

IPRI President's Message

This special edition of IPRI Journal is likely to help answer a few questions. Was the Russia-Ukraine War a surprise? Was it an inducement to entangle Russia with default advantages like rejuvenation of NATO, thriving of military industrial complexes and deterring possible China-Russia increasing nexus? Did Russia underestimate Ukrainian, US and Western perseverance? More importantly has this war been intentionally kept limited in Ends, Means and Ways by Russia? Lastly will the war see a negotiated settlement -- if yes, at what state and conditions? More importantly, how has it impacted South Asia?

This war has further complicated the international milieu dominated by ensuing US-China competition. South Asia has been impacted directly as well as indirectly. Emerging bloc politics imposes difficult options of choosing between the US, Russia and China. The countries with better economies and relevance to US and Western interests in the region can exercise greater liberty, but those mired with politico-economic problems have to tread a tightrope walk.

South Asia houses about 25% of the world population with good human capital and economic potential. It is energy as well as food deficient, hence dependent upon their imports. It's here that Russia and Ukraine matter the most. Post-war sanctions, Russia has pivoted east to find markets. India is the largest buyer of Russian oil and gas in South Asia now.

Russia felt and does feel the pinch of politico-economic and financial sanctions. It is partly isolated, and is also facing internal pressure on general mobilization. War expense in times of economic sanctions hurts it more. Currently China and Asia are the only zones of some comfort for her.

Enhanced regional connectivity and trade in these difficult times can be a win-win proposition. Pakistan, termed as a zipper state and bridge for Eurasian connectivity, can play an important role. Pakistan is likely to refrain from camp politics, and pursue its politico-economic interests with balance in conduct of international relations.

-President IPRI