

Chief Patron's Note

IPRI's journal has an established track record of presenting high quality, objective writings of Pakistani and international scholars. It gives me immense satisfaction to see the IPRI Journal attaining a new landmark of publishing a special issue on a topic of contemporary relevance that has consumed the world's attention for much of 2022. The present issue contains six well-researched articles on the conflict in Ukraine, each of them penned by an internationally acclaimed scholar. The articles contain fresh analyses on several dimensions of the conflict and collectively cover perspectives of different regions and countries. The insights of Ukrainian and Russian authors, in particular, lend authenticity to the arguments adduced in support of the respective countries' stance on the issue.

The Russia-Ukraine war is a black swan event that has disrupted the normal flow of events globally, affecting virtually every country and society due to energy and commodity supply disruptions. We are witnessing bloc politics reminiscent of the Cold War; the dream of a Kantian world of peace and cooperation lies shattered in the face of a Hobbesian joust for power. The conflict has divided the world in rival camps with the United States and European Union and UK leading the Western Camp that is pitted against Russia. The conflict has rekindled global fears of major interstate military conflicts and forcible action to claim territory controlled by rival nations. The supply chain disruption caused by the war has fueled price hike in commodities that has adversely impacted developed as well developing nations, including Pakistan.

The second and third-order effects of the supply chain disruption have resonated globally. South Asia, a region that should ideally benefit from a new paradigm of geo-economics by burying the ghosts of geopolitical confrontation – a forward-leaning vision formally presented by Pakistan earlier this year through its first-ever National Security Policy – is again being lured back into the security-centric alliances evidenced by rise to prominence of partisan structures such as QUAD and AUKUS. Unfortunately, the attention of the international community has been squarely focused on a conflict that may ultimately have no winners, at a time when the perils of climate change and its manifestations like the recent deadly floods in Pakistan and other extreme weather events around

the world have sounded clear warnings of the real threat facing the human race, one which cannot be addressed without international cooperation.

Pakistan, on its part, has constantly advocated peace and a dialogue-based end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Pakistan formally espouses a vision of ‘peace within and peace without’ and advocates a benign version of geo-economics that seeks to make Pakistan the melting pot for positive global economic interests. We have promoted regional connectivity and development partnerships, and want resolution of all outstanding disputes in line with the United Nations Charter and International Law. We have nothing to gain from any war. In fact, as the world polarizes in rival camps, our vision gets challenged as our major regional projects aimed at economic gains for all get caught in the cross hairs of geopolitical competition between the global powers.

As a student of South Asian peace and conflict dynamics, I closely followed the last twenty years of the Afghan war. If there was one lesson I drew from it, it was that military conflicts leave behind astronomical human misery and cost. Who wins and who loses stops to matter at some point – such is the physical, economic, and psychological devastation from years of violence. The conflict in Ukraine is no different. Therefore, the sooner the war ends and a negotiated way forward is agreed upon, the better for the conflicting parties and the entire world that has suffered due to the conflict’s knock-on effects.

I am glad IPRI has taken this timely initiative to take an expansive view of the conflict and showcase the scholarly insights covering its multiple dimensions. I wish the IPRI editorial team and management the best of luck in similar future endeavours as well.

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