

The Russia-Ukraine War from the Perspective of Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism

الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية من منظور الأوراسية الجديدة لألكسندر دوجين.

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Date of send: 29/10/2025 Date of acceptance: 05/12/ 2025 Date of publication: 30/12/2025

Abstract:

This study aims to analyse the Russia-Ukraine war through the lens of Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism, by revealing the intellectual and geopolitical references of the war in order to understand its causes and objectives. Following a methodological approach consisting of a historical approach, a descriptive approach, an analytical approach, and a geopolitical approach to interpret the dimensions and implications of the war according to the geopolitical contexts of Dugin's Eurasianism. Perhaps the most important conclusion reached is that the war is not a border war between two states, but part of a broader civilizational conflict that reflects a deep-rooted geopolitical rivalry between two forces (land and sea) for control of the Eurasian geostrategic space and the definition of the international order.

Keywords: Alexander Dugin, Civilisational Conflict, Geopolitical Discours, Geopolitical Importance ,Geopolitical Rivalry , Neo-Eurasianism.

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Introduction

The 2022 Russia-Ukraine war was a prominent geopolitical event in the international system that attracted the attention of researchers and thinkers of various orientations to investigate its motives and dimensions. In this context, we find the Neo-Eurasianism and the ideas formulated by Alexander Dugin as an intellectual framework that explains the war from an ideological perspective with a civilisational-geopolitical dimension that differs from traditional interpretations.

The Neo-Eurasianism represents an integrated geopolitical and philosophical ideology that views Russia as a distinct ethnic and cultural reality, as an independent and unique continental Eurasian civilization. It proposes a (civilisational-geopolitical) project to revive the Russian-Eurasian empire in order to counter the hegemony of Western Atlantic civilisation and establish a multipolar system, focusing on the need for Russia to restore its position as a superpower by redefining itself, its cultural identity, and its imperial structure, by bringing the countries of the Soviet Union back into its orbit, most importantly Ukraine, as it represents a cultural fault line that attracts international competition and conflict.

Research problem: Given the increasing complexity of the Russia-Ukraine war and the multiple angles from which it can be interpreted, there is a need to understand the ideological and philosophical dimensions driving Russia's strategy towards Ukraine as a decisive geopolitical gap for Russia's geopolitical and cultural future, which leads us to the following problem:

How can the Russia-Ukraine war be interpreted through Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism?

Study hypothesis: This study will attempt to test the limits of the following hypothesis: The Russia-Ukraine war reflects a strategic step in an ideological project aimed at reviving the Eurasian empire as an independent cultural identity to counter the Western liberal order.

Study methodology : This study relies on a methodological framework that combines a historical approach to tracing the roots and trajectories of the Russia-Ukraine war with a descriptive approach to understanding its dimensions. The content analysis approach was used to analyse the content of Dugin's statements, not to mention the geopolitical approach to reading and interpreting the war by highlighting the geostrategic importance of Ukraine in various dimensions and clarifying the Russian strategy of expansion and control of geopolitical outlets.

This study seeks to examine the role played by Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism and his geopolitical vision of Ukraine as a reference tool for interpreting and understanding the geostrategic dimensions of the war, not to mention its implications for Russia Eurasian tendencies and its quest to build a multipolar international system.

Firstly: The geopolitical importance of Ukraine in Alexander Dugin's thinking.

Ukraine occupies an important place in Dugin's geopolitical thought due to its multidimensional importance in terms of civilisation, history, culture, and geostrategy, which has made it a pivotal state within the Eurasian geopolitical architecture and a grey cultural space that attracts geopolitical competition and cultural conflict between the major powers.

1. Ukraine in the Russian geopolitical perception.

Ukraine means 'borderland' in Old Slavic. This name was used by both Russians and Poles to refer to the geographical areas inhabited by the Ukrainian Cossacks. This name was attributed to the prevailing belief at the time that Ukraine was a marginal, peripheral land with no influence on the interactions and conflicts of the time. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of its states, and the change in the geopolitical landscape in Eurasia, Ukraine came to be described as a pivotal country in both Russian and Western perceptions, making it an arena for international geopolitical competition¹.

In terms of geographical location, Ukraine occupies an important strategic position, covering an area of 603,700 km², making it the second largest country in Europe after Russia. It is bordered by Russia to the east, Belarus to the north, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary to the west, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to the south².

Figure 1: Geopolitical Map of Ukraine.



Source: bit.ly/4rfm8Hv

Ukraine occupies a strategic position at the crossroads between European and Asian countries and is Russia's gateway to the Black Sea, which plays a decisive role in breaking the geopolitical stranglehold imposed on Russia to access warm waters. On the other hand, the Black Sea represents a security buffer zone that enhances Russia's ability to strategically deploy its military to its spheres of influence in the Middle East. The Black Sea also reinforces Russia's role as a global commercial player, guaranteeing its access to European markets and providing it with sea routes

for energy transport. However, Russia faces a geostrategic challenge due to the presence of geopolitical rivals in the Black Sea, such as Turkey, which seeks to consolidate its regional leadership role through NATO³.

In addition to the Black Sea, the Sevastopol base is of geostrategic importance in terms of the balance of naval power and the architecture of Russian regional power in the Black Sea. It is a central point for the projection of Russian naval power and a strategic defence base against maritime threats⁴.

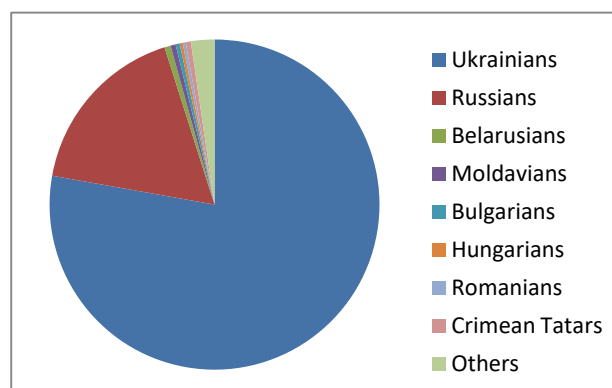
From a geostrategic perspective, Ukraine forms a geographical safety belt and a natural barrier between Russia and the West, making it the heart of Russia's defence and a protective shield for its national security and strategic depth against security threats, particularly the expansion of NATO, which is now centred in the immediate neighbourhood. This justifies Russia's fear that Ukraine will become a Western defence centre to encircle Russia and contain its influence, especially since history confirms the use of the plains of Central Europe and Ukraine as routes of invasion by Napoleon and Hitler. Ukraine represents a strategic buffer zone to deal with this security necessity⁵.

From a geo-cultural and historical perspective, Ukrainian is the official language, while Russian is widely spoken in Ukrainian regions, being used as an everyday language in seven out of nine regions and being widespread in the eastern regions due to the concentration of Russians in these areas. However, it is also present in the central regions at a rate of 35%, while it is used in the western regions at a rate of 12%. Ukraine is also characterised by a complex social fabric of several ethnicities and races, with a population of 4.45 million, of which Ukrainians represent 77.8% of the total population, while the Russian minority represents 17%, in addition to minorities of Moldovans, Belarusians, Crimean Tatars, and Hungarians. This diverse social composition has determined the pattern of cultural and civilizational connections and the nature of social loyalties in the Ukrainian state⁶, and has perpetuated the clash of identities and created internal tensions between those loyal to Russia and those loyal to the West.

Figure2 : Ethnic in Ukraine.

Ethnic	%
Ukrainians	77.8
Russians	17.3
Belarusians	0.6
Moldavians	0.5
Crimean tatars	0.5

Bulgarians	0.4
Hungarians	0.3
Romanians	0.3
others	2.3

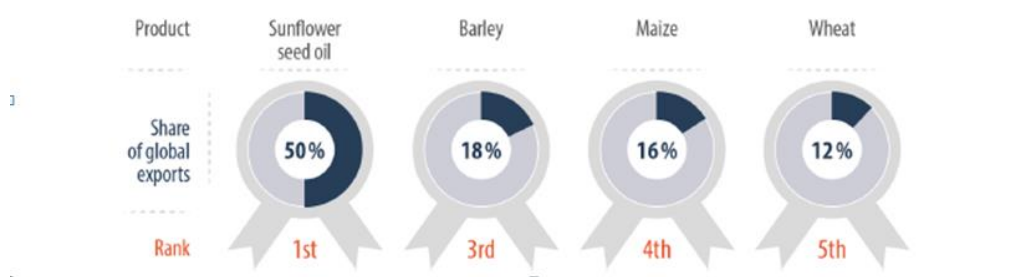


Source: Adapted by the author from(The Council of Europe, 2006, p50)

Russia views Ukraine as a natural extension of its historical, cultural, and religious trajectory, due to its ties to the East Slavic ethnicity. In addition, Ukraine is seen as representing the roots of Russian Orthodoxy, linked to the symbolism of Kievan Rus as the nucleus of Russian civilisation. Ukraine is an important part of Russia's cultural history, as Kiev is considered the mother of Russian cities and the historical capital of the Kievan Rus' principality, as well as the cradle of Orthodoxy since Prince Vladimir's baptism on the banks of the Dnieper River⁷.

From a geo-economic perspective, Ukraine is considered an agricultural country par excellence due to the fertility of its land, which represents 22% of Europe's arable land. It also enjoys high-quality soil, known as black soil, in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country. It is described as the world's breadbasket, as it is one of the largest exporters of grains worldwide, especially wheat, which is a strategic crop⁸. It ranks fifth globally in terms of wheat production and third globally as a source of corn.

Figure3 : Ukraine's share of global agricultural exports and rank in the world before the Russian invasion.



Source : (Albaladejo Román Antonio,2024,p5.)

In terms of minerals, Ukraine is among the top ten contributors to global production of iron (5%), titanium (5%), and manganese (5%). These minerals are mainly concentrated in the lower Dnieper River, while Ukraine ranks twelfth in coal production, 82% of which is concentrated in the Donbas region⁹. The Donbas region is the fourth-largest coal field in Europe, with estimated recoverable reserves of 10 billion tonnes. The region is Ukraine's leading industrial centre, contributing 20% of gross domestic product. The region also plays a pivotal role in Russia's space and defence industries by providing raw materials (a special type of steel) used in the manufacture of Russian armed forces' tanks. In addition, most Russian helicopter engines are manufactured in the city of Zaporizhia¹⁰.

Ukraine plays a vital role in transporting Russian energy through natural gas networks to European markets, with approximately 80% of the total gas destined for Europe passing through it. Ukraine has the largest gas transmission pipeline network, consisting of 35,000 km of gas pipelines, 120 pumping stations, and 13 underground gas storage facilities, forming the main route for Russian gas supplies to European markets¹¹.

Figure 4: Russian Natural Gas Pipeline Network through Ukraine.



Source : bit.ly/4ob1ghU

Such strategic factors have made Ukraine a vital player in global food security and energy security, especially in Europe. Moreover, it has been described as a geopolitical hub in the Eurasian chessboard. Given its geopolitical assets, including a diverse social fabric and a strategic central location, Ukraine has been designated a

pivotal state at the heart of the world. All of this has made it a geopolitical fault line that drives and attracts international competition.

2. Ukraine in Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasian Theory.

According to the Eurasian theory, Alexander Dugin started from the premise that Russia is a unique geographical, ethnic, and cultural reality that connects the East and the West, and that Russia is destined to be a Eurasian empire based on its geography and culture. He assigned it a geopolitical mission, which is to gather the main points of power on the grand Eurasian chessboard to create a continental bloc in the form of a great Eurasian empire to counter Atlantic expansion, guided by Mackinder's concept of the 'heartland' and Haushofer's 'living space'¹². He assigned Ukraine a central importance within his Eurasian project, considering the strategic triangle of Moscow-Astana-Kiev a necessary framework for ensuring the stability of the Eurasian Union and strengthening the cohesion of its strategic structure as a result of shared civilisational and cultural ties in terms of language, religion, and ethnicity, making Ukraine a pivotal point for achieving geopolitical balance in the Eurasian region¹³.

Dugin views Ukraine's location as a country bordering Russia, given its status as an independent sovereign state, as a threat to Russian security and military incursion into Eurasian territory. According to Dugin, Ukraine as a state has no geopolitical significance, as it has no cultural message of global importance, no geographical uniqueness, and no ethnic exceptionalism, and its territory is torn between the heart of Eurasia (Russia) and the West¹⁴. Therefore, Ukraine's independence is considered a geopolitical threat to Russia and its presence as a continental power in the Eurasian region. Furthermore, an independent Ukraine serves as a geopolitical tool for the Atlantic strategy to contain Russia geopolitically and thwart its ambitions to build a Eurasian space¹⁵. On the other hand, Ukraine's independence and sovereignty would limit Russia's control of the Black Sea from Azov Fortress to the Kerch Strait, leading to a decline in its strategic influence as a regional power, reinforcing its geopolitical predicament, and depriving it of access to warm waters¹⁶. Dugin therefore recommends that Russia control the northern coast of the Black Sea as a focal point to prevent Western Atlantic expansion in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits¹⁷.

Dugin views Ukraine as an unnatural state, given its geopolitical structure comprising four central regions with different geopolitical allegiances, namely:

1. **Western Ukraine:** consisting of three provinces: Galicia, Halychyna, and Zakarpattia. These regions are characterized by their geographical and ethnic heterogeneity, not to mention their different political traditions. Culturally, they belong to the Western Catholic geopolitical sphere of Central Europe, which makes them alien to Russian culture. These regions play a vital role in the general political climate in Ukraine, as they adopt a geopolitical approach that is pro-Western and anti-Russian. Therefore, Dugin proposes separating this region from Ukraine.

2. **Eastern Ukraine:** Stretching from east of the Dnieper to the Sea of Azov, this region is characterised by a Russian Orthodox majority and is linked to Russia by historical, cultural, religious, and ethnic ties, which could form an expanded autonomous region allied with Russia.
3. **Central Ukraine:** This region covers the geographical area stretching from Chernihiv to Odessa, including Kyiv. It is dominated by the Orthodox community, not to mention the ethnic groups of Little Russia, making it reflect a geopolitical reality that is culturally close to Eastern Ukraine and implicitly falls unconditionally within the Eurasian geopolitical system.
4. **Crimea:** This region is of particular geostrategic importance, as it is characterised by ethnic diversity, including Russians, Ukrainians, and Crimean Tatars. From this perspective, Dugin emphasised that Crimea should be granted special autonomous status under Moscow's direct strategic control, considering that relinquishing this region to an independent and sovereign Ukraine would pose a geopolitical threat to Russia¹⁸.

To counter this threat, Dugin proposes dividing Ukraine into geopolitical regions according to ethno-cultural factors, whether by soft or hard power, and placing Crimea and eastern Ukraine under Moscow's direct control. He reiterates his ideas on Ukraine in his book *The Fourth Political Theory*, emphasising that it represents a geopolitical gap formed by significant areas of influence: Galicia, Volhynia, Crimea, Novorossiia, part of which lies within Russian borders. He also stressed the need for Russia to begin annexing these territories, especially Crimea, and to gather the territories of the Commonwealth of Independent States to create a Eurasian empire through hybrid warfare¹⁹.

The above highlights Ukraine's centrality and geopolitical position in Alexander Dugin's Eurasian doctrine, as it expresses an existential issue for Russia and reveals the fragility of its western borders and its geographical exposure. Ukraine represents a pillar of geopolitical balance in the Eurasian region. Without it, Russia's expansion as a land power would be limited, and its historical geopolitical path towards warm waters would be halted.

Secondly : The geostrategic dimensions of the Russia-Ukraine war from Alexander Dugin's perspective.

Alexander Dugin has always emphasised in his books and articles the need to bring Ukraine back into the Russian orbit as a geopolitical and civilisational imperative to restore the Eurasian empire with its cultural unity based on Slavic Orthodox identity, traditions, and hostility to Western modernity.

1-The roots of the Russia-Ukraine war

Alexander Dugin considers the Russia-Ukraine war to be a profound civilisational and ideological clash, part of the eternal confrontation between the power of land and the power of sea. According to Dugin, the war reflects an existential necessity to protect Russian civilisational identity and its uniqueness; it is a holy war to protect a sacred system. Dugin also uses religious language to describe

the global liberal system, calling it the kingdom of Satan, Lucifer²⁰. In this context, Dugin emphasises the need to form a continental Eurasian bloc to counter the Atlantic maritime bloc representing Western powers, led by the United States of America, as Russia's central geopolitical rival. According to Dugin's geopolitical vision, this continental bloc includes countries that are considered a natural extension of the Russian cultural space, the most important of which is Ukraine, as a historical extension of Kievan Rus²¹.

In his book *The Eurasian Mission*, Alexander Dugin discusses Russian-Ukrainian relations based on a historical, civilisational, and cultural perspective, considering Ukraine to be a cultural and existential extension of Russia due to the deep ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic ties that bind them together. However, there are systematic liberal Western attempts to separate Ukraine from the Russian sphere of influence²².

The formation of Ukrainian identity is considered one of the first Western, Atlanticist efforts to use Ukraine as a strategic tool to weaken Russia and fragment its civilizational geography. Dugin argues that the Ukrainian national identity, which emerged in the 19th century, is entirely artificial. He cites Polish support for the Ukrainian identity as an effort to gain an ally against Russia and restore Polish dominance over the western parts of Russia. Moreover, Poland played a central role in creating the artificial Ukrainian language²³.

He confirmed this in his article 'Ukraine in the Great Game,' published in December 2021, arguing that Western capitalist countries supported the independence of the Soviet republics through the pro-Western local elites who were in power in these republics²⁴. Ukraine gained its independence through a referendum on 1 December 1991, and the Ukrainian independence referendum is considered the decisive factor that effectively ended the existence of the Soviet Union. The main issue between Ukraine and Russia is not about borders, but rather the deeper question of building a geopolitical entity with a separate identity that is entirely independent from Russia²⁵, which has raised significant Russian geopolitical concerns, as it is seen as a threat to its influence in its vital heartland.

Dugin believes that liberalism has reached its historical end, which is driving it towards military or ideological war to impose its hegemony and protect itself from internal erosion. It needs an external enemy to assert its existence, using Ukraine as a fifth column to penetrate the Eurasian space²⁶. relying on the Orange Revolution, which Dugin considers in his book *Postmodern Geopolitics* to be a long-term plan to cut Ukraine off from Russia by soft political and spiritual media means. Atlantic forces used online protests as a means of controlling the behaviour of political leaders and the masses, through media and cultural networks, alliances between informal organisations, and the mobilisation of extremist youth groups²⁷.

On 21 November 2004, widespread protests broke out over the election results between pro-Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovych and pro-Western opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko. After Yushchenko's victory, Ukraine took an anti-

Russian stance. It sought to limit the use of the Russian language and portrayed the Ukrainian people as colonised by the Russians. From a geopolitical perspective, Dugin considered this a transformation of Ukraine under Yushchenko's leadership into a key ally of the Atlantic maritime strategy directed against Russia and its Eurasian project²⁸.

Using the same strategy, the Atlantic powers fuelled the Euromaidan protests in December 2013, which were a response to President Viktor Yanukovych's decision to suspend the partnership agreement with the European Union in favour of closer relations with Russia. The protests, which began peacefully, escalated into widespread unrest and violence by the government against demonstrators in February 2014, prompting Yanukovych to flee to Russia, leaving a power vacuum²⁹.

In his article "Ukraine in the Great Game", Alexander Dugin confirmed the support of the United States and NATO for the protests in the square and the use of the Zabadents (Western Ukrainian nationalists) to take power, which put half of Ukraine under the threat of mass terrorism. The military council also announced its intention to join NATO and the need to withdraw Russian ships from the port of Sevastopol. Following these events, Russia annexed Crimea, and separatists declared the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions with Russian support³⁰. From there, Russia moved to establish the foundations of the Novorossiia project by establishing a quasi-governmental entity through expanding its control to parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, using soft power in the form of media campaigns to prove Russia's historical and cultural ownership of these regions.

Dugin considered the 2014 war a turning point for national and cultural revival aimed at protecting the Russian-speaking Orthodox population from the liberal and Nazi threats spreading in Ukraine, not to mention his denial of the legitimacy of the Ukrainian state, saying 'Ukraine has no right to continue as a state within any borders,' considering it a civilisational threat within the Russia-Eurasian sphere of influence³¹. He considered the annexation of Crimea a spiritual and geographical victory in the great continental war, given Crimea's cultural symbolism on the one hand, and on the other hand, its strategic importance within the Anaconda ring used by the Atlantic powers, led by the United States, to besiege Russia and prevent it from reaching warm waters

In conclusion, Dugin frames the Russia-Ukraine war not merely as a territorial dispute, but as a fundamental clash of civilizations, with Ukraine as a critical component in the broader geopolitical contest between Russia and the West. This war is seen as a struggle for the preservation of Russia's Eurasian identity and its rightful place as a continental power, resisting the liberal, Atlanticist forces led by the United States.

2. The geopolitical justifications for the Russia-Ukraine war.

Ukraine's escalating demands for NATO and EU membership, not to mention the continuing fighting between separatist movements and the Kiev government in the Donbas region and the failure to comply with the Minsk II agreement, provided

fertile ground for Putin's decision to intervene militarily on 24 February 2022 through a special military operation in Ukraine, which was seen as a correction of a historical geopolitical mistake, to liberate Ukrainians from the corrupt Nazi elites supported by the West and return them to their natural place within the Russian world.

2.1. Geopolitical-cultural justification: According to Dugin, the Eurasian space is a natural historical, cultural, and civilisational extension of Russia, forming the geographical framework in which Russian identity has been shaped over the centuries. From this perspective, Dugin emphasises the need to make the restoration of Russian influence in the Eurasian region a strategic goal of its foreign policy by supporting Russian minorities in the Eurasian space and strengthening cultural and national ties. He believes that restoring Russia's power requires, first and foremost, a return to the original Russian culture and a confrontation with Western liberalism and Westernisation efforts³². This was reflected in Putin's doctrine of restoring Russian territories. In his statements, he considered the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the separation of its states to be a geopolitical disaster, and portrayed himself as having a historic geopolitical mission to restore the separated Russian territories, following in the footsteps of Peter the Great. He views Ukraine as part of the Slavic nation, as clearly evident in his 2021 statement on the 'historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians,' in which he asserted that Russians and Ukrainians are one people, supporting his statements with historical events³³.

2.2. Geopolitical-security justification: This justification is linked to NATO's eastward expansion, which Dugin considers a direct threat to the Eurasian vital space and an attempt to strategically and geographically encircle Russia, as he believes that NATO is part of the Anaconda strategy and a tool for liberal Atlantic hegemony.

Ukraine's attempts to join the Atlantic Alliance began in 2008. However, the idea of accession was not discussed at the Bucharest Summit that same year due to opposition from France and Germany. The membership application was resubmitted in 2017, when NATO announced that it would put the idea forward for study and discussion. Until the current president, Zelensky, submitted a request for a timetable for joining the alliance³⁴. The 2008 NATO summit was a decisive factor in widening geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West, as it included an open invitation for Ukraine and Georgia to join the Atlantic alliance. Moscow considered this a direct threat to its national security, especially given the possibility of Ukraine becoming a military base on Russia's immediate border, which would reduce the size of the buffer zone, particularly after the accession of Eastern European countries.

So, the neo-Eurasianism sees NATO expansion as an existential threat to the civilisational-geopolitical space. Thus the war represents a civilisational clash between two opposing civilisational models, Realism, on the other hand, interprets this from the perspective of maximising power and self-security, as NATO's expansion created a security dilemma due to Russia's perception of this expansion as an increase in the enemy's power, making it necessary for Russia to act to create a balance of power by regaining its influence in its vital space. As for liberalism, it

considered NATO expansion to be the integration of the Soviet Union into the democratic institutional system, which Russia viewed as a threat due to its weakness in establishing democratic institutions and, consequently, war as a result of the regime's fear for its survival³⁵. As for constructivism, it focuses on the collective identity of states that determines their interests and behaviour. The Ukrainian war provided fertile ground for identity to emerge as a decisive factor. From a constructivist perspective, shifts in national identity through official policies adopted by the political elites in Ukraine were the catalyst for the decision to go to war, as changes depend on the beliefs and ideas adopted by states through their agents. When these beliefs and ideas change, hostile relations shift from friendship to enmity. However, the constructivist interpretation ignored Russia's strategic concerns in their material sense, particularly with regard to NATO expansion, in addition to ignoring geopolitical considerations in Ukrainian relations³⁶.

2.3. Geopolitical-demographic justification:

The decline of Russian influence within Ukrainian decision-making circles played a role in pushing Russia to invade Ukraine, especially after 3.75 million Ukrainian voters were excluded, namely those in Crimea and the Donbas region who are loyal to Russia. This weakens the possibility of a pro-Russian government coming to power in the future, thereby causing Russia to lose control over domestic policy and, necessarily, foreign policy³⁷. The loss of the pro-Russian demographic bloc is pushing Ukraine to gradually and automatically transform into an entirely Western state and turn it into an advanced base for the West on Russia's borders, threatening the Eurasian geopolitical balance.

According to geopolitical justifications, Russian military intervention is part of an integrated Russian strategy that reflects long-term geostrategic and ideological goals derived from the new Eurasia, as Ukraine is a fundamental pillar in the Dugin vision of regional and global hegemony.

Thirdly: The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the Russian Eurasian Orientation in International Politics

The Russia-Ukraine war has deepened Russia's Eurasian orientation. This orientation was clearly evident in the conceptual framework of foreign policy for 2023, with an escalation in anti-Western political rhetoric. In response, Russia has reformulated its priorities towards deepening its strategic relations with Eurasian powers and laying the foundations for a comprehensive strategic partnership to counter Western pressure and shape the contours of a multipolar world order³⁸.

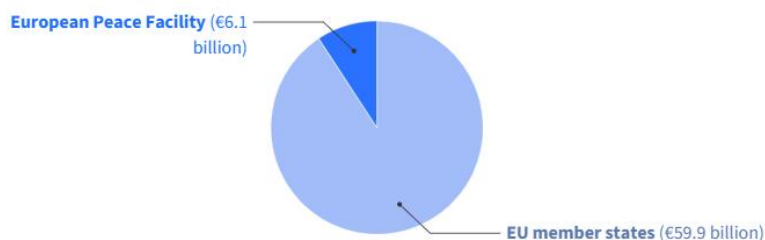
In the same context, Eurasia is considered the optimal strategic direction for Russia to give it the vital space to occupy a pivotal position in the international system and participate in its dynamics as a strategic player. It has therefore become imperative for Moscow to strengthen the centrifugal tendencies towards the centre and maintain its influence in its regional neighbourhood, which, according to Dugin, will restore the strategic balance with the West³⁹.

1. Economic sanctions and gradual separation from the Western economic system:

The West has played a pivotal role in the war by providing aid to Ukraine and imposing extensive sanctions on Russia. The USA has decided to provide support in order to maintain its dominance in Asia and contain Russian expansion into Eastern European countries. In February 2022, Congress approved five supplemental appropriations measures, funding the Atlantic Resolve operation as part of security assistance to Ukraine to the tune of \$189 billion. US support included direct budgetary support or humanitarian aid, including support for refugees in other countries, as well as security assistance. The administration also committed to providing at least \$5 billion in development assistance to Ukraine's energy, agriculture and governance sectors, among others⁴⁰. Not to mention security assistance to build the defensive capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces through training and equipment efforts. Reports indicate that 40 high-mobility artillery rocket systems and more than 2,000 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles have been provided⁴¹.

In contrast, the European Union has also played a pivotal role in providing military, economic, financial, humanitarian, political and diplomatic support and assistance, with European military support to Ukraine estimated at €66 billion.

Figure5 : EU military support for Ukraine.



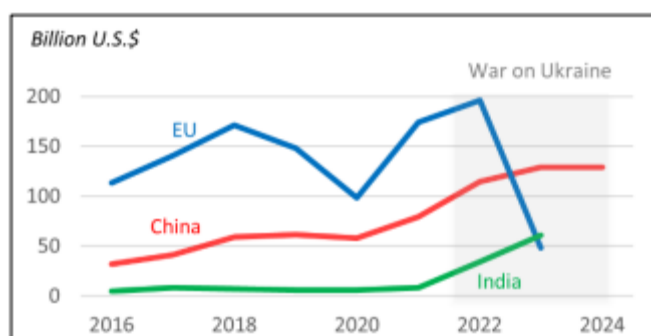
Source : bit.ly/4oVylzG

The European Union also launched a military assistance mission in November 2022 with a budget of €409 million. Since the mission began, around 85,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been trained. In March 2023, the European Council approved a three-track plan to speed up the delivery of ammunition and missiles to Ukraine⁴².

Since the outbreak of the war in 2022, the European Union and the United States have imposed a series of sanctions targeting vital sectors of the Russian economy. Western economic sanctions included the separation of seven Russian banks from the SWIFT banking system. The United Kingdom approved the freezing of Russian assets in the British-American financial system, and Germany suspended the operating licence for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, in addition to the disruption to the Russian gas pipeline network in Ukraine⁴³.

The economic war waged by the European Union against Russia has led to a decline in trade between the two sides, with European imports falling by 66.1%, from \$262.8 billion to around \$89 billion in the 11 months since the start of the war⁴⁴.

Figure 6: EU, China, and India Imports from Russia



Source: bit.ly/3K8CUHE

Russian energy exports to the European Union also declined by more than 75% between 2021 and 2023⁴⁵, prompting Russia to seek strategic alternatives for energy transport by activating and strengthening international trade routes, including:

- **North-South Corridor:** a 7,200 km trade route linking India, Iran, Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, and Russia⁴⁶. This route has seen a resurgence of Russian interest in completing the project, starting in 2022, after the invasion of Ukraine, even though agreements on it were made in 2000. The testing phase began in July 2022 with the transport of 39 containers by Russian train through Central Asia to Iran and then to India. The corridor is expected to be completed by 2025 with a capacity of 20-25 million tonnes per year⁴⁷.

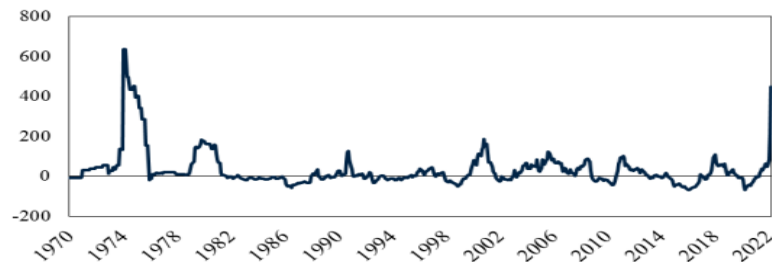
- **Turk Stream pipeline:** Commissioned in January 2020, it connects Russia and Turkey and passes through the Black Sea with a total annual capacity of 31.5 billion cubic meters. In 2024, it transported 16.7 cubic meters to Moldova⁴⁸.

- **Power of Siberia 1 and 2 pipelines:** Commissioned in 2019, these pipelines stretch 1,400 miles between Russia and China. Russia exported 4.1 billion cubic meters of gas to China via these pipelines in 2020, and this figure is expected to reach 38 billion cubic meters in 2025. However, this pipeline has not been able to compensate for the shutdown of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, prompting Gazprom to announce on 28 February 2022 the signing of a contract to build the Siberia 2 gas pipeline, which aims to transport 50 million cubic meters of Russian gas to China⁴⁹.

The economic isolation imposed on Russia has therefore prompted it to reduce its dependence on European markets as a fundamental step towards overcoming Western European centralization in its economies and to seek other alternatives by strengthening its orientation towards the East and the global South. In the same context, Russian natural gas has undergone a functional transformation from a tool of pressure on Europe to a strategic tool for strengthening partnerships and alliances with other countries.

It should be noted that the war has caused an energy crisis following supply shortages and a global rise in energy prices to 448% in March 2022⁵⁰, which has increased transportation and manufacturing costs for consumers.

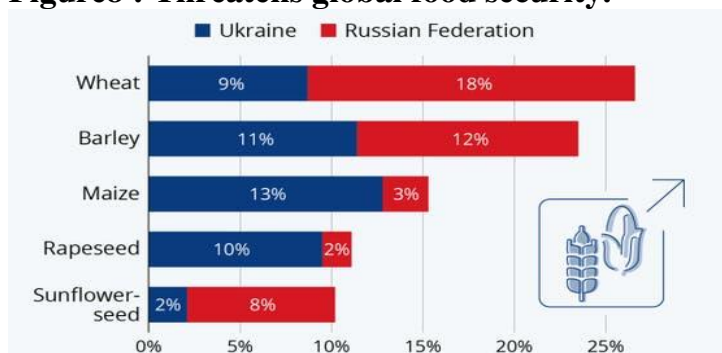
Figure 7: The development of energy prices (%).



Source : (Abdelkader Belbachir, Brahami Mohamed Amin ,2023 ,p275).

Its effects also extended to causing profound geo-economic shifts, with Ukraine witnessing a 35% decline in domestic production, labour displacement, migration and total dependence on Western aid⁵¹. Wheat prices rose by 25% globally, causing a food crisis and increasing the risk of famine in the Middle East, especially since Ukraine produces enough food for 400 million people around the world. The Russian-Ukrainian war led to a 30% decline in agriculture on agricultural land⁵².

Figure8 : Threatens global food security.



Source : bit.ly/3XaRZvi

The global economy also experienced unprecedented inflation and rising interest rates, which affected loans, investment and economic growth. It disrupted supply chains in the Black Sea region, affecting traders of metals and raw materials.

2. Strengthening strategic alliances with Asian powers.

In his 2005 book “The Philosophy of War”, Alexander Dugin considered China, Iran, and India to be Russia's best geostrategic partners, especially in security matters. In 2011, he emphasized the need for Russia to support North Korea through military initiatives, considering it a strategic ally in countering Atlantic hegemony.

China:

The Sino-Russian strategic partnership has expanded steadily since 2022, encompassing trade, economic, and military areas. Trade relations between the two countries have grown significantly since the invasion of Ukraine, as shown in the following table:

Figure 9: Volume of Russian-Chinese trade.

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
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Trade Volume (Billion USD)	149.88	190	240	244.8
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Adapted by the author from (Samoudi Alireza, 2025, p. 155)

However, there was an imbalance in the trade balance between the two countries, with China's share of total Russian trade exceeding 25%, while Russia's share remained at around 3% of China's total trade. This difference reflects Russia's increasing dependence on China, which has reshaped the balance of power within their strategic relationship and tipped the scales in favour of China as the stronger party in their partnership⁵³.

On the military front, strategic cooperation between the two countries has included joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and joint development of weapons systems, despite Beijing's keenness to maintain its neutral stance towards the Russia-Ukraine war and its refusal to provide direct military support. However, Ukrainian reports released in April 2025 indicated that there were 155 Chinese fighters among the Russian forces. On the other hand, Beijing plays a pivotal role in the technical and military industries, with reports indicating that China contributes about 80% of unmanned aircraft engines, not to mention the intensification of military coordination since 2022, with the two countries conducting approximately 102 joint military exercises between 2022 and 2024, the most important of which were the Vostok 2022 exercise in the far east of Russia, the 2023 naval manoeuvres in the Sea of Japan, which included live-fire exercises on naval and air targets, and the large-scale Russian naval manoeuvre 'Ocean 2024' with the participation of 400 naval units and 90,000 military personnel⁵⁴.

India:

Indian-Russian relations were not primarily based on trade, but with the war in Ukraine and the withdrawal of Western companies from Russia, the door was opened for Indian companies to expand their business there. Russia now ranks seventh as India's largest trading partner, up from 25th. There has also been an increase in the volume of trade between the two countries, reaching \$49.4 billion in 2023, compared to a stable \$10-13 billion before the war. The two countries have also discussed a system of trade in local currencies. Strategic military cooperation between India and Russia includes cooperation in the development of advanced defence systems such as Brahmos missiles and the manufacture of Su-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks in India. Russia is India's largest supplier of military equipment, while India is Russia's second largest customer. Not to mention joint manoeuvres and exercises, the most important of which are the Indra manoeuvres⁵⁵.

Iran:

Dugin considered the Russia-Iran alliance to be a fundamental pillar of Russia's Eurasian project against Western hegemony, based on the idea of a common enemy, which contributes to strengthening the strategic rapprochement between the two countries and breaking the anaconda ring formed by NATO by limiting American

influence in the Arabian Gulf region, not to mention the geostrategic importance of Iran for Russia's access to warm waters⁵⁶.

Russian-Iranian cooperation has seen remarkable development in the midst of the war, with several reports indicating that Tehran has supplied Moscow with thousands of Shahed-131 drones, and Shahed-136 drones, as well as hundreds of short-range ballistic missiles, not to mention providing technical support for the establishment of production lines for Shahed drones within Russian territory, enabling Russia to manufacture its modified version under the name Geran-2. Reports indicate that Moscow will produce more than 6,000 drones in 2024⁵⁷.

North Korea:

Russian-Korean relations took a different turn following the invasion of Ukraine, with North Korea expressing its explicit support for the Russian position. The two summits that brought together the Russian president and the North Korean leader in 2023 and 2024 marked a qualitative shift in the advancement of bilateral cooperative relations. On the other hand, the visit of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to the Russian Far East was seen as a sign of North Korea's openness towards Russia. The new comprehensive strategic partnership treaty signed on 19 June 2024 was a step with security implications, as it obliges both parties to provide military assistance and full support to any party that is subjected to armed aggression⁵⁸. The military cooperation between the two countries was evident in Moscow receiving direct military support from North Korea, which deployed around 11,000 soldiers to the Kursk region of Russia in 2024, not to mention supplying Moscow with around 50% of its ammunition needs and hundreds of ballistic missiles⁵⁹.

The war deepened and reinforced Russia's Eurasian orientation as part of a multipolar Eurasian vision, but these alliances have not yet reached the stage of integrated cultural integration as envisioned by Dugin, as its parties oscillate between cooperation and competition.

3. Accelerating the path to multilateralism through Eurasian blocs:

Russia has worked to make Eurasian blocs geopolitical civilisational projects to counter Western hegemony by attracting emerging powers to form a multipolar economic and political axis. It has also sought to reduce its dependence on the dollar and establish an independent Eurasian financial system, forming an integrated economic space to free itself from dependence on Western institutions.

Iran joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2023, followed by Belarus in 2024. Putin also confirmed the increasing use of national currencies in payments between member states, which accounted for 92% of Russia's trade with member states during the first months of 2024⁶⁰. During the Eurasian Economic Union summit in May 2023, Putin also emphasised the need to develop the union to achieve common civilisational values and expand its scope to include ideology, historical memory, and common culture, stressing that his goal was to oppose Western globalization⁶¹.

In the same context, BRICS witnessed a wave of expansion in 2024-2025 with the accession of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia, bringing the number of official members to ten. In addition, around 40 countries expressed their desire to join, not to mention the unveiling of the BRICS Pay payment system, which relies on local currencies and makes digital currencies available for transactions in local currencies without converting them to dollars, in order to dismantle the US dollar's dominance over the SWIFT system and circumvent economic sanctions⁶².

4. Decline of Russian influence in Central Asia and South Caucasus.

Russia views Central Asia as a pivotal geographical region for its security doctrine and a fulcrum for preventing any Atlantic expansion into Russia's backyard, especially since the region poses a model for new security threats that necessarily affect Russian national security. This has prompted Russia to play the role of protector of the region and its stability and to assume the role of dominant player in security dynamics by deploying military bases to contain armed Islamic movements⁶³.

The Russia-Ukraine war has sparked controversy over Russia's continued role as protector of the region and its stability, especially after it withdrew 1,500 soldiers from the Russian military base in Tajikistan and 90 soldiers from the air base in Kyrgyzstan, creating security fragility on the border with Afghanistan. Not to mention the decline in the value of Russian arms exports to 3 million in 2022, compared to 134 million in 2021. The decline in Russian security support for Central Asian countries and their international isolation has led to a decline in Russia's influence in these countries. China and Turkey have emerged as strategic alternatives, strengthening their security cooperation with these countries through military aid, joint manoeuvres, and training⁶⁴. Central Asian countries have also worked to diversify their diplomatic and economic relations away from Russia by developing alternative trade routes to reduce their dependence on Russian infrastructure. Their desire to strengthen their independence was clearly evident in their cautious stance towards Putin's proposal to establish a gas union comprising Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. This stance reflects the region's drive to formulate an independent foreign policy and attempt to build new regional alliances⁶⁵.

As for the South Caucasus, Russia has lost some of its traditional influence in the region, and its effective intervention in the Caucasus crises, particularly the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, has declined. This has prompted Armenia, as one of the parties to the conflict, to gradually turn towards the West and open the door for alternative regional powers to play active roles in the region. Statistics indicate that there are 10,000 soldiers on Armenian territory, in addition to 2,000 peacekeeping troops in the Lachin corridor connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. However, other reports indicate that Russia has partially withdrawn its military forces and directed them towards its war with Ukraine. In addition, Russia's modest intervention in the border clashes in the summer of 2022 led Armenia to refuse to sign the

Collective Security Treaty Organisation declaration. Azerbaijan's full intervention in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 and Russia's inability to fulfil its security commitments led Armenia to turn to the West on the issue of the Zangezur corridor, which passes through Armenian territory and links Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan region⁶⁶. Armenia worked to free itself from dependence on its strategic ally and diversify its partnerships with traditional and new parties. It strengthened trade cooperation in the energy sector with Iran, developed defence cooperation with France and India, and signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with the United States under the Biden administration.

On the other hand, the South Caucasus region has entered into European geo-economic calculations, with a noticeable Azerbaijani-European rapprochement in the field of energy and renewed interest in international transport routes via the Caspian Sea and the Southern Gas Corridor, where both parties have committed to doubling gas supplies to Europe by 2027⁶⁷. The war also accelerated Georgia's integration into the European Union and created new security challenges for South Ossetia and Abkhazia in terms of arms smuggling and the creation of new facilities for transporting arms to Ukraine⁶⁸.

Thus, the Russia-Ukraine war has led to a relative decline in Russian influence in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, highlighting a shift in its geopolitical position as a traditional hegemon in its regional neighbourhood, which has opened the door to multipolar competition for influence in the region.

Conclusion

Based on the above, it can be said that the Russia-Ukraine war has confirmed the extent of Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism penetration into Russian decision-making circles, as it has emerged as an intellectual reference point for Putin's strategic orientations in recent years. It is necessary to understand this in order to comprehend the geopolitical intellectual roots of the current war. On the other hand, the war has provided a testing ground for the geopolitical principles put forward by Alexander Dugin as an ideological framework for understanding Russia's quest to annex Ukraine as a central point for achieving continental independence and Eurasian integration. Considering Ukraine to be the key to geopolitical trends in the Eurasian region and, at the same time, the weakest link as an independent sovereign state, opening the way for Russia's isolation, curbing its expansion as a land power, and completing its geopolitical paths towards warm waters. From this geopolitical perspective, the war is interpreted as a defensive measure to counter external geopolitical threats aimed at encircling Russia and tightening the noose around it to restrict its movements as a dominant power in its vital sphere.

From a cultural perspective, the war is interpreted as a necessary and inevitable chapter in the protracted historical conflict between the Eurasian land-based civilisation with its traditional values and collective spirit and the Western Atlantic maritime civilisation, aimed at preserving traditional Russian identity, which provides

us with an ideological justification for Russian actions that goes beyond traditional interpretations.

In short, this war is a fateful one that will determine Russia's geopolitical future and its cultural identity in the international system, which seems to play a decisive role in determining its shape between continuity in Western-led unipolarity or a shift to a multipolar world led by Russia. The answer remains contingent on the outcome of the war in Ukraine.

Based on the above, it appears that the repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian war will be profound and far-reaching, making the global system less stable and prone to similar conflicts, especially in Eastern Europe, which will remain a hotbed of tension, opening the door for the crisis to turn into a long-term frozen conflict. It will also push Russia to redefine its relations with Europe and produce a new map of international relations, while Europe will be forced to reassess its defensive role following the return of issues such as rearmament and increased military spending. On the other hand, we will witness a reshaping of global supply chains and an acceleration of the shift towards alternative energies as a strategic option for managing economic risks. Moreover, the exacerbation of food crises around the world, especially in African and Middle Eastern countries, is making self-sufficiency in production a necessity. In contrast, there will be an increase in waves of refugees, especially towards Europe, creating social crises.

It has therefore become necessary to activate diplomacy more and seek gradual settlements through strengthening the role of international organisations, especially since the war has shown that reliance on military force may lead to the expansion of the war and its escalation into a new world war.

-Arms control and the establishment of new security agreements to manage tensions, and the development of mechanisms to prevent cyber attacks and protect digital infrastructure, especially after the Russian-Ukrainian war proved that we are now facing a new type of warfare that differs from traditional wars, as it has now become hybrid in nature.

- Directing investments towards renewable energies, building an effective system and crisis-resistant infrastructure, and developing European plans to manage the flow of Ukrainian refugees.

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