermore, if U.S. air defense systems were deployed on these islands, they would be able to track Russian missile launches from the Sea of Okhotsk more quickly .

3. The Western Border

Russia's western border occupies a significant part of its foreign policy. The countries along Russia's western border form a circle that completely encircles it, starting with the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), passing through Belarus and Ukraine, the Balkan states in the southeastern part of the European continent, and finally the South Caucasus states (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan).These borders present Russia's most significant geopolitical security threat which is NATO bases and missile defense systems.

A. The Baltic States:

The Baltic States are considered a zone of tension between Russia and the West. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania lead them to join the European Union and NATO in 2004. Despite the Baltic States' membership in the European Union and NATO, Moscow continues to extend its influence into the region; Russia shares direct borders with Estonia and Latvia, and these countries constitute a strategic zone for Russia, besides, the shared history, cultural and economic ties. Thus, the Russian minorities in the three countries play a key role in enabling Russia to maintain a presence based on shared language, values, and interests.

However, due to the maritime and strategic importance of the Baltic region, NATO and U.S. naval exercises have focused on this zone because of its proximity to the Russian border. In June 2014, the United States and NATO countries conducted the Baltops exercise in the Baltic Sea against the backdrop of the crisis in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Saber Strike military exercises were conducted under the command of the U.S. Armed Forces with participation from Canada, Denmark, the Baltic States, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In January 2018, Saber Strike military exercises were also launched in Poland and the Baltic states, involving 18,000 troops from 20 countries .

B. The Balkans:

Like the Baltic States, the Balkans is also considered as a zone of interest between Russia and the West. Geopolitical considerations reflect the importance of this region through two key factors:

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The firs factort: Energy, considering Russia as a major supplier to the region and holds varying infrastructure projects in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to a lesser extent in Macedonia and Slovenia. Russian energy companies, both private and state-owned, now hold significant stakes in the energy sectors of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia.

The second factor: Russian ethnic groups. The Balkan states are the areas where Russia employs its soft power and propaganda. Consequently, the tendency to emphasize ethnic and cultural factors in Russia's relations with the Balkan states and with their Slavic peoples in particular has become more evident with the protection of Slavic Orthodox Christians being framed as a mission in the principles of Russian foreign policy .

Consequently, while some of these countries are members of NATO (Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro), the Balkan states do not pose a significant threat compared to other countries because Russia does not share a direct land border with them.

C. South Caucasus Countries:

Russia deals with the countries of the Caucasus region by adopting a carrot-and-stick policy, with the stick reserved for Georgia and the carrot for Armenia. Its primary goal is to keep these countries out of NATO. Unlike most of the former Soviet republics which sought independence from Russia, Armenia was the only country that viewed its survival as tied to its alliance with Russia. This comes from its geographical position as a landlocked country and its confront relations with Turkey because of the historical massacres of Armenians by the Turks, and with Azerbaijan as the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region that is located within Azerbaijan and is inhabited by an Armenian majority.

After the Soviet Union's dissolution, conflicts arose between the two states over control of the region. In 1992, the region's residents declared it an autonomous region. Despite a ceasefire agreement in 1994, clashes continued between Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the former supported by Turkey and the region supported by Armenia and Russia.

As for Azerbaijan's importance to Russia, it lies in preventing Azerbaijan from emerging as an alternative source of energy for European countries .

In addition, Georgia is the most important country in the South Caucasus region due to its direct border with Russia and serves as a model for how Russian foreign policy addresses Western threats which the West itself is responsible.

In 1921, Joseph Stalin, the former leader of the Soviet Union, declared South Ossetia a Soviet republic which is located in the center of Georgia, to the north, but

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downgraded its legal status to that of an autonomous republic within Georgia in 1931. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, South Ossetia expressed its desire to secede from Georgia and declared the region to be under Russian influence. In 2006, South Ossetia announced its intention to hold a referendum on self-determination.

In August 2008, the former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili launched a military campaign against the separatist region of South Ossetia, where Russian military forces were deployed. On August 8, The Russian forces moved in after declaring South Ossetia as an independent state. Russia sent military units to Abkhazia, located northwest of Georgia, after Georgia had supported South Ossetia, to back the Abkhaz separatist movement. In fact, Saakashvili made a fatal mistake by relying on former U.S. President George W. Bush, his trusted ally, a decision that led to a swift and decisive Russian response; Bush, for his part, merely adopted a spectator's stance at the time.

The war between Russia and Georgia had many significant political repercussions. First, it restored the strength of the Russian military and demonstrated its superiority in the region. Second important factor, that American and European support's for the South Caucasus states were worthless.

D. Ukraine:

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has regional and international implications which can be stated as follows:

• From the American and European perspective, independent Ukraine is part of building a "Europe that is whole, free, and secure," and requires the completion of efforts to secure Europe which has accelerated through the expansion of NATO and the European Union to lessen Russian influence and reach the furthest possible point bordering Russian territory, by integrating Ukraine into economic and security partnership.

• According to Alexander Dugin, the situation in eastern Ukraine (where a pro-Russian separatist movement emerged in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine),that led to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk, was a geopolitical necessity for Moscow; The annexation of Ukraine is not the goal; rather, what cannot be allowed is the "Atlantic occupation of Ukraine" or the "Westernization of Ukraine." The real threat is the probability of its integration into NATO, and worse still, the establishment of a NATO base a short distance from Russian territory. Ukraine must either be an ally or a partner of Russia, or remain in a neutral sphere.

• Russia's actions toward its regional surroundings are merely part of a consistent geopolitical approach to addressing threats caused by the West; it

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may occasionally resort to military force to maintain the status if necessary .

In conclusion, Russia uses energy as a weapon to pressure European states by using geopolitical factors to advance and defend state interests and line up a future for extending across the Eurasian region,. It possesses an extensive network of gas pipelines in Ukraine, ensuring it a winning position. Russia also adopts a strategy based on upholding Russian nationalism and exploiting Russian ethnic groups and nationalities beyond its borders, in its capacity as a Eurasian state, to assert its influence in neighboring countries.

The Third Section: Possible Scenarios for the Russian-Ukrainian War.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has taken a complex interpretation, perhaps most notably in its regional and international dimensions following the Minsk II agreements, signed on February 12, 2015, However, we will attempt to assess the future of this war beyond the current trajectory of the crisis by highlighting three possible scenarios, which we will address in this section.

First Scenario: The possibility of the war ending according to a zero-sum equation (in favor of the Russian Federation).

This involves the Russian Federation's determination to continue its military operations until it achieves its mentioned objectives, as it is linked to its vital interests and national security; as Alexander Dugin describes it, it is a matter of existence, survival, or annihilation.

What the Russian Federation is banking on in this war is its conventional and unconventional military capabilities, as the ultimate guarantee for managing Russia's escalation is its arsenal of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons.

Concerning the Western position: the relationship with Russia will force the West to acknowledge the extent of Russian interests and the necessity of recognizing them in their entirety and in part. This position was taken by French President Macron when he publicly warned against attempting to humiliate or take revenge on Russia, emphasizing that to end the war in Ukraine, peace must be built without humiliating Russia. In the same vein, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger emphasized the need for the West to stop attempting to defeat Russian forces in Ukraine, warning that this would have consequences for Europe's long-term stability. Speaking at the Davos Forum on May 23, 2022, he stated "It would be fatal for the West to succumb to the mood of the moment and forget Russia's rightful place in the European balance of power… calling on Ukraine to accept negotiations on terms that do not meet its current military objectives and that the appropriate position for it is neutrality and to serve as a bridge between Russia and Europe."

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The rationale for this possibility is based on the following factors:

1- Russia's military capabilities and the realization that Russia is serious about achieving its objectives, even if that requires resorting to unconventional means.

2- The extent of Western dependence on Russian energy sources, especially since the West remains in a cycle of searching for alternatives.

3- The continuation of the war has exacerbated price hikes in the energy and food markets.

4- The war's repercussions on Europe internally, regarding bearing the economic burdens of supporting the Ukrainian war effort on the one hand, and bearing the costs of sheltering refugees from Ukraine on the other .

Accordingly, there is a possibility that the war will end in the West's favor, as demonstrated by events on the battlefield regarding the resilience of the Ukrainian resistance, and the failure of Russian international efforts to occupy the capital (Kyiv), which forced the Russians to shift toward eastern Ukraine to isolate its access to the Black Sea and to support the independence of Luhansk and Donetsk, and Second scenario: The possibility of the war ending according to a non-zero-sum equation

According to mutual pressure between the two sides of the war—the Russian Federation on one side and Western nations on the other—each side has deployed its capabilities to achieve its objectives. This pressure is manifested in Russia's determination to continue its military operations and the repercussions of this on Europe, although the economic and financial sanctions imposed on Russia by Western nations—which have affected various sectors and Russian political and economic figures—especially given that Russia stands alone against a coalition of European nations and those outside the European system (Japan and Australia) with American leadership and guidance. Furthermore, the military operations which began in February 2022 without a decisive outcome on the ground, among Ukrainian resistance in the field—has resulted in losses that the Russians may not have anticipated. Consequently, the repercussions of the war on the parties involved—including Western sanctions against Russia and the problem of the European energy market's dependence on Russian energy sources—compe the parties to adopt reasonable solutions or ones that avoid the dilemma of continuation or the repercussions of escalation.

Based on the Russian victory scenario (Scenario 1) and (Scenario 2) the following possible outcomes may occur:

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1- Western recognition of the extent of Russian interests in Ukraine, particularly regarding Russia's retention of areas it previously controlled (the Crimean Peninsula) and, subsequently, areas in eastern Ukraine over which it seeks to establish full control (the Donbas region).

2- A pledge by Western countries not to expand NATO to include states that Russia considers part of its sphere of influence.

3- A pledge by the Russian Federation to respect Ukraine's independence and refrain from launching military operations against it in exchange for Ukraine's declaration of neutrality and support for its accession to NATO.

4- The lifting of sanctions imposed by Western countries on Russia .

Third scenario: The war continues, with the probability of escalation (spinning out of control).

The possibility of the war continuing remains when the parties insist on their positions and seek to achieve their objectives, especially since the war is not limited to the Russian Federation and Ukraine but is between the Russian Federation and the Western bloc led by the United States, based on geopolitical realities and reinforced by the historical nature of relations between the two sides.

Russia's determination to achieve its objectives, despite setbacks in this endeavor due to the resistance Russian forces face on the ground—resulting from the Western support received by Ukrainian forces, which has strengthened their resolve to resist—is compounded by the continued intensification of Western pressure on Russia's economy through the imposition of further sanctions. Meanwhile, European countries' efforts to join NATO have complicated the political and military landscape and increased the challenges facing Russian decision-makers, as Russia now stands alone against a Western alliance comprising some 30 countries.

Considering these circumstances, the war is likely to continue, especially when Russian decision-makers reach a point where they are unable to resolve the conflict in their favor and seek to further complicate the situation, according to the "sunk cost" perspective, or what is known as "irrational escalation of commitment." This escalation occurs when leaders continue to maintain the failed projects or objectives, often pouring more valuable resources into those projects in the hope of ultimately achieving success.

Factors increasing the likelihood of continued military confrontation include: the possibility of deliberate hostile intentions aimed at depleting Russian capabilities on the ground, and justifying this through an escalation of sanctions against Russia in the hope of exhausting it financially, and drowning it in costs that render the objective meaningless, thereby

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subjecting Russia to restrictions for years to come in order to limit its regional role.

In addition, the expansion of the war cannot be ruled out, especially if the challenges facing the parties intensify. We would then be facing a third world war whose causes and beginning are known, but whose end is not easily foreseeable, particularly since the world would be witnessing a confrontation between international powers possessing unconventional capabilities .

Despite the future scenarios proposed for the crisis, another scenario can be predicted: the division of Ukraine into two parts. This follows Ukraine's transformation into a proxy battlefield between Russia and the West, and in light of the current military escalation, it is noticed that Ukraine could split into two parts: eastern part aligned with Russia and a western part aligned with Europe and the United States.

Conclusion

The Russian invasion of Ukraine witnessed a dangerous change of international relations, imposing power and military conflict back to the front after decades of efforts to consolidate the principles of collective peace and respect for state sovereignty. The repercussions of this invasion have exposed the fragility and inability of the international security system to effectively prevent conflicts; it has also deepened divisions among major powers, intensified the arms race, and threatened regional and international stability. In addition to human and economic losses, the crisis affects the global food and energy security, making international peace even more vulnerable to disruption. Consequently, achieving international security and peace depends on revitalizing the role of international institutions, promoting diplomatic solutions, and adhering to international law, thereby ensuring that such crises are prevented and the future of global stability is safeguarded. The likely outcomes and trajectories of war will be determined by the capabilities of the adversaries, their willingness to endure, and their determination to achieve their objectives, in accordance with the principles of game theory, which has provided examples of potential war trajectories.

Suggestions and recommendations:

1. Strengthening the role of the United Nations in preventing conflicts through reforming decision-making mechanisms taking into account the use of the veto in matters related to aggression and violations of international peace.

2- Upholding international law and holding violators accountable by supporting the work of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, thereby reinforcing the principle of no impunity.

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3- Reaffirming the principle of state sovereignty and the non-use of force in international relations, as the cornerstone of collective security.

4- Minimizing the impact of economic sanctions on states not involved in the conflict, particularly developing countries affected by food and energy crises.

5-Strengthening the international humanitarian response to protect civilians and refugees and ensure that aid reaches them without political or military obstacles.

6- Combating disinformation and cyber warfare which threaten the stability of societies and fuel conflicts.

7- Encouraging diplomatic and negotiated solutions as the only way to achieve a sustainable end to the conflict.

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