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The Future of the Russian-Ukrainian War and its Impact on European Security Strategy

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ABSTRACT

The Russian war against Ukraine is a deeply rooted conflict and security dilemma. Its complexity lies in the uncertainty of its outcome. The multiple possible scenarios will affect European security. This article analyses how these war scenarios will impact the future of European security. The problem lies in the view that the war's impact will be limited and incomplete, with no far-reaching consequences, and the widespread notion that a Russian defeat will lead to comprehensive European security. The key question is: what impact will the various trajectories of the Russian war against Ukraine have on European security? European security will be negatively affected regardless of whether Russia wins, loses, or maintains the status quo. Consequently, a Russian victory will jeopardize European security, deepen Euro-American divisions, and undermine efforts to achieve security independence. Conversely, if Ukraine manages to counter the Russian advance, the situation may stabilize temporarily. However, a Russian defeat in Ukraine would have serious ramifications. In context, Russia may resort to using nuclear weapons at the strategic level because it will not accept being viewed by the West as a defeated nation. Consequently, the absence of active vision could lead to the collapse of the EU's security architecture and security dilemma unless comprehensive negotiations take place.

KEYWORDS

Russian, Ukraine, War, Europe, Security.

Introduction

The Russian war against Ukraine has historical roots. Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, which had an aspiration for global power based on communist ideology and possessed political, economic, military, and cultural capabilities. It was founded on an ideology that sought to extend its influence on a global level.

In 2005, Vladimir Putin considered the collapse of the USSR as the greatest geostrategic disaster of the 21st century. Therefore, Ukraine is a vital pillar of the comprehensive Russian strategy in the near abroad and even toward the Western countries that are trying to undermine the future role of the Russian Federation, especially the USA and the active European powers, as a result of the real threat they feel. As a result, the ramifications are catastrophic; its prospects determine the future of European security (ES).

This article aims to clarify the trajectory of the Russian war against Ukraine, then outline the various war scenarios, and analyze the implications of each scenario, focusing on the opportunities and obstacles. It also aims to clarify the impact of each scenario on European security and assess the repercussions on the strategic security balance in Europe.

The article's problem is that it has an overwhelming misperception about the impact of the war on European security, which is limited and not comprehensive. Many thought that the effects would only pertain to military security and would not extend to other aspects, and a Russian defeat would automatically lead to enhanced European security. Most existing studies tend to focus solely on daily military operations and the support provided by various parties, aiming for favorable outcomes in the war. However, they often fail to conduct a thorough and reliable analysis that considers the situation at both the regional and international levels. This study aims to address this misconception. The central question is: What is the impact of the Russian military actions against Ukraine on European security? Therefore, the several sub-questions: What is the impact of the prospects of the Russian-Ukrainian war on European security? What are the causes? Is Ukraine considered a strategic or tactical target for Russia? Does the West have a unified position? Is Ukraine used as a tool by NATO to confront Russia? What are the scenarios of the Russian war against Ukraine? Finally, what is the ramification of each of these scenarios on European security?

Theoretical Background and Framework

Theorizing in strategic studies is the foundation upon which states adopt philosophies regarding how to deal with other states in the international system. In this context, realism is a tool and a general theoretical framework that has proven to be an effective paradigm in tackling international war. The realist school is the one that presented the security dilemma and its interpretations. Realism, in its various forms, has its own view of what security entails.

Therefore, "Wolfer's presents a different view of security. He contends that states vary widely in the value they place on security and that some states may be so dissatisfied with the status quo that they are more interested in acquiring new values than in securing the values they have. From this perspective, saying that one state has more security than another does not imply that one state is better than another anymore than saying that one state has more people or land area implies that one state is better than another. For Wolfer, international politics is not a 'game' in which all states play by the same 'rules' and compete for the same 'championship'". (David A. Baldwin, 1997, p. 11)

However, "Butterfield's writings contain six propositions about security dilemma: (1) its ultimate source is fear, which is derived from the "universal sin of humanity"; (2) it requires uncertainty over others' intentions; (3) it is unintentional in origin; (4) it produces tragic results; (5) it can be exacerbated by psychological factors; and (6) it is the fundamental cause of all human conflicts". (Shiping Tang, 2009. p.590).

In addition, Herz also spelled out six aspects of the security dilemma: (1) the ultimate source of the security dilemma is anarchy—the lack of "a higher unity"; (2) an immediate cause of the security dilemma is states' uncertainty and fears about each other's intentions to do harm under anarchy; (3) states' means of self-help—trying to escape from the security dilemma by accumulating more and more power—generates a cycle of power competition; (4) states' attempt to escape from the security dilemma by accumulating more and more power may not increase their security at all, becoming self-defeating and even tragic; (5) the security dilemma can cause war, but is not the cause of all wars; and (6) the dynamic of the security dilemma is a self-reinforcing vicious cycle". (Shiping Tang, 2009. p. 591).

Moreover, Jervis's various definitions and elaborations stressed that "the security dilemma can cause war, but is not the cause of all wars; and (7) the dynamic of the security dilemma is self-reinforcing and resembles a spiral". (Shiping Tang, 2009.p.592).

However, states seek survival and security, and as they cannot be certain of the intentions of others, military capabilities become the ultimate means of protection. But here, suspicion and fear are mutual, resulting in a cyclical pattern: one state increases its arms; the other, fearing that the arms build-up may rest on malign intentions, follows suit; the first reacts to this; the second reacts to the first's reaction, and so on. Both states are pure, defensively-minded security-seekers—but none can afford to trust that the other is of this type. (Jakobsen, J., & Halvorsen, T. 2018, p.156). Also, arming in response to the armament process of an opponent may fuel an arms race and confirm the threats for both sides, and thus escalate even if neither wants a war". (Amir Lupovici, 2021, p.265).

Therefore, the Security Dilemma is the notion that in a context of uncertainty and bounded rationality (1) perceived external threats (real or imagined) generate feelings of insecurity in those states that believe themselves to be the targets of such threats, thereby (2) leading those states to adopt measures to increase their power and capability to counteract those threats (alliance creation, arms buildups, and so on). In other words, the very attempts of individual states to strengthen their own security in an anarchic world lead other states to try to ratchet up their own power, thus making the first state to start this process feel even less secure, not more so, by its efforts. These countermeasures in turn are (3) perceived (or misperceived) as threatening by yet other states, leading to further counter-countermeasures and more? potentially undermining existing power balances and creating a vicious and even tragic circle of ever-increasing insecurity. (Philip G. Cerny, 2002. p.624).

Consequentially, security dilemma is a situation in which a state (A) takes a series of measures to enhance its security, which leads to the perception by another state (B) that this constitutes a threat to it, prompting it to respond to those measures taken by state (A), which makes state (A) feel that its security has declined. Security measures and counter-security action lead to a vicious cycle and an escalation that may lead to war.

Ukraine's Position as a security dilemma in the Russian Security Strategy

The historical context of Ukraine's position proves that Russian strategic thinking about it occupies a security dilemma in Russia's overall strategy in the 21st century. It was a vital pillar for the former USSR and played an essential role in its establishment, expansion, and at the regional and international levels. However, after the collapse of the USSR and Ukraine's independence from the RF, it began to adopt a stance opposite to Federal Russia's ambition. Hence, the discovery of Ukraine's position in Russian strategic approaches depends on many aspects and will answer the following. What is behind the Russian war against Ukraine? Is the Russian-Ukrainian war the practical application of the Russian, European and American strategic intellectual approaches? On this basis, does understanding the Russian-Ukrainian war require an exploration of the intellectual approaches of the Soviet Union and the transformation witnessed by Russian strategic thought at the beginning of the twenty-first century?

Ukraine and Russia share a history of uneasy coexistence, geopolitical confrontation, and historical and cultural rivalry. Demographically, both countries are based on ethnic Slavic populations, albeit with vastly different historical trajectories over a long period of time, and both were members of the Soviet Union, which was dissolved in 1991 (Ioannis E. Kotoulas and Wolfgang Puzstal, 2022, p. 7). Many reasons made Ukraine one of the main pillars in Russian strategy. Ukraine and its capital, Kyiv, were considered by the Russians to be the origin of Orthodox Christianity. The notion that Ukrainians and Russians (along with Belarusians) are "one nation". A large area of Ukraine has been an integral part of the Russian states, whether the Russian Empire or the USSR and played a huge role in the Soviet economy. Crimea was a strategically and militarily base. (Marek Menkiszak, 2016, p. 2). The Russian Federation had obtained the political and legal status of the Soviet Union. Thus becoming its official representative. It received promises of assistance from the West to regain its standing gradually. However, as time passed, those promises proved to be insincere from the Russian perspective.

However, a group of events, such as the expansion of NATO, the war in the former Yugoslavia, and the expansion of the European Union, led to the isolation of the Russian Federation from the United States. While there were initially many efforts to bring Russia into the Western group, the Russian Federation declared that it no longer had status and was treated more as a junior partner than a great power. (Douglas Davis and Michael O. Slobodchikoff, 2022, p. 216).

From a legal perspective, the Russian Federation began replacing the Soviet Union in international organizations and institutions. Fifteen republics gained their independence, whether these republics were the "Slavic republics represented by Ukraine and Belarus," or the "Baltic states represented by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova", or the "Caucasus states such as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan", or the "Central Asian states which include Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan". In Russian literature and official documents, these countries became known as the "near neighbourhood," which began to occupy a vital position. Russia has worked to reshape the internal, regional and international strategic environment. The Soviet mindset is affecting Russian official visions, but new frameworks are emerging in line with the norms of the 21st century.

The Soviet Union had a long history of striving for global hegemony. It possessed comprehensive political, economic, military, and cultural power, along with a strong will to impose its dominance. However, a combination of internal debilitating factors led to the collapse. The economic aspect is one of the vulnerabilities resulting from the Soviet Union's inability to keep pace with the changes of the global economy. The collapse deeply affected those who had embraced Soviet ideology, who perceived it as a historic and moral defeat in their struggle against the perceived enemy. In fact, many Soviet historical figures were considered insulting. The shift in Russian strategic thinking stemmed from the Russian Federation's understanding of its strategic environment, as well as its position following the withdrawal of several republics that had previously formed its core. Communist ideology was no longer the cornerstone; pragmatism became the dominant factor in Russian foreign policy.

In conclusion, a new crystallization process of Russian strategic thinking began as a result of the inevitable decline at the global level. The realistic analysis of the international strategic environment came as a result of the West's withdrawal of support for the Russian Federation during the last decade of the twentieth century. From the Russian perspective, a return to the "near abroad" is necessary, whether directly or indirectly. Working to confront the new international environment, the hegemony of the United States of America, and to reshape the "new international order." According to the vision mentioned above, new Russian visions were formed, including a focus on the region and neighboring countries, as one of the inputs for restoring the Russian role and adopting a pragmatic approach in dealing with international interactions.

Russia as an Emerging Power in the Twenty-First Century

Analysis and diagnosis of the comprehensive strategic environment is one of the approaches undertaken by the Russian Federation at the beginning of the twenty-first century under the rule of "Vladimir Putin". Initially, after Putin came to power, the Russian Federation sought to undermine the influence of the mafia, whose wealth had increased as a result of state privatization and the sale of state assets following the transition from socialism to capitalism.

Putin had taken concrete measures to restore the prestige of the Russian state. It includes restructuring the civilian and military steps and technological innovation. As for the energy sector, it has become a vital element in Russian energy policies as a result of Russia's realization that it is a source of Russian national income and a tool to support its position as an international player. Given the Russian Federation's long history in arms manufacturing and export, it has worked to reorganize Russian military factories to expand arms trade with countries with which it has close ties.

As a result of historical experience during the Soviet era, the Russian Federation knows that the only way to reactivate its role at the international level is through controlling the countries of the near abroad that were mentioned in official strategic documents, whether through the Slavic republics, the Baltic

states, the Caucasus countries, or the countries of Asia. Russia is working on reconstituting its relations and regional allies to contain American influence, confront the expansion of NATO and quickly resolve military wars if a war had started. Comprehensive exploration of the Russian Federation After the collapse of the bipolar system and the formation of the “new international order” represented by the dominance of the USA over the new order, Russian Federation realized that the dire challenge it faced was American dominance of international interactions, the greatest threat to Russian national security in the twenty-first century, and represents a real threat to its return as a power. Effective and restoring its historical glories in countries that have fallen out of its control.

The behaviors that led to the reactivation of the Russian role are American mistakes in the world, perhaps foremost among which is the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, the decline of its reputation internationally, its failure to provide support to Georgia during the 2008 Georgian war, and spreading the impression among most countries that gained independence from the Soviet Union that there are limits to support. The American occupation of Iraq, the American occupation of Afghanistan and then the withdrawal of the above contributed to reactivating the Russian role internationally.

Signs of Russia’s Resurgence as an Emerging Power

Many studies in universities and international research centers have described the Russian Federation as one of the rising powers as a result of the shift in the Russian strategic mind, its possession of the elements of strength compared to other active powers in the international system, and the American weakness that resulted from the excessive effort of the USA due to American occupation for Iraq and Afghanistan. All contributed to pushing the Russian Federation to work to demonstrate its strength and the process of its rise as a great power in the international community.

Accordingly, and based on a set of foundations established in Russian strategic documents, the Russian Federation began to employ a set of behaviors and positions. The first approach was in the Russian-Georgian war (2008), through which Russia was able to support the process of independence of Ossetia and Abkhazia, While the other approach was through the “annexation of Crimea in 2014”, Russia working on returning to most of the strategic regions that it lost due to the collapse of USSR, the most important of which was Crimea, as a result of its military and strategic importance to the Russian Federation under the leadership of Putin. To legitimize its behavior, it worked to hold a popular referendum that enabled it to annex Crimea, although it was not officially recognized internationally.

Throughout the movements of political change in the Arab world after 2011 and the prior awareness and fear of a changing state of influence in the region, a third approach of the Russian Federation crystallized, represented by providing political and military support to the Syrian political regime. In contrast to the decline witnessed in Russian policy during the American occupation of Iraq, it supported Syria during the crisis by all means, material and moral, which demonstrated the ability of the Russian Federation to continue supporting what it wanted Syria to be. In 2022, the fourth approach, represented by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, crystallized. The “RUW” was the broader practical implementation of the Russian strategy in the twenty-first century, which will shape Russian-Western relations, the future of ES, and the comprehensive security strategy.

Therefore, this is very much reflecting the famous claim of Brzezinski in *The Grand Chessboard: Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. Russia without Ukraine can still strive for imperial status, but it would then become a predominantly Asian imperial state. Keeping control of Ukraine was understood as crucial for Russia’s future as a great power. While this may sound like a full-blooded geopolitical argument, it is particular for Russia that this is entangled with the complex relation the country has with its national identity.* (Casier, Tom, 2022, p. 75).

However, according to the Russian perspective, the most important pillars that motivated Russia to declare war on Ukraine were its efforts, supported by its Western partners, to join NATO, and its official declaration that it would become a nuclear state. Also, Russia categorically rejects, as it represents a security dilemma to Russia. The issue of energy and its export through Ukraine is also an inherited issue of economic security.

The European Perspective for the Future of Ukraine and its Position in the ESS

Ukraine is no longer one of the security dilemmas of Russian national security, but a vital part of the Western security strategy for the global strategic balance. Therefore, dominating Ukraine or keeping it under Western influence will enable the West to build a security barrier that will distance the Russian Federation from the eastern wing of NATO and create a guaranteed barrier against Russian incursion attempts into Europe.

So to speak, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marks a watershed. First, it signifies the return in Europe of large-scale interstate war, aimed at territorial expansion. Second, it indicates a radical shift in Russia's strategy, from destabilizing Ukraine through relatively limited means to massive military coercion. Third, it seals the end of the post-Cold War security order, whose deep crisis made it ineffective in preventing the conflict. Fourth, the war reinforced the transatlantic front, thus aggravating Russia's security concerns. (Casier, Tom, 2022, p. 71).

As a result of the changes in Eastern Europe, the security implications of the collapse of the USSR, and the European desire to reshape Ukraine, Ukraine has occupied a security dilemma in ESS. The Europeans realize that Ukraine is one of the main pillars in confronting Russia as a rising power. The Russian rise also coincides with Russian enlargement in "Eastern Europe", which is considered a security dilemma to Europe. Hence, they are working to link Ukraine with a set of measures that contribute to strengthening Ukrainian-European interdependence in a way that exceeds European-Ukrainian interdependence, and they know that the biggest obstacle is Putin's Russia.

Moreover, regarding the basic plans of the EU's global strategy, the interests of the European Union have been defined as follows: The first is concern for the people and territories of the European Union, and then concern for peace and stability in the surrounding regions. Second, the European Union has an interest in its prosperity, and hence, sustainable development in an open global economic system is important. Third, protecting the values that underpin our democratic system, which must be linked to those democratic values. Fourth, preserving the global rules-based order. (Isabel Ferreira Nunes, 2016, p.8-10).

Above all, the European Union's plan to open up the Ukrainian economy has come into conflict with Putin's efforts to create a deeper economic union in the post-Soviet region. (Peter Rutland, 2017, p129). Finally, the European Union must be more ambitious and coordinate in increasing defense spending. Lastly, the war highlights how significant equipment shortages can pose a problem for Western forces in a conflict. (Ian Bond and Luigi Scazzieri, 2022).

The USA and EU: Ukraine the Tool, Ukraine the Barrier

In the shadow of Cold War repercussions, US policy toward Ukraine was mostly tied to US policy toward Russia after the 1994 Budapest Memorandum that led to the denuclearization of Ukraine. In its transition to democracy and a market economy, Ukraine suffered from the same ills as neighboring Russia: the rise of a wealthy oligarchic class that crystallized competition, while colluding with a deeply corrupt political elite. With the pro-Russian Yanukovich winning a fairly free election in 2010, the US strategy appeared to have reached a dead end. Washington has effectively integrated Western policy toward Ukraine with its partners in Belgium. (Peter Rutland, 2016, p. 126).

In recent survey, most Americans (57%) say the post-Cold War era is over, most of them blame Russian, and small one blame USA; 92% say Russian behavior contributed to the demise of the post-Cold War era; 64% say "a lot" and 28% say "somewhat"; while 73% say American behavior contributed; 30% say "a lot" while 43% say "To some extent". While Americans say NATO expansion played a role in Russian behavior, most do not believe this was key to Russia's invasion of Ukraine". 38% say NATO expansion played a major role in the Russian invasion of Ukraine; 41% say NATO expansion played "a small role but not a major role;" while 21% say it played no role". (Shibley Telhami, 2022).

In summary, there is a division among Europeans regarding security dilemma in Western security. It reflects the importance of the United States' role in European security. The United States considers Europe

an integral part of its cultural identity and a tool of its global strategy. In contrast, there are different views within the European continent regarding the nature of the American role in ensuring European security. The underlying problem lies in the independence of the European vision, particularly from leading countries such as France and Germany, which differs fundamentally from the vision of the United States. Ukraine is a key security dilemma of the European security strategy, as it is the first barrier preventing Russian freedom of movement.

In light of the shift in “Russian strategic thought” and the establishment of a set of foundations, proven in Russian strategic documents, the Russian Federation began to implement it through a set of facts: The first approach, the Russian-Georgian war (2008), through which Russia was able to support the independence of Ossetia and Abkhazia. The second one, annexing Crimea: as a result of its military and strategic importance to the Russian Federation under the leadership of Putin, Russia worked, during its gradual impact program, to return to most of the strategic regions that it lost due to the disintegration of the USSR, perhaps the most important of them is Crimea, which Russia was able to control in 2014, and then a referendum was held and officially annexed. The third is a political and military support for the Syrian political system.

In addition, the Russian war against Ukraine led to an unexpected Western reaction. The essential pillar is that the Russian Federation did not expect the Western reaction to its behavior in Ukraine, especially in preventing Russian aircraft companies from flying in European airspace and confiscating the belongings of active Russian figures. The vital point is excluding Russian banks from the global banking system.

Arguably, the areas in which key international powers compete for control and influence are being changed by the conflict in Ukraine. When Russian forces invaded Ukraine, they controlled less territory than they had expected. The military abandoned the aim and began working towards the east. In addition, Russia has withdrawn its forces, whether professional, private or mercenaries, from the MENA region, where they have been deployed in Ukraine. (G. Douglas Davis and Michael O. Slobodchikoff, 2022, p. 118). Meantime, the Russian Federation realized it was hard to achieve its vital objectives over the short haul. Therefore, focus on the following stepwise: First, Russia would still have de facto control over this vital part, and it would only reintegrate with the rest of the country. Second, the Russian Federation seeks to exploit the social and economic situation of the crisis in Ukraine to increase internal instability. Third, the RF is working on exploiting and benefiting from the mutual disillusionment between the West and Ukraine. (Marek Menkiszak, 2016, p. 11-12).

Also, it is clear that Russian leaders greatly underestimated the moral and material resistance of Ukraine and its army. The presence of captured Russian conscripts and soldiers who claim that they did not know that they would invade Ukraine until the last minute is a form of confusion. (Dimitri Minic, 2022, p. 11).

The Multiple Scenarios of the Russian Ukraine War and its Impact on European Security

The Russian war against Ukraine is one of the largest conflicts to erupt on European borders in the 21st century. The outcome of this war will have varying impacts on European security, influenced by the course of the conflict and the scenarios that unfold in the future. The lack of a quick end to the war between the two parties led to a reconsideration of many of the assumptions that preceded the war. Likewise, the strength of a state is not only based on its capabilities or claims of achieving goals that others cannot, but rather on its historical experience in dealing with the situation when war breaks out. The ambiguity of the ongoing war and the overlapping of its aspects have led to the emergence of multiple scenarios with diverse effects.

The scope of conditions for the possible future models of the European security architecture is generated by combinations of the drivers with critical uncertainties. The latter are, above all, the military dynamic of the conflict, regime stability in Russia, Russia's economic outlook in the short-term period (microlevel), and the positions of the U.S., China and European powers as external great powers in the near future. (Ditrych, Ondřej, and Martin Laryš. 2024.p.9).

War scenarios could take place according to the following paths:

The First Scenario: A comprehensive Russian Victory in Ukraine

This scenario posits that, due to a complex interplay of internal dynamics, regional developments, and international influences, the Russian Federation will succeed in asserting comprehensive control over Ukrainian territory. This outcome will occur despite resilient Ukrainian resistance and unwavering support from Western allies.

This scene depends on a set of opportunities that support its achievement. The Russian Federation, under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, will be able to fully control Ukraine and establish a political system loyal to it. As a result of a set of material and moral factors, the Russian people's increased support for Putin as a result of the growing Western support for Ukraine, as well as the support of other countries opposed to US policies as China, North Korea and Iran, the decline of Western alliances with some active Asian powers, and European divisions over the position on Ukraine as a result of the Europeans perception that continued support for Ukraine will contribute to the continuation of the war would not deter Russia from achieving its goals. Therefore, since many opportunities may make this scenario happen, these opportunities are represented by pillars that work to increase the rate of achievement.

Furthermore, Ukraine, according to Russian strategic thinking, is of inevitable interest according to Russian terms and will not be subjected to western norms. "It is a matter of life and death, a matter of our historical future as a nation," he told the Russian people in his televised speech on February 24. A Ukraine that severs its links with Russia "is not only a very real threat to our interests but to the very existence of our state and to its sovereignty". In the eyes of Putin, the war against Ukraine is a war for survival. (André W. M. Gerrits, 2023, p.12). Initially, Russia is the world's second-largest arms exporter, behind the United States. Russia exports arms to over 45 countries and has accounted for around 20% of global arms sales since 2016 during the same period, 55% of Russian arms exports were to Asia, 21% to the Middle East, and 18% to Africa. (Andrew S. Bowen, 2021, p.8). Although Russia has Europe's largest conventional military, which it is more than ready to use. The EU's defense policy—in contrast to NATO's—is far from being able to provide security for its members. Thus, military reassurance, especially for the EU's eastern members, will be key. Responding to a revanchist Russia with sanctions and with the rhetorical proclamation of a rules-based international order will not be sufficient. (Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage, 2022).

As for the countries opposed to American policy (China, Iran, and North Korea), they found in the Russian war against Ukraine an opportunity to express their rejection of this hegemony. Also, "supporters of the Russian Federation in the war against Ukraine include nations opposed to American hegemony, such as China, North Korea, and Iran. For example, China's calculations and balance after the meeting of President Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin at the Beijing Winter Olympics, a joint statement was published on February 4, 2022, stating that Sino-Russian friendship "has no limits". After Russian crossed into Ukrainian territory on February 24, many took the previous statement as evidence that Xi had prior knowledge and even supported the invasion of Ukraine. (Hilary Appel and Boyang Liu, 2022). Also, After weeks of speculation, NATO and the Pentagon have confirmed that about 10,000 North Korean troops are in Russia, with most massing near Ukraine's border in Kursk, where the Kremlin's forces have struggled to repel a Ukrainian incursion".(Justin McCurry, 2024). The Russian war in Ukraine represents an opportunity for North Korea to get rid of the blockade imposed on it by the West, expand trade exchange between the two countries, and increase the benefits resulting from arms exchange.

In addition, despite China refraining from overtly providing Russia with weapons, it has worked to ensure Moscow's ability to continue its war. Importantly, China has stepped in to prop up the Russian economy and defense industry, ensuring that Russia can withstand Western sanctions and supply its military. Russia now imports most of its battlefield goods and critical components from China; according to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, China now supplies Russia with about 90 per cent of its

microelectronics imports and 70 per cent of machine tool imports. (Jeffrey W. Hornung, 2024). Russia, however, is not an internationally isolated pariah state. Most African, Latin American, Asian and Middle Eastern countries did not follow the West's sanctions against Russia and support for Ukraine. (Schirm, Stefan A. 2023, p. 57).

Although China did not explicitly express its support for the Russian war in Ukraine, it gradually began to monitor Russian trends, and the goal is for the Russian Federation to support its perspectives in Taiwan. China also realizes that the declared support for the Russian Federation will be costly to it in the face of the United States of America, as they have significant economic relations, and could lead to the imposition of sanctions on China, which will cause a recession in the Chinese economy. Also, Iran is trying to use the war as an opportunity to meet its international isolation imposed by Western powers. It began to assist the Russian Federation, especially by supplying it with aircraft and conventional weapons. Iran worked to increase its economic interactions with the Russian Federation after the war, aiming to benefit from Russian technology, get rid of Western sanctions and benefit from the Russian Federation in the issue of supporting the Iranian nuclear file, as well as giving it a free hand in the Middle East where Russia is present.

Furthermore, the three most critical challenges for Ukraine have been evident for months, which represent opportunities for Russia: a lack of ammunition, a shortage of well-trained troops and dwindling air defenses. (Marc Santora, 2024). Also, there are many European differences with Ukraine. Moreover, the failure, along with some Europeans' unwillingness to meet NATO's 2 per cent GDP defense spending target, has kept strategic autonomy as a significant point of disagreement within transatlantic and intra-European relations. US opposition and member states' skepticism have hindered the EU's defense initiatives. (Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri, 2020, p. 6). For example, Germany has hesitated to explicitly support Ukraine in retaking all of its territory, including those occupied since 2014. Instead, Germany is balancing a fear of escalation with the importance of the principle of territorial integrity. This fluctuation, torn between commitment and hesitation, has shaped Germany's perspective on the war in Ukraine. (Caroline L. Kapp and Liana Fix, 2024, p. 323). The war proved that the West does not have the capacity to increase the production of military equipment rapidly. Finally, many European countries realized that they cannot depend on the USA forever". (Ian Bond and Luigi Scazzieri, 2022, p. 1- 2).

This approach is compounded by Russia's sense of great power status and its perception of being in a conflict with the West and NATO in particular, and is reinforced by its wider foreign policy aspirations. Military technology innovation enables Russia's way of war and feeds new concepts of operation and military thought around future warfare. Despite systemic impediments to innovation, the Russian military-industrial complex ('OPK') remains a formidable machine able to structure a fully-fledged military-industrial base in entire segments, and to adapt them to the operational needs of the armed forces. (Samuel Bendett and others, 2021, p. 75).

Consequently, Russian forces proved more flexible and effective in the conduct of defensive operations in 2023 through a combination of maneuver and positional defense to halt Ukraine's offensive. Russian units expanded significantly, integrated new types of formations, and mounted a doctrinally modified defense with the successful use of support elements. Despite this, the Russian military remained committed to the concept of an active defense, defending forward and counterattacking in a manner that proved costly to the force. Ukraine's offensive failed". (Michael Kofman, 2024, p. 1).

And, despite many negative forecasts made in 2022 and early 2023 regarding sanctions crippling Russia's ability to produce weapons, the country has entered the third year of a large-scale war with increasing production output and a growing army. It is possible that the ammunition sector is not an isolated example of industrial growth, but can serve as an indicator of the wider capabilities of Russia's entire military-industrial complex. (Alex Orlov, 2024, p. 96).

Russian energy represents a key opportunity for Russia against Europe, granting it unique power applicable in both peace and war. Therefore, "In Ukraine, Belarus, Austria, Hungary, Germany, and even Italy, excessive dependence on Russian oil, gas, and in some cases, nuclear energy has been the foundation and financial basis upon which Russian influence stands in these states. Therefore, much of that influence manifests itself in energy dependence upon Russia or subsequent Russian penetration of the countries'

political processes and elites. Indeed, “employing energy is a hybrid form of political, societal, or economic coercion to meet political ends that can expose vulnerabilities of energy. Thus, Russia can employ its energy as a weapon to break these countries’ resistance to Russian encroachments in the economy, media, politics, or even defense. Austria, for example, remains 98 per cent dependent upon Russian gas. (Stephen Blank, 2024, p.11).

Moreover, the humanitarian cost to Ukraine will be used by Russia as a bargaining chip to dissuade Ukraine. For example, from 24 February 2022 to 12 February 2023, the OHCHR recorded 18,955 civilian casualties in the country.⁷ This included a total of 7,199 killed (2,888 men, 1,941 women, 226 boys and 180 girls, as well as 32 children and 1,932 adults whose sex is not yet known); a total of 11,756 injured (2,616 men, 1,856 women, 341 boys and 253 girls, as well as 260 children and 6,430 adults whose sex is not yet known)”. (Yuliya Yurchenko, 2023, p. 81). Consequently, the Russian victory in the war would lead to a re-architecting of European security due to various repercussions.

The Second Scenario: The Russian Defeat in Ukraine

The scenario is based on the premise that the Russian Federation, having miscalculated and failed to predict the Western response to its invasion of Ukraine, as a result of misunderstanding that European

countries will adopt a stance similar to what occurred in Georgia and Crimea, as a result, the Russian Federation is likely to face defeat due to a combination of internal and external factors that represents a challenges for Russia and opportunities for Ukraine. Therefore, many opportunities may make this scenario happen.

However, the conflict is becoming increasingly problematic for Putin in terms of both domestic and foreign policy. Domestically, the progress of the war is beginning to undermine his reputation as a leader. There are now about a dozen cases of business leaders who have lost their lives in mysterious circumstances. Development on the economic aspect presents even more of a challenge for the regime. Imports have, however, collapsed, and hundreds of international companies have left Russia. This has particularly affected industrial sectors that have modernized in recent years, such as the oil industry and agriculture. Uwe Optenhögel, 2023, p159-160).

And, most consequentially, Putin could lose the support of the Russian people and elites, on whom he depends to prosecute the war and maintain his hold on power. Meanwhile, the sanctions that the United States and European countries have imposed on Russia will result in the separation of Russia from the global economy. Outside investment will fall away. Capital will be much harder to acquire. Technology transfers will dry up. Markets will close to Russia, possibly including the markets for its gas and oil, the sale of which has been crucial to Putin’s modernization of the Russian economy. Business and entrepreneurial talent will flow out of Russia. The long-term effect of these transitions is predictable. A key variable in the fallout of this war is the Russian public. Putin’s foreign policy has been popular in the past. More probable, though, is that the horror of this war will backfire on Putin. Information about what is happening in Ukraine will pour into Russia through social media and other channels, disproving the propaganda and discrediting the propagandists. This is an ethical dilemma that Putin cannot resolve alone. (Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage, 2022).

In addition, despite advantages of a larger recruitment base and defense industrial capacity, the Russian military has been unable to decisively defeat the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) since Russia’s February 2022 war on Ukraine. The Russian military has suffered significant losses in personnel and equipment. Its performance arguably has been hindered by a rigid command and control structure, a weakened corps of trained and professional units, and a reliance on tactics with high casualty rates”. (Andrew S. Bowen, 2025).

In contrast, as a result of the European awareness that the Russian war against Ukraine represents a common and security dilemma to European security, the EU and its Member States have mobilized €47.3 billion in military support for Ukraine, including €6.1 billion under the European Peace Facility. The EU

Military Assistance Mission for Ukraine. is tackling the training needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and has trained more than 65,000 Ukrainian soldiers. Furthermore, about €210 billion in assets of the Russian Central Bank are immobilized in the EU. The EU took a decision to use the proceeds from immobilized Russian assets for Ukraine. Depending on interest rates, revenues generated from these immobilized assets are likely to yield around €2.5-3 billion a year for the benefit of Ukraine. On 26 July 2024, the EU made available to Ukraine the first payment of €1.5 billion generated from immobilized Russian assets, channeled through the European Peace Facility and to the Ukraine Facility, respectively, to support Ukraine's military capabilities and reconstruction. More than €28 billion of private assets of listed persons and entities have been frozen so far. (EU Solidarity with Ukraine, 2024, P1). Also, the number of US forces in Europe has increased by about 20,000 since the Russian invasion to more than 100,000 and is growing further. (Ian Bond and Luigi Scazzieri. 2022, p.8).

Undoubtedly, the only superpower in the world, the United States, considers defeating Russia a central goal in the twenty-first century. Therefore, allowing Russia to win its war in Ukraine would be a self-imposed strategic defeat for the United States. The United States would face the risk of a larger and costlier war in Europe. The United States would face the worst threat from Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a victorious Russia would likely emerge reconstituted and more determined to undermine the United States and confident that it can. A Russian victory would diminish America's deterrence around the world, emboldening others with an explicit or latent intent to harm the United States. Most dangerous of all, however, US adversaries would learn that they can break America's will to act in support of their strategic interests. (Nataliya Bugayova, 2023). A complete defeat of its forces on the ground contains the risk of a Russian escalation in its war against Ukraine's infrastructure or of other military means, including the use of sub-strategic nuclear weapons. (Hans-Joachim Schmidt, 2023). At the end, leading Russia to inevitable defeat will also lead it to commit suicide and use nuclear weapons.

The Third Scenario: Maintaining the status quo in the Russian-Ukrainian war

This scenario depends on ongoing uncertainty and the inability of either party to gain a decisive advantage over the other. The stalemate arises from the internal strengths of both sides and the external support they receive. Russia benefits from its military capabilities, external support and ability to respond to Western sanctions. Additionally, Russia is mobilizing its home front and receiving support from allies such as China, Iran, and North Korea, who all reject American hegemony.

In contrast, the Ukrainian state has demonstrated remarkable resilience, thanks to the support of European countries and the United States in the political, economic, military, and humanitarian spheres. Western support has been instrumental in Ukraine's internal stability. Consequently, the conflict is likely to persist, characterized by periods of advances and setbacks, resulting in ongoing casualties on all sides, without a decisive victory. Without a clear solution, the assessment of the Russian-Ukrainian war is expected to remain unchanged.

The RUW led to a set of facts. At the beginning, there is no comprehensive victory for one party over the other. Therefore, the war on Ukraine put a new political and military reality in Europe. Accordingly, the Russian Federation realized it could not achieve a comprehensive victory within a short period in an area that Europe considers a vital interest. Moreover, the Russian Federation did not expect a European and Western reaction if it invaded one of the former Soviet republics.

Consequently, many elements are pushing the scenario to happen. It means frozen conflict, an armistice that would stabilize the front line and allow both sides to regroup and rebuild their depleted forces in preparation for further fighting. There would be no agreement on Ukraine's future military status or the size of its armed forces. Ukraine would remain formally committed to the goal of full restoration of its 1991 borders. (Lough, J. 2024,).

Any nation's ability to generate and sustain military forces depends on many factors, but some of the most important ones are security priorities, societal support, economic performance, defense spending, demographics, and the quantity and quality of military personnel and the interactions between them. Over the past decade, the key factors in shaping Russia's ability to generate and sustain its military forces

have significantly changed, but these factors show signs of remaining stable over the medium term. (Andrew Radin, 2019).

In Contrast, new research conducted in Ukraine and 14 other European countries reveals that Ukraine's determination to fight and European support for arming Ukraine have not been affected by Russian advances on the battlefield. But lurking beneath the appearance of unity is a major divide between Ukraine and Europe on how this war should end and what the allied support is destined to achieve. While Ukrainians want more weapons and ammunition to help them win the war, most Europeans want to give Ukraine weapons and ammunition in order to put Kyiv in a better negotiating position to end the war. And, while Ukrainians think they should be given membership of the EU and NATO to mark their victory, most Europeans see this as part of a settlement. (Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, 2024).

There is a group of international interconnections that add an element of surprise to the course of the war due to their ambiguity. Therefore, China is the largest trading partner of both Russia and Ukraine. The direct impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on China is relatively limited. Bilateral trade with Ukraine represents only 0.2% of China's total foreign trade, compared to about 2.3% with Russia. China highly depends on them for some strategic items in energy, agriculture and mining products. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the Chinese were seeking alternatives that relied heavily on oil and gas imports for energy. In addition, praises Ukraine becoming a member of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2017. (Yang Jiang, 2022). Actually, it is at least possible that, given the many domestic difficulties they face, Chinese leaders may try to avoid open confrontation with the West. The leadership may also draw lessons from the Ukraine war vis-à-vis Taiwan. (Charles Grant, 2023, p. 7). Also, Ukraine's victory could lead to a tame and tamed Russia. A calm Russia will allow the West to more easily deal with China. (Andrey Kortunov, 2022).

Moreover, RF understood that it had to break its isolation in dealing with the eastern countries, especially China, North Korea, and South Korea. Also, it is necessary to seek alternative energy importers other than the European Union countries to which most of their oil exports went. Consequently, the search for new partners must be one of the tactics of the Russian foreign policy leader aiming to diversify Russia's options. The war in Ukraine proved that Russia is capable of mitigating the severity of the sanctions imposed on it by Western countries. Also, working to invent new tools and mechanisms to confront Western sanctions on Russia, opening new paths to export Russian crude oil to other countries, and the Russian Federation cooperating with countries opposed to American hegemony in the world, Iran and North Korea, which leads to reducing European security options.

Finally, consequently, while the outcome of the fighting remains uncertain, if Ukraine wins, Russia will have bad repercussions, and the West's treatment will determine whether the outcomes of the war serve as a launching pad for global progress toward multilateralism. At worst, the Western countries will have a "Pyrrhic victory" that results in rooting out authoritarian and global divisions. (Kemal Derviş, 2022). The Ukrainian-Russian war is crystallizing through a group of variables that affect the strategic and security balance in Europe, perhaps the most important of which is the cohesion of the internal front in the Russian Federation, China's support for the Russian Federation to change the international order, the cohesion of the political system in Kyiv, and the ability of the Ukrainian army to enduring losses and steadfastness on the fronts, continuity of European support for Ukraine, American support for Ukraine. The data has created a set of facts, the most important of which are the ambiguity, the multiple scenarios, and the catastrophic impact on European security.

European Security in the Context of the Russian-Ukrainian War Trajectories

The Russian war against Ukraine has had both direct and indirect impacts on European security. Regardless of the war's outcome—be it a comprehensive victory for the Russian Federation, a defeat leading to backward, or a continuation of the conflict with shifting frontlines—the long-term effects on European security will be significant in each scenario that we have assumed. A Russian victory would undermine European security, while the defeat of the Russian Federation would result in a partial decline in security and the emergence of unconventional challenges following the war.

That is the reason, why predicting the outcome of war is a challenge. However, the focus has been on some implications for (Russia and Ukraine, Europe). While the war was fateful for Ukraine and Ukrainians, it also proved to be difficult for Russia in every aspect. The war severely disrupted the Russian military's reputation and profoundly changed the geopolitical arena in which the RF is facing in Europe. (Steven Pifer. 2022).

First of all, the war in Ukraine long-term effects, re-shaping not only the security architecture in Europe but also affecting the international chessboard. Contained on multiple fronts by Western countries, Russia has gradually become a prisoner of its own geographical and ideological borders, and its geostrategic position worsens, particularly by pushing Finland and Sweden to join NATO. The RUW demonstrated that the risk of a major war in Europe remains. Ukraine cannot maintain a successful defense without significant support from NATO countries. (Ioannis E. Kotolas and Wolfgang Pusztai. 2022).

European security is in tatters, and the European Union is (again) struggling to find its role. It might sum up the situation after Russia's invasion of Ukraine brought the reality of a major interstate war back to Europe. The first impression was clear: a major blow to the hope that the EU might achieve "strategic autonomy" - or strategic sovereignty, as some call it - and align its status as an economic superpower with more robust capabilities in the realm of security and defense. (Christos Katsioulis, 2023).

If Russia achieves its political aims in Ukraine by military means, Europe will not be what it was before the war. Not only will U.S. primacy in Europe have been qualified, but any sense that the European Union or NATO can ensure peace on the continent will be a relic of a bygone age. Instead, security in Europe will have to be reduced to defending the core members of the EU and NATO. Everyone outside the clubs will stand alone, except Finland and Sweden. It may not necessarily be a conscious decision to end enlargement or association policies, but it will be a de facto policy. Under a perceived siege by Russia, the EU and NATO will no longer have the capacity for ambitious policies beyond their own borders. (Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage, 2022).

The impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on European security is undoubtedly multifaceted. It includes security, economic, political, and humanitarian aspects. It will pressure European Union decision-makers and citizens.

Firstly, if the Russian Federation achieves control over Ukraine, it would pose significant security concerns for the European Union, as it would place Russia right at its borders. It could enable Ukraine to act as a buffer for Russian national security that would represent an existential threat to EU countries, potentially leading NATO into a confrontation with Russia. It means that the Russian Federation will be on the direct borders of European security, which makes Europe face a serious challenge that will increase with any differentiation between Russia and Europe. Because Europe went through the experience of the First and Second World Wars and the Cold War, the political systems realized that the decision to go to war with Russia would be very costly. Indeed, the real battlefield will be on European soil and the destruction this will cause to the foundations of non-traditional European security.

Politically, Russia is working to exert its influence in many EU countries, especially those geographically closest to it, which could lead not only to the election of parties aligned with Russian interests but also to deepening divisions within the EU, and perhaps even threatening its unity. European security is vulnerable to weakness in the face of Russian attacks. There is also a European division over ways to confront the Russian Federation. Narrow European interests continue to dominate national policies, despite a European consensus on the need to limit Russian influence in Europe. EU member states are beginning to realize the direct impact of the Russian war in Ukraine on the European Union. Economically, this scenario would grant Russia comprehensive control over European energy security.

Its impact is evident in its effect on European energy security and rising prices. Energy is one of the key factors that will determine how the West interacts with Russia and the war in Ukraine, particularly regarding energy transport routes in the Baltic Sea. In the energy sector, Russia has enjoyed a unique position in the EU gas and oil market over several decades - 34% of the EU's energy consumption, 42% of the EU's gas imports and 23% of its gas consumption, and 29% of its oil imports in 2020 were covered by Russia (Eurostat 2023). (Ondřej Ditrych & Martin Laryš 2024).

The ramifications could be severe, including increased prices for goods and services across Europe and

a decline in public confidence in the EU's effectiveness. From a humanitarian perspective, Ukraine could experience a substantial wave of displacement, resulting in more refugees than EU countries can effectively absorb. This influx would strain services in these countries and further drive up prices. Therefore, Human development impacts of the war continue to be deep and wide-ranging. Between February 2022 and July 2023, almost 10,000 civilian deaths and 18,500 injuries were reported. At the start of the war, 13.5 million people (approximately one-third of Ukraine's population) were forcibly displaced. As of December 2023, an estimated 5.9 million people remain recorded as refugees across Europe and 3.7 million as IDPs, as of October 2023. (Anne Himmelfarb, 2024).

Secondly, if the Russian Federation were to lose in Ukraine, that would have significant repercussions for European security. From a security standpoint, such a defeat could lead Russia to utilize its most lethal weapons, including nuclear weapons, which pose a direct threat to Europe due to its geographical proximity. Additionally, there is a risk that non-state military actors could rise, making Ukraine a battleground for proxy wars and terrorist operations. A defeat might also destabilize the Russian political system, creating internal challenges for the government and limiting its ability to eliminate threats near European borders, in addition to the emergence of non-state radical military actors.

European and NATO security in times of war against Ukraine can be determined that the war against Ukraine is a turning point for ES, proving that Russia will pose a threat to Europe's security. and revitalized NATO to deter Russia, also pushing Europe to strengthen cooperation in developing military capabilities. (Ian Bond and Luigi Scazzieri, 2022). The war is pushing Europeans to take security and defense more seriously. The war has led to more defense spending across Europe, from Germany's defence *Zeitenwende* of €100 billion additional spending on defense, to the more diffuse uptick in defense expenditures across mostly northern and eastern European states. EU member states' defense spending is expected to grow by €70 billion over the next three years, making NATO's 2% of GDP in defense spending finally within reach. EU institutions, which traditionally considered defense a dirty word, have now mobilized a European Peace Facility to support Ukrainian defense. They have also approved a military training mission for the Ukrainian armed forces. Collectively, the EU and its members have provided €12 billion in military assistance to Ukraine as of March 2023 (and a total of €67 billion if economic assistance is included). The EU has also developed a mechanism for the procurement of ammunition for Ukraine, committing a first €2bn tranche to the endeavor. (Tocci N, 2023).

In contrast, the war in Ukraine renewed the Americans' pursuit of hegemony over Europe as the country that could openly defend the Western world. Ukraine could become a crucial shield for European security against the Russian Federation. America believes that the Russian war against Ukraine is illegal and an attack on a sovereign country. It proves the expansionist ambitions of President Vladimir Putin. Since the Russian Federation is one of the countries that rejects American hegemony, the United States found that Ukraine could be a tool to exhaust the Russian Federation. Therefore, America was keen to provide indirect support to defeat the Russian Federation and cause it to lose the war, because also portrayed the war as a threat to democratic values in the world. Therefore, the United States is working not only to prolong the war as much as possible with the aim of exhausting the Russian Federation but also to work to increase internal problems to bring down Russian President Vladimir Putin.

NATO may expand its influence, particularly in countries surrounding Russia, with Ukraine being a focal point. Politically, a defeated Russia may retreat inward and seek to reorganize its international relations based on pragmatic mutual interests. The European Union may strive to hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine, demanding reparations for the war. Economically, the defeat of Russia could support the European Union, as it may lead to more favorable prices for Russian energy exports, which would help rebuild its economy.

A major reason why Europe has remained united so far is that it has weathered the storm of the energy crisis remarkably well. This averted what could have been a devastating economic recession on the continent. In late spring 2022, the International Monetary Fund had predicted a contraction of 3-5% in countries such as Germany, Italy, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. When the war began, few would have bet on the fact that with Russian gas closed off to Europe, the EU would have survived energetically, and therefore economically and politically. (Tocci N., 2023). Therefore, the dire situation

represents an incentive for Europe to seek alternatives and accelerate the adoption of alternative energy. From a humanitarian perspective, the cessation of conflict could end human tragedies, allowing refugees to return home; therefore, pressure on public services will ease, and reconstruction in Ukraine will begin.

The current status quo has a significant impact on European security due to ambiguous elements and situations. Tensions are rising in Europe due to various factors affecting the daily lives of EU citizens. From a security perspective, European countries have started to increase their military budgets at the expense of other sectors. When it comes to security, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has fostered a shift in emphasis from crisis management to territorial defense. This shift has wrong-footed European security policies as conceived of during the last three decades, both as regards the construction of capabilities and shared understandings. (Costa, Oriol, and Esther Barbé. 2023).

NATO is mobilizing its forces, and there are concerns about Russian military actions potentially reaching the borders of the European Union, which could have serious security repercussions. Economically, the war has been affecting the European economy. Many European companies have withdrawn from Russia, and rising energy prices are creating challenges for European industries, which struggle to find effective and rapid alternatives. Politically, the ongoing stalemate in the war is likely to deepen divisions among European countries, stemming from differing opinions on how to respond to the Russian Federation. This division could even lead to the disintegration of the European Union. There are three main currents within Europe: one supports the continuation of military aid to Ukraine, another advocates for negotiations and a settlement, while a third attempts to maintain a neutral stance.

There have also been growing fears that Britain's exit from the European Union will lead to the disintegration of the Union and weaken its security and defense capabilities. As a result of Brexit, the EU lost a significant contributor to its budget. Brexit complicated bilateral cooperation within Europe, most importantly with the EU's second military power, France (Hoeffler, and others, 2024).

As well, the number of Ukrainian immigrants to the European Union has also increased. The Europeans realize that the continuation of the conflict in Ukraine could lead to the spread of non-state extremist groups and their obtaining weapons from Ukraine after the disintegration of the state, and using them on European territory, and threatening European security. The push to defeat Russia will make it more likely to use nuclear weapons, whether tactical or strategic, affecting European security, unlike the United States of America. The European Union realized its vital need for new mechanisms to adapt to the new situation after the war. It needs sustainable alternatives to energy imports. Total reliance on Russia in this area could also jeopardize European security. There must be a transition to clean energy through a parallel approach to traditional energy, whether through government effort or the private sector. European division or integration will determine the course of the future conflict in Ukraine, especially regarding the leadership over Europe by the active states in the European system, France and Germany.

Conclusion

The Russian-Ukrainian war is a security dilemma that is shaping the future of European security. Historical evidence shows that Russia's actions regarding Ukraine were influenced by its interactions with the West (both European and American). A thorough strategic analysis suggests that the conflict will extend beyond military consequences and impact the regional strategic balance. The victory of the Russian Federation in the war and its control over all Ukrainian territories pose a direct threat to overall European security that lead to vicious circle.

If Ukraine manage to limit the Russian incursion, the situation may remain stable for a short period, provided the current political regime in Russia stays in power. However, the conflict is likely to reignite once the Russian Federation can reorganize its military forces and strengthen its military relations with countries like India, China, and Iran. It would allow Russia to proceed with its "Special Operation" mission, thus increasing the threat to European security again until Ukraine is dominated by Russia or a political system aligned with the Russian Federation is established. The outcome of the conflict in Ukraine will likely reshape European security dilemma in far more profound ways than a Russian victory would.

Russia will not easily accept being viewed as defeated by the West, especially with the considerable

support Ukraine is receiving. This perceived humiliation could drive Moscow to resort to nuclear weapons at a strategic level, posing a security dilemma. As a result, it is likely to witness a deterioration in European security and a rise in cross-border dangers that could destabilize the region, making it imperative for European nations to address these inherited threats. The most dangerous sub-security dilemma that will affect all parties is the spread of extremist and radical non-state military actors. Ukraine's lax control over many Ukrainian regions and the lack of tight Russian control over the Ukrainian province it has controlled may lead to the spread of weapons, extremist groups and mercenaries that Russia and the West may bring to Ukraine to fight. These fugitives are from different regions, and a large number of them may belong to terrorist groups that were in Syria and Iraq and have combat experience, which is considered a gateway to threatening European security.

In conclusion, the division between the warring states and their supporting parties will likely worsen, leading to inherited security dilemma in the European Union's security structure in the future. In the immediate future, it appears that the situation will remain unchanged, with military operations halting due to the inability of both sides to reach a negotiated settlement. This stalemate will prevent Russian fears of Ukraine becoming a continued security dilemma to its national security and will also curb Russian ambitions for regional hegemony.

Disclosure statement

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