

Politico-Strategic Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War for South Asia: A Bangladeshi Perspective

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Abstract

Geographically as a distant conflict from South Asia, yet the Russia-Ukraine war is immensely consequential for the region due to a variety of reasons. The South Asian states are not immune from the fallouts of the war. While the economic impacts of the war were felt immediately, the politico-strategic fallouts will be gradual and long-term. The main question is on the validity of the bigger states playing the dictatorial role in an imbalanced relationship. The bigger states get the edge of dominance through force while denying peaceful coexistence on the basis of equality. This paper provides a Bangladeshi perspective on the politico-strategic implications of the Russia-Ukraine War, since it lies in the neighbourhood of India. The larger versus smaller states is a dangerous trend.

Keywords: Russo-Ukraine War, Regional Implications, Politico-Strategic Fallouts, Economic Consequences, Indo-Bangladesh Relations.

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Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine war that began on February 24, 2022, is unlikely to end soon. It has turned into a protracted ‘war of attrition.’¹ Russians, it appeared, planned to end the war within a short period of time by capturing Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital, and installing a pro-Russian regime in that country. Moscow however, failed to execute the plan. As Western military assistance began to arrive in Ukraine, the war gradually assumed the character of a ‘proxy war’ which may take years to end.

The war’s multifaceted fallouts are already evident. It has affected the global order, regional systems, and individual states in multiple ways. By the end of the war, it is likely to restructure the global order. While the fallout of the war at the three levels (global, regional, and state) are interwoven, variations can be observed in the way regions and individual states have been affected by it. For example, the way Europe and the European states are affected by the war, its fallouts on the African states are considerably different.² Hence, reactions and perceptions about the war in various parts of the world are varied.

It is against this backdrop that this paper illustrates the fallouts of the war on the South Asian states and assesses its politico-strategic implications for the region. It provides Bangladesh’s viewpoint in this regard.

The paper starts by briefly illustrating the international fallout of the Russia-Ukraine war and its likely impact on the global order. It is

¹ Spencer Bokart-Lindell, “Is There Any End to the Ukraine War in Sight?” *The New York Times*, August 10, 2022.

² The war’s impact on different regions’ food security is a case in point in this context. The war has disproportionately affected the food security of some Middle Eastern and North African states compared to many other regions. For a discussion on this, see Caitlin Welsh’s testimony to the US Congress, “The Impact of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa,” May 18, 2022, available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/impact-russias-invasion-ukraine-middle-east-and-north-africa>.

followed by an analysis of the war's impact on Bangladesh and the country's diplomatic dilemma that it created (particularly at the UN). Then, it assesses the politico-strategic implications of the war for Bangladesh and the South Asian region in general. The paper concludes by summarising the key points of the work.

The Russia-Ukraine War and International Relations

The Russia-Ukraine war is a case of outsized consequences of a conflict between two states. Perhaps no other such war in recent history between two states has produced so much impact as the war between Russia and Ukraine. The consequences of the war are multifaceted and far-reaching. The impact of the war on the global economy is particularly dramatic and profound. Also, no less important are its politico-strategic fallouts. The war has the potential, as will be discussed below, to restructure the global order.

As soon as the war began, its impact on the global economy was immediately felt. Two crucial sectors of the global economy – energy and food – were particularly affected by the war. The price of oil and gas in the global market immediately shot up when the war began. Supply uncertainty of those commodities took hold as Russia, a key producer of oil and gas, became embroiled in the war.³ Also, it was due to economic sanctions that were imposed by western countries on Russia for the latter's invasion of a sovereign state. As modern economies are energy-driven, the higher price of oil and gas affected almost all states, irrespective of their location or position in the global structure.

Food is another key sector of the global economy which was severely affected by the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war. The global food trade

³ Russia is the third largest producer of oil and second biggest producer of gas. For a discussion on Russia's global importance on those two commodities, see International Energy Agency, "Energy Fact Sheet: Why does Russian oil and gas matter?", March 21, 2022; available at: <https://www.iea.org/articles/energy-fact-sheet-why-does-russian-oil-and-gas-matter>

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and its supply chain was severely disrupted as the war began. Both Russia and Ukraine are major suppliers of food grains in the international food market. According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation, Russia and Ukraine ranked among the top three global exporters of wheat, barley, maize, rapeseed and rapeseed oil, sunflower seed and sunflower oil in 2021.⁴ Also, the two countries are important sources of cooking oil and fertiliser for agriculture. Consequently, the Russia-Ukraine war has increased global food insecurity, thus exacerbating the challenges of alleviating global hunger.

Overall, the onset of the war has produced multiple challenges for the global economy. It has increased food insecurity, reduced industrial production, disrupted international trade, and created worldwide inflationary pressure. Importantly, it happened at a time when the world economy was recovering from the setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The war is unlikely to end soon which implies that the economic woes may multiply in the days and months ahead. And, even if the war finally ends, its impact will linger on as the global economy will take time to recover from the setback of the war.

The political ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine war are no less important. Indeed, the war may be hugely consequential due to its potential to restructure the global order. Such an eventuality will dramatically alter the world's geopolitical landscape.

A new global order in the wake of the war is predictable for several reasons. First, Russia is a major global power with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world and a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. It is geographically large and a major international commodity

⁴ Additionally, Russia is also ranked as the world's top exporters of nitrogen fertilizers, the second leading supplier of fertilizers and the third largest exporter of phosphorous fertilizers. See, FAO, "The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with war in Ukraine," June 10, 2022; available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9013en/cb9013en.pdf>

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supplier. Importantly, the war has brought Russia and China closer,⁵ despite China not having come out clearly in Russia's support. Nonetheless, their combined weight in the global power structure is bound to have a major impact on the global order. Its potential is even higher given that the global structure was decentring⁶ and gradually moving towards multipolarity⁷ even before the war. Secondly, China, the rising power, is not affected in a substantive way by the war, rather it is benefitting from it because Russia is drawing closer to it. China has not only increased oil and gas imports from Russia, but it is also buying them at a cheaper rate.⁸ It will boost China's *relative power* position in the international power structure. Third, the USA and its European allies are reeling under the pressure of a shortage of energy that will affect their economic growth potential in the short to medium-term. Europe is traditionally dependent on Russian energy and Moscow has now drastically reduced its gas supply to European countries as the latter imposed economic sanctions on Russia. So, the European Union member states are currently under a severe energy crisis that will exacerbate in the days ahead.⁹ Also, it will keep the inflationary pressure on the European economies in the months and years to come. Fourth, it does not appear that many countries in the developing world have taken the side of the United States or Europe in the war for a variety of reasons.¹⁰ Surprisingly,

⁵ "Ukraine crisis pushes Russia and China into a closer embrace," (editorial), *Financial Times*, February 13, 2022.

⁶ Barry Buzan, The Inaugural Kenneth N. Waltz Lecture "A World Order Without Superpowers: Decentred Globalism," *International Relations*, vol. 25, issue 1 (2011), pp. 3-25.

⁷ Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (New York: Wiley, 2014).

⁸ Chen Aizhu and Florence Tan, "China quietly increases purchases of low-priced Russian oil," Reuters, May 20, 2022; available at: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/exclusive-china-quietly-increases-purchases-low-priced-russian-oil-2022-05-20/>

⁹ "Europe's energy crisis: facing down Putin will not come cheap," (editorial), *The Guardian*, July 13, 2022.

¹⁰ Reasons include: experience of colonial exploitation and suffering; illegal wars waged by the USA and allies in the developing world; racial discrimination in taking refugees by the Western countries (which particularly became evident after the onset of the Ukraine war) etc.

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many have positive and sympathetic views about Russia and its President Vladimir Putin.¹¹ Fifth, when sanctions were imposed and Russia was excluded from the SWIFT international payment system, many countries were affected by it in their trade with Russia. Several countries are now working for an alternative payment system and considering ways to use major non-Western currencies for international trade. For example, various countries, (Russia in particular) are building foreign currency reserves with Yuan, UAE Dirham, Turkish Lira and Indian rupee.¹² Even Bangladesh is taking steps to diversify its foreign currency reserve basket.¹³ Consequently, the fallout of the war in this context will affect the power of the dollar as the global reserve currency.

Not only the economic and political aspects of the global order are set to be affected by this war, its strategic fallout will also be no less consequential. Particularly, the nuclear dimension will have considerable global implications in which nuclear doctrines and strategic policies of the nuclear weapons states may be reoriented. There is a fear that Russia may use nuclear weapons in Ukraine which could result from battlefield setbacks.¹⁴ If it so happens, the ‘nuclear taboo’ that existed for so long will cease to exist. It will increase the usability of nuclear weapons. Also, the war will complicate nuclear arms control and disarmament efforts. The established nuclear order that was in place since 1968 may face challenges as a result of the war. In this context, an immediate impact can

¹¹ Declan Walsh and John Eligon, “Shunned by Others, Russia Finds Friends in Africa”, *The New York Times*, March 3, 2022; ‘In Some Parts of the World, the War in Ukraine Seems Justified’, *The New York Times*, 3 March, 2022.

¹² Mariko Kodaki, “China and Russia step up bid to challenge U.S. dollar's dominance”, *Nikkei Asia*, August 17, 2022; available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Markets/Currencies/China-and-Russia-step-up-bid-to-challenge-U.S.-dollar-s-dominance>

¹³ Syful Islam, “Bangladesh aims for yuan trade as cushion against mighty dollar,” *Nikkei Asia*, September 27, 2022; available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Bangladesh-aims-for-yuan-trade-as-cushion-against-mighty-dollar>

¹⁴ “Russia reasserts right to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine,” *The Guardian*, March 26, 2022.

be observed in the failure to agree on a final statement on NPT Review Conference.¹⁵

As can be evidenced, the Russia-Ukraine war has generated a multiplicity of consequences. They are not uniform across regions and states. South Asian states have been affected differently by the war and have drawn lessons from it.

Impact on Bangladesh

The Russia-Ukraine war has affected Bangladesh in multiple ways. However, two fronts – economic and diplomatic – are particularly noteworthy which deserve closer scrutiny.

Economic Fallout:

As soon as the war broke out, its impact on the Bangladesh economy was immediate. The energy sector was particularly hit as a result of the war, which created a chain reaction of shocks throughout the economy.

Bangladesh is an energy-deficient state. It has to import oil, gas, and coal to run the economy. Bangladesh's economic growth potential largely depends on the supply stability of those commodities. When the global energy market became volatile and the price of oil and gas shot up as soon as the war began, Bangladesh confronted a daunting challenge to ensure energy supply from external sources. Supply uncertainty and increased cost of fuel generated economic shockwaves which were manifested in multiple ways. First, Bangladesh's import bills suddenly increased due to the higher price of oil and gas in the international market which put pressure on the country's balance of payment situation.¹⁶ The problem

¹⁵ "Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference Ends without Adopting Substantive Outcome," *United Nations*, August 26, 2022; available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2022/dc3850.doc.htm>

¹⁶ Fahmida Khatun, "What the Russia-Ukraine war means for Bangladesh's economy," *The Daily Star*, March 21, 2022.

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was exacerbated as export earnings fell and remittances dropped for which the war in Ukraine was largely responsible.

Second, instability in the energy sector meant the reduced ability to generate power which in turn affected industrial production. It dampened Bangladesh's economic growth potential.

Third, due to the higher price of oil and gas, the government had to hike the domestic price of fuel. It increased inflation, thus creating a cost-of-living crisis in the country.

The onset of the war affected Bangladesh's food security. Ukraine and Russia, as noted above, are amongst top suppliers of food grains and fertilisers in the international market and Bangladesh is a net importer of wheat and fertiliser from those countries. The war disrupted the import of those commodities from the two sources. The problem was exacerbated when India, another source of Bangladesh's food grains import, imposed a ban on wheat and rice export to ensure its food security against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war.

The war also affected Bangladesh's exports due to sluggish demand of its export products, particularly in the West. The impact was specifically felt as the key sector of its exports, such as ready-made garments (RMG), was hit as a consequence of the war. It is noteworthy that Bangladesh is the third largest exporter of RMG in the world and this sector constitutes over 80% of its export earnings.

It can be observed that the key sectors of the Bangladesh economy have been affected by the Russia-Ukraine war. It even created the fear that Bangladesh might confront a Sri Lanka-like economic meltdown.¹⁷ The fear has not been borne out thus far and, indeed, it is unlikely that a full-

¹⁷ Arafatul Islam, "Is Bangladesh heading toward a Sri Lanka-like crisis?" *DW*, May 18, 2022; available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/is-bangladesh-heading-toward-a-sri-lanka-like-crisis/a-61838597>

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blown economic crisis will ensue in the foreseeable future.¹⁸ There is no denying that the war has impacted Bangladesh's economy significantly and it will be felt in the years to come. It is evident that the Bangladesh government has taken measures to tackle brewing economic problems as a consequence of the war. For example, it has sought a US\$4.5 billion support package from the International Monetary Fund, which is to stave off a potential balance of payment crisis.¹⁹

Diplomatic Challenges:

The onset of the Russia-Ukraine war created a huge diplomatic dilemma for Bangladesh as it forced Dhaka to take a position on the issue, particularly at the United Nations. A resolution on the war was moved at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on March 2, 2022, (due to a deadlock on the issue at the Security Council). Although the resolution was passed with an overwhelming majority condemning Russia for the invasion, Bangladesh together with a small group of countries abstained.

Dhaka apparently adopted a non-aligned 'neutral' approach in its voting on the issue, but a careful scrutiny would reveal that by abstaining Bangladesh sought to protect its own interests. Dhaka aimed to protect its interests by not taking a side in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Dhaka has been building a nuclear power plant at Rooppur with Russian financial (90% of its cost) and technological assistance, the first of its kind in Bangladesh. The Rooppur nuclear power plant would cost US\$12.5 billion, when it is completed, and would generate 2400-megawatt electricity. Dhaka did not want to derail this huge infrastructure building project by voting against Russia at the UNGA. Additionally, Bangladesh

¹⁸ Rejaul Karim Byron, Dwaipayan Barua, "Bangladesh not at risk of Sri Lanka-like crisis", *The Daily Star*, April 14, 2022.

¹⁹ Benjamin Parkin, "Bangladesh seeks IMF loan as rising import bills hit South Asia", *Financial Times*, July 28, 2022.

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wanted to safeguard its trade interest with Russia which was consistently growing over the past few years.²⁰

The decision to abstain from the UN voting effectively meant siding with Russia on the issue. So, it was not an easy decision for Bangladesh given its dependence on western countries. To stave off diplomatic fallout, Dhaka highlighted that it was ‘neutral.’ Additionally, it indirectly pointed out that it needed to do so to safeguard its interests which were similar to that of India (which also abstained at the UN voting). Hypothetically speaking, Dhaka might have consulted New Delhi about the issue prior to or in the wake of the voting in order to neutralize western diplomatic pressure. Dhaka might also have made concessions to the USA in areas that were of Washington’s strategic interest in the greater Indo-Pacific region. For a while, Washington was putting pressure on Dhaka to endorse its ‘Indo-Pacific Strategy’²¹ whilst Beijing was seeking to resist Dhaka to do it and stay with the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative).²² Recently, a slight tilt toward the USA might have occurred in Dhaka’s policy orientation. Bangladesh’s finance minister has strongly criticised China’s BRI funding²³ which did not happen in the past. As if to signal a policy shift, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stated at a roundtable in New York that Bangladesh and the USA could build a ‘robust partnership’.²⁴

²⁰ “Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Russia,” Bangladesh embassy in Moscow; available at: <https://bangladeshembassy.ru/economy-trade-investment/bilateral-trade-between-bangladesh-and-russia/> (accessed on September 27, 2022).

²¹ “Bangladesh important in US Indo-Pacific strategy: US deputy Secretary,” *South Asia Monitor*, October 15, 2020; available at: <https://www.southasiamonitor.org/bangladesh/bangladesh-important-us-indo-pacific-strategy-us-deputy-secretary> accessed on?

²² “China tells Bangladesh to reject ‘Cold War mentality and bloc politics’,” *Hindustan Times*, June 2, 2022.

²³ “Finance minister Kamal warns developing nations of Chinese loans strapped with debt-trap,” *Prothom Alo*, August 10, 2022.

²⁴ “PM Hasina: US can be our most robust partner in graduation from LDC,” *Dhaka Tribune*, September 23, 2022.

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Another resolution on the Russia-Ukraine war was moved at the UNGA on March 25, 2022, in which Bangladesh voted against Russia. The country's foreign minister justified Dhaka's position by stating that Bangladesh supported the resolution because it was regarding 'humanitarian aid' whilst the preceding resolution was about condemning Russia for the war.²⁵ It may, however, be read as a balancing act on the part of Bangladesh and to neutralize Western diplomatic pressure for abstaining in the earlier voting (which actually amounted to taking sides with Russia).

As the war drags on and its end is nowhere in sight, the diplomatic dilemma for Bangladesh arguably will continue. In the future, the challenge to maintain a balanced position may prove difficult given that the stakes of the warring parties (the USA and its Western Allies vs Russia and China) may become higher in the future.

Politico-Strategic Implications:

The war in Ukraine has significant politico-strategic implications for South Asia. These implications are generally perceived in national terms. It is because various countries in South Asia have been impacted differently by the war. The below analysis provides a Bangladesh perspective about the politico-strategic implications of the Russia-Ukraine war for South Asia.

The starting point for analysing the politico-strategic implications of the war for South Asia is the study of the global order and what happens to it in the wake of war. The war has generated several intriguing questions about the global order. For example, it is not known what will happen to Russia in terms of its relative power position in the international structure as a consequence of the war, or whether the USA or China will come out stronger after the war, or how robust the US-India strategic partnership

²⁵ "Dhaka's UNGA vote on Ukraine based on humanitarian grounds, not Western pressure: Momen," *bdnews24.com*, March 25, 2022.

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will remain or what shape Sino-Indian relationship will take. These issues will define the structure of the global order and that new order will have a profound impact on the South Asian ‘intrusive sub-system.’²⁶ The post-Ukraine order will influence the behaviour of the regional states in regional and international contexts.

The war’s impact on the global nuclear order will have significant implications for South Asia. The war in the nuclear context is significant for two key reasons: first, it may increase the usability of tactical nuclear weapons; and second, it may lead to further proliferation of nuclear weapons.²⁷ Russia began the invasion of Ukraine by conducting a nuclear exercise and upgrading the alert level of its nuclear forces. It is assumed that Russia may use nuclear weapons if it confronts battlefield failures.²⁸ If it were to do so, it will not only erode the credibility of the non-use norm and ‘negative security guarantee,’ it will also profoundly damage the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and question the viability of the existing global nuclear order. Nuclear developments in the war are closely being observed by the two South Asian nuclear weapons states (India and Pakistan). It is because the nuclear fallout of the Russia-Ukraine war may be strategically significant for them. It may affect their strategic doctrines and operational arrangements. The South Asian nuclear powers have tactical nuclear weapons in their arsenal. So, they will have a keen interest in Russia’s nuclear approach during the course of the war.

The war may also have a profound impact on nuclear arms control and disarmament. Although unlikely, the use of nuclear weapons will make nuclear arms control and disarmament far more difficult. It is arguable that the fallout of nuclear development in the war will have significant

²⁶ An intrusive sub-system is one in which dominant, systemic powers intrude into regional international relations.

²⁷ Alexander K. Bollfrass & Stephen Herzog, “The War in Ukraine and Global Nuclear Order,” *Survival*, vol. 64, no. 4 (2022), pp. 7-32.

²⁸ “Ukraine war: Putin not bluffing about nuclear weapons, EU says,” *BBC*, September 23, 2022; available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-63016675>.

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implications for nuclear stability in South Asia. It may even be that the fallout of the war may intensify South Asia's nuclear competition.

Another fallout of the Russia-Ukraine war is significant for small states like Bangladesh, which relates to the position of minor states in the international system. There is a fear in Bangladesh that the war may set a precedent that if a big power desires, it may conquer a neighbouring state or part of it. The specific fear in this context in some quarters in Bangladesh is that India may hold such desires in a situation when the Bangladesh territory or part of it becomes strategically vital for New Delhi. Indeed, this is not about actually happening, the key point here is normative that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has set a precedent about big powers' behaviour in international relations. A careful consideration of Bangladesh's abstention from voting on March 2, 2022, at the UNGA will highlight that the Bangladesh government failed to grasp this crucial implication of the war for small states in international relations. Although Dhaka's decision to abstain from voting on March 2, 2022, was dubbed as 'non-aligned' or 'neutrality,' the implicit implication of the war was missed in that analysis. Indeed, the best chance of small states' survival in the anarchic international system largely depends on a positive international environment in which rule-based order and norm of sovereignty and territorial integrity prevailed.²⁹ The contemporary world order is based on the norm of sovereignty and non-interference into the internal affairs of other states, which is enshrined in the UN Charter. Indeed, Bangladesh's voting behaviour at the United Nations Security Council or General Assembly since its inception as an independent state held this principled position on all occasions except the vote on March 2, 2022.³⁰ The traditional position was restored in the second voting on the Ukraine war (March 25, 2022) although it was more of a balancing act than otherwise.

²⁹ Matthias Maass, "*Small states in world politics: The story of small state survival, 1648-2016*", (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

³⁰ Ali Riaz, "How logical is Bangladesh's position on the Ukraine issue," (in Bangla), *Prothom Alo*, March 15, 2022.

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An important geopolitical lesson from the war for a small state like Bangladesh is that location should be used judiciously in foreign policy. Depending on a country's geopolitical importance, location can be a boon or bane. Ukraine's and East European countries' location is geopolitically important because it is a buffer between NATO and Russia. Ukraine's political elite failed to fully understand this crucial fact of the country's geographical location. Had they understood it, they would not have strived to join NATO in the first instance, which they realized only after the onset of the war and announced that they would not join the western alliance (although they retained the option of joining the European Union).³¹ Bangladesh's geographical location is important for major states (particularly India), for a variety of reasons. It is at the crossroads of Southeast and East Asia on the one hand and South, Central and West Asia on the other. It is located on the northern tip of the Bay of Bengal, hence the country carries formidable maritime importance. So, it is important that Bangladesh carries out its diplomacy carefully in which it appreciates its location.

Some analysts in Bangladesh also point out that the Russia-Ukraine war demonstrates that security guarantees provided by big powers have limited value in international relations.³² In 1994, a security guarantee was given to Ukraine by the United States and Russia through the Budapest agreement. The Russian invasion has not only overturned the security guarantee provided to Ukraine, it also has devalued the norm of security guarantee in international relations. As Shahidul Anam Khan has pointed out, the war has made it clear that a small state like Bangladesh should not rely on external security guarantees, instead it should build its own capabilities and rely on its own.³³

³¹ "Ukraine will not join NATO, says Zelenskiy, as shelling of Kyiv continues," *The Guardian*, March 15, 2022.

³² Shahedul Anam Khan, "Lessons we can learn from the Russian invasion of Ukraine," *The Daily Star*, March 22, 2022.

³³ *Ibid.*

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While Ukraine is not a small state, it is a neighbour of a major power, hence significant lessons can be learned by states which are neighbours of a big regional or systemic power. Bangladesh's lessons can be applied to other states in the South Asian region.

Conclusion

This paper has assessed the politico-strategic fallout of the Russia-Ukraine war on the South Asian region from the perspective of Bangladesh. It first illustrated the global fallout of the war and argued that the global-level consequences are interwoven with the impact on South Asia's regional and state levels. Then, it considered the consequences of the war on Bangladesh with a particular focus on the economic and diplomatic dimensions. Economically, the war has presented Bangladesh with a set of challenges ranging from fuel shortage to inflationary pressure to balance of payment problem and food insecurity. Also, Dhaka was caught in a diplomatic dilemma as a result of the war about taking a position on the issue. Whilst it acted on the surface to demonstrate neutrality, it indeed sought to ensure its national interest in its diplomatic behaviour.

As analysed, the politico-strategic implications of the war for South Asia, first of all, will largely depend on the structure of the global order after the war. South Asia has an intrusive system, hence post-Ukraine global power structure will have profound implications for the region in general and individual states in particular. The nuclear order after the war will particularly be meaningful for the region. At a general level, it will also mean that the war is likely to create a precedent about great powers' behaviour toward small neighbouring states. For the smaller states of South Asia, it may raise concerns about India's behaviour towards them. ■