The author analyzes the geopolitical, economic, energy, military, historical, informational, and other important factors, which played a role in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

Particularly, the author presents a comprehensive overview of the reasons behind the implementation of the intervention in Ukraine and the violation of the main principles of morality and international law by Russia. Furthermore, the author shows how Russia is losing geopolitical influence in the world and particularly in the post-soviet space, which the Kremlin considers as a zone of geopolitical and geostrategic interests of Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The author also examines the economic consequences of the war, including how the military operation has damaged the Russian economy, and how this has negatively affected the Russian government's budget. One of the results of it is the decreasing volume of Russian oil and gas exports, especially in the European market. In this context, some aspects of how the war affects the global economy are also discussed and analyzed.

Regarding military aspects, the statistical data related to Russian losses in the war, including military personnel and military techniques also are considered in the framework of the research.

In the research, attention is paid to the importance of analyzing some historic factors, related to the imperialistic policy of the Russian empire, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation accordingly from the 19th century till now. Particularly, the focus is on kinds of violations that have been implemented by their rulers against different states and nations, including mass deportations and genocides of the civilian population.

In conclusion, the author presents possible scenarios for developments related to the Russia-Ukraine war.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, Russia, geopolitics, economy, energy, military, history.
When discussing the Russia-Ukraine war, it is perhaps more important to analyze the main factors that contributed to significant geopolitical changes as a result of the war. In particular, before Russia’s murderous aggression against Ukraine, there was an impression that Vladimir Putin was at the zenith of his military-political games. Before 2022, many experts considered Russia to be one of the important “geopolitical centers”. We can name several factors as the reason for this, namely:

1. Russia, together with the USA, was considered the strongest nuclear power, because it is recognized that Russia and the USA together possess more than 90% of the world's nuclear potential.

2. During Putin’s rule, Russia managed to establish full control over Chechnya.

3. Russia became a member of the Group of Eight (i.e., the Group of Seven turned into the Group of Eight).

4. Russia has completely occupied the territories of Georgia – Abkhazia and the former South Ossetia Autonomous Region, and no one prevented Russia from this action, and no sanctions were imposed against Russia, and on the contrary, the new US administration led by Barack Obama in 2009 jointly implemented the “reset policy” with Russia.

5. High oil and gas prices and the increase in exports of Russian energy resources to the European market brought unprecedented financial profits to Russia. As a result of the export of Russian gas to Europe alone, the annual income of Putin’s regime exceeded €400 billion, and the foreign exchange reserves of Russia exceeded $643 billion [1]. Moreover, the construction of two gas pipelines from Russia to Germany, “Northern Stream-1” and “Northern Stream-2” was completed (the capacity of each gas pipeline exceeded 50 billion cubic meters per year) [2].

6. During the illegal occupation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia in 2014, Russia took possession of the mentioned region of Ukraine relatively easily, which increased the existing ideas about the invincibility of the Russian army at that time. The temporary annexation of Crimea was followed by relatively mild sanctions from the West, creating the impression that the Western democratic world was holding Russia to account.

7. Russia also achieved some success (for it) in Syria. In particular, by intervening in the Syrian conflict, the Kremlin managed to keep Bashar Assad in office, despite western demands for his resignation. In addition, Russia created the illusion that the so-called destruction of the “Islamic State” on the territory of Syria was a result of its active military actions.
8. Russia managed to obtain an almost exclusive right (the Turkish factor should be taken into account to some extent) to mediate in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, one of the results of which was the fact that Russia deployed about 1,980 Russian “peacekeepers” in the conflict zone from 2020.

9. At the same time, the USA and its Western allies withdrew their troops from Afghanistan in 2021, which allowed the “Taliban”, which the West had been fighting since 2001, to regain control of Afghanistan, which was seen as a weakness of the West and a victory for Russia to some extent [3].

10. Russia managed to grow its international authority and strengthen its geopolitical influence outside the post-soviet space (which the Kremlin traditionally considers its sphere of influence), namely in Africa – when several Russia-Africa summits were held, in which the leaders of more than 20 African countries participated, as well as Latin America, where Venezuela is considered an ally of Russia [4].

11. With the creation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, Republic of South Africa), Russia formed a de facto anti-Western alliance with the leading geopolitical players of Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

12. Before the 2022 war, Russia demonstrated its military potential. For example, president Putin boasted that Russia had successfully tested a supersonic missile system and that Russia was the first country in the world to receive a new type of strategic weapon.

Based on the above, a significant part of the international community was convinced that Russia would easily succeed in conquering Ukraine. For example, on the day of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, US intelligence predicted the fall of Kyiv in a few days. But a year later, the Russian president found himself trapped in a war that went wrong with catastrophic mistakes and without a strategy to get out of a difficult situation. Shortly before the New Year, amid the cancellation of the final press conference (which Vladimir Putin has traditionally held at the end of each year), the impression was given that the president is worried about the unpopularity and the prolongation of the war. Moreover, there is an opinion that the Russian leader may be terminally ill and intends to leave his post. In any case, the military adventure on February 24, 2022, left the Kremlin with no chance for a “dignified” exit from the war, and its influence decreased in many areas.

Consequently, the war started by Vladimir Putin radically changed the contemporary world. Based on this, we can discuss what issues and problems arose in the world after the start of the Russia-Ukraine war and what main factors led to cardinal geopolitical, geoconomic, and geostrategic changes on our planet. In particular

**Geopolitical factors**

Based on the results of the war, it can be said that Russia’s geopolitical influence around the world has decreased. Before 2022, many experts considered Russia – the largest country in the world in terms of territory (17.1 million square kilometers) – as one of the important “geopolitical centers” [5]. In particular, there was an opinion about a multipolar world, where Russia controlled the largest geopolitical space, in particular the post-Soviet space, which is 1/6 of the world’s land area. Accordingly, various political scientists and political figures believed that the victory of Atlanticism in the Cold War in the 1990s was a temporary event, and in the first and second decades of the 21st century, the rise of Eurasianism took place as a result of the strengthening of Russia. However, at the current stage, as a result of Russia’s economic and military weakening, it can be said that the importance of Russia as one of the leading geopolitical forces has been thoroughly shaken.

A clear example of this is the fact that Russia is losing geopolitical influence in the post-Soviet space, which Russia officially called the “near abroad”. Examples of this are Kazakhstan’s attempt to export oil produced on its territory to the international market through the territory of Georgia and thus bypassing Russia, Turkmenistan’s desire to also export natural gas to Europe to bypass Russian territory, the movement started in Armenia for the country to leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and in the city of Gyumri of the same country, the Russian military deployed there should leave the territory of Armenia. Also, it is important to mention that Emomali Rakhmon, the President of Tajikistan, publicly addressed Vladimir Putin at the Russia-Central Asia Summit and demanded from him confirmation of respect of statehood of Tajikistan and other countries. In addition, the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu, demanded the withdrawal of the 14th Russian army (located in Transnistria) from the country.

Also, it is necessary to note that Russia is gradually losing its influence in the mediation between Armenia and Azerbaijan and therefore in solving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. In November 2020, Russia presented us as the main “guarantor” for the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh, when it seemed that Russia stopped hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh and deployed its own “peacekeeping forces” – 1,980 military personnel for separating the belligerents in the zone. However, in August-September 2022, Azerbaijan (taking into account Russia’s involvement in the war in Ukraine) carried out a military attack in the area of responsibility of Russian “peacekeepers” and occupied a strategic area in the direction of the Lochin corridor [6]. In addition, during a meeting with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the EU expressed its readiness to deploy its monitors on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border.
The war in Ukraine has created a threat of geopolitical conflict and a cold war in the Arctic, as the war has disrupted cooperation between Russia and the countries of the Arctic region. This change threatens the ecology of the region and the people living there. The conflict over oil and gas resources located in the Arctic region may also intensify, especially since according to various data, more than 10% of the world’s oil and gas resources are located in the Arctic region [7].

In addition, Russia’s aggressive actions have strengthened NATO as the main symbol of Atlanticism. The North Atlantic Alliance came out with a united front in support of Ukraine, and the expansion of the alliance is on the agenda as Finland and Sweden are considering joining NATO. In addition, certain geopolitical or geostrategic disagreements between the American and European allies of NATO have significantly decreased.

**Military factors**

The Russian-Ukrainian war has completely shattered the myth of Russia – as the second greatest army in the world. As a result of the war, the Russian army has suffered colossal losses, in particular, according to the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces [8]:

- Land-power – about 127,500 servicemen
- Tanks – 3,201 units
- Armor – 6,378 units
- Artillery systems – 2,197 units
- Multiple launch rocket (MLRS) – 454 units
- Anti-aircraft combat systems – 221 units
- Aircraft – 293 units
- Helicopters – 284 units
- Operational-tactical UAVs – 1,951 units
- Winged rockets (dropped) – 796 units
- Ships / boats – 18 units
- Cars and fuel tanks – 5,048 units
- Special technical pieces – 200 units.

It is also noteworthy that the Russian army invaded by Ukraine lost 9,001 units of land, air, and maritime military and combat equipment from February 24, 2022, to January 2023, compared to 2,759 by the Ukrainians.

This includes at least 1,671 tanks of various modifications lost by the Russian army on the battlefield, 545 of which were taken by the Ukrainian army!

As a result, before Ukraine and the Western countries negotiated the transfer of Leopard and Abrams tanks, the Ukrainian defenders gathered a more or less Russian tank farm on the battlefield.

In addition to the tanks, other armor from the Russian occupation forces are in the hands of the Ukrainians, including 257 armored vehicles; 592 infantry combat machines; 96 armored personnel carriers; 106 special engineering machines; 19 self-propelled anti-tank missiles; 104 self-propelled artillery units; 50 jet firefighting systems; 93 towed artillery units; 13 artillery-areas; 22 self-propelled anti-aircraft missile units; 9 radiolocation stations [8].

**What can the future of warfare be like?**

As a result of the war, an idea of what future wars may be like can be drawn. On the one hand, the Ukrainian war has shown the importance of modern technology – such as satellite internet and drones, on the other – war has become significantly old-fashioned with its trenches, and artillery duels.

The war has brought some profits to the weapons companies. The most profits are made by American and European companies in the military-industrial complex. The war has proven that Western weapons are more effective than Russian ones. It is enough to compare tanks. On the one hand, there are the American Abrams, German Leopard and British Challengers, on the other, the T-72 or T-90 Russian tanks.

In this case, it is also important to note the importance of cyberspace. In the last decade, there has been increasing activity between different states, including the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine in cyberspace. Overall, the financial loss caused by cyberattacks exceeded $6 trillion [6].

**The nuclear war factor**

Putin’s aggressive actions have returned and revived the fear of nuclear war. For example: On December 21, 2022, Vladimir Putin reiterated at a meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Defense his blackmail that the triad of the Nuclear Triad was a major guarantor of Russia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and also a continuation of its improvement. According to the Russian dictator, by 2022, 91% of its strategic nuclear arsenal consisted of modern weapons [9].

Later, in February 2023, Putin announced that in 2023 Russia would deploy in combat the first Sarmat missile system with a new heavy missile and continue to fully operate the Kinjal synergistic systems. According to him, the share of modern weapons and equipment in the maritime strategic nuclear forces will reach 100%.
In addition, Russia tested an intercontinental ballistic missile when US President Joe Biden was in Europe in February 2023. The name of this missile is Sarmat, which is called Satan II in the West.

At the same time, in the appeal by Russian president Putin on February 21 to the state duma and federation council of Russian parliament, the dictator said that Russia was suspending its involvement in the “further reduction and restriction of strategic offensive weapons”, which the Russians referred to as SNV-III and the Americans as New START.

The treaty was signed between the US and the Russian Federation on April 8, 2010, and was signed by the then US and Russian presidents, Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev.

In this case, it is important to note that to reduce and control strategic nuclear weapons with Russia, US President Barack Obama began with the Kremlin a reset policy aimed at reducing strategic nuclear weapons, as well as the development of cooperation between Russia and the United States around the Iranian nuclear program and North Korean missile programs, and ongoing hostilities in Afghanistan.

Consider what the “nuclear treaty” in place between the US and Russia is.

Since 1972, this has been the seventh treaty that has defined the parity of American and Soviet / Russian strategic nuclear weapons and thus regulated the nuclear confrontation between the two states.

By the way, this agreement, which was concluded for a 10-year term, expired in 2021, but then president Putin himself signed a five-year extension of the document until February 2026.

This treaty provides that the US and the Russian Federation may have no more than 700 intercontinental ballistic missiles in combat readiness, submarine ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers with no more than 1550 nuclear warheads.

According to this agreement, as of September 1, 2020, the US arms were to include 675 units of strategic nuclear warheads carriers and 1,457 nuclear warheads.

The strategic nuclear weapons of the Russian Federation, according to that 2020 agreement, were to include 510 units of strategic nuclear carriers and 1,447 nuclear warheads.

Russia’s announcement of a moratorium on this agreement means that the cooperation will stop and the control mechanism will be completely disrupted, so nuclear militarization will be very likely to start at a new growing pace [9].

The Russia-Ukraine war and the factor of political leaders

On the one hand, the hostilities have weakened Vladimir Putin as a political figure, who was previously considered an accountable politician. Consequently, Russia also weakened, its influence and authority, and the Kremlin’s reputation was damaged.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has demonstrated the importance of charismatic leadership. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has become a world leader, and the result of this is that the world’s leading states, along with other countries, support, respect, and maintain contact with the Ukrainian President and the Ukrainian political elite.

Migratory consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war

Russia’s aggressive actions forced 14 million Ukrainians to become refugees. In addition, Russia forcibly transferred more than a million people from its occupied regions of Ukraine to Russia.

As a result of the Kremlin’s expansionist policies, new Russian diasporas were created abroad. More citizens left Russia in the last 12 months than since the 1917 revolution [10]. According to various data, more than 2 million people have left Russia [10].

Russia and conflict regions

The Russia-Ukraine war refocused attention on the issue of Taiwan. In particular, Russia’s action has raised the question of what Beijing’s steps will be towards the recalcitrant island – will China invade like Russia or vice versa – will Beijing measure a hundred times before promising anything?

However, tensions in the region have risen steadily in recent months, with China conducting one of its largest naval and air exercises around Taiwan in December 2022.

At the beginning of Russia’s war in Ukraine, many experts worried that China would decide to take active steps against Taiwan. But now some analysts believe that China, seeing the united reaction of the West (especially the European Union) to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, will not dare to do so.

Also, the Russia-Ukraine war accentuated the problems of the Russian-occupied and separatist regions of Abkhazia, the former South Ossetia Autonomous District (Georgia), and Transnistria (Moldova). After the end of the Russia-Ukraine war, the issue of solving the problems related to these occupied regions will be on the agenda of the international community.
Russia and the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation

Russian aggression has strengthened Ukrainian national identity. For example, in the first decade of the 21st century, Ukrainian society was divided into two and the pro-Russian part constituted about half of the Ukrainian population. This fostered the victory of the pro-Russian leader Viktor Yanukovych in the presidential elections of Ukraine in 2010, as well as the fact that in 2006 a sociological survey conducted in Ukraine determined that only 24% of Ukrainians supported the country’s accession to NATO (this when the Orange Revolution in Ukraine had just taken place). Since 2014, the occupation of Crimea by Russia, and especially since February 2022, the attitude of Ukrainians towards Russians has drastically changed. Today, there are no pro-Russian people in Ukraine, except for the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. No one in the world equates these two nations anymore. When naming the cities of Ukraine, Ukrainian transliteration is used more and more often, for example, instead of Kiev, Kyiv, Lviv instead of Lvov, and Kharkiv instead of Kharkov, etc. In addition, the teaching of the Russian language has already been banned in Ukrainian schools [6].

International isolation of Russia

The Russia-Ukraine war led to Russia’s isolation in other directions as well. In particular, even though Russia carried out the genocide of the Chechen people over the course of two wars in Chechnya, with 160,000 to 200,000 people, primarily civilians, dead, the International Olympic Committee still gave Russia the right in 2004 to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2014. In particular, the Winter Olympics were held in Sochi, and despite the aggression against Georgia in 2008 and the occupation of 20% of the country, in 2010 FIFA chose Russia as the host country for the 2018 World Cup. However, as of 2022, Russia has been removed from virtually all international sporting competitions and will most likely not be allowed in any international sporting tournaments for a long time. In addition, citizens of Russia and Belarus were banned from participating in the Olympics and the broadcasting of the Olympics was banned in the territory of both countries [11].

Russia’s connection with various countries of the world in the fields of sports, science, and art has been significantly disrupted. Russian athletes will not be able to participate in the Olympics and international tournaments in various sports.

In addition, Russia was excluded from the ranks of such international institutions as the Council of Europe, the UN Human Rights Commission, and dozens of other structures.

Russia and the reaction of the international community to the war

The Russia-Ukraine war has revealed the mood of the international community toward war on the political map of the world. In particular, about 1/3 of the world’s population, based on their anti-American sentiments, blames the West for the Russia-Ukraine war, about 1/3 has an indifferent position and a third supports Ukraine and the West [6].

As for the anti-western countries, of course, we should first mention Belarus, as well as Iran, as for China and India, these countries have a relatively pragmatic policy. For example, China has close economic relations with the West, in 2021 the trade turnover between China and the United States exceeded $700 billion [12], while with Russia it was only $147 billion [13]. At the same time, China is trying to distance itself from Russia in terms of military cooperation, although the positions of official Beijing and Moscow coincide in some cases from a geopolitical or ideological point of view.

Informational factors of the war between Russia and Ukraine

Another result of the hostilities is that the war has made it difficult to receive information from Russia. In particular, information is hidden on such issues as what socio-economic or political processes are developing in the country, etc. This is the result of the fact that the strict measures taken by the Russian authoritarian government forced many representatives of the Western media to refuse to work in Russia and those who were working moved to another country to work. With the actions of Putin’s regime, the independent Russian mass media has also been “shut up”.

Energy factors of the Russia-Ukraine war

The Kremlin’s expansionist policy changed the energy strategy of the West, primarily Europe. In particular, the war forced the West to think more about green technologies and the use of nuclear energy (due to the increase in prices of traditional energy resources – gas and oil), as well as alternative energy projects, in particular, about receiving natural gas from the USA (shale gas), North Africa and Norway, as well as receiving oil and gas from the Middle East, the Caspian Sea region, and Central Asia, etc.

As a result, gas imports from Russia decreased. In particular, compared to 2021, in 2022, gas production in Russia was 12% less, and exports decreased by about a quarter. The reduction took place, primarily in the EU countries. For example, before the Russia-Ukraine war, the share of fuel supplied by Gazprom in the volume...
of natural gas consumed by the EU countries exceeded 40%, and the highest rate of dependence on Russian gas (55%) was in Germany (a total of 90 billion cubic meters consumed over the year). As we know, only after Russia invaded Ukraine, did the EU countries and, first of all, Germany, decided to reduce the consumption of Russian gas. Just two months after the start of the war, Germany reduced its dependence on Russian gas to 35%, and the shutdown of the Nord Stream made it theoretically impossible to consume Russian natural gas [14].

In total, by the fall of 2022, the EU’s dependence on Russian natural gas has decreased from 40% to 7% [14].

In this case, it would be interesting to discuss energy projects related to the Caspian Sea region. In particular, the goal of the government of Azerbaijan is to export about 24 billion cubic meters of natural gas to the international market in 2023, of which to supply Europe with about 12 billion cubic meters of natural gas. It is worth noting the fact that in 2021, Azerbaijan supplied 8 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe [14].

Due to the Russia-Ukraine war, in July 2022, the European Union and Azerbaijan reached an agreement, according to which the gas export from Azerbaijan to the European Union will be doubled to 20 billion cubic meters by 2027. Nevertheless exports to Europe amounted to only 11.4 billion cubic meters in 2022, although in 2023 this indicator is expected to increase to 11.6 billion cubic meters [14].

As for the position of another state of the Caspian Sea region, Turkmenistan, it is worth noting that at the end of 2022, the leaders of Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan discussed the issue of supplying Turkmen gas to Europe through the territory of Georgia at a trilateral summit. In general, it is planned to transport gas from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan, and then transfer it to the Southern Corridor pipeline network, which connects Azerbaijan to Europe through Georgia and Turkey. It is important to note that the issue of supplying Turkmen gas to Europe while bypassing Russia was discussed before, but unsuccessfully. However, after the war in Ukraine, the topic of finding alternative routes for the transportation of energy trains became relevant.

It should be emphasized that the vast resources of Turkmenistan are mostly unused because Ashgabat is not able to transport them to Europe. The reason is that there is no agreement on the transportation of Turkmen gas through the Caspian Sea and then through the pipeline. At the current stage, almost a third of Turkmen gas is supplied to China, and the rest to the domestic market and Russia. At the end of 2020, Turkmenistan’s gas reserves amounted to 13.6 trillion cubic meters, which was a third of Russia’s reserves [14].

**US-EU energy relations**

As a result of Russia’s aggression, the export of shale gas extracted by the USA to Europe (through gas liquefaction – LNG) increased by 2.5 times in 2022.

Overall, European countries increased their total imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by more than 60% to 125 million tons last year, with the United States becoming the largest supplier of the fuel. In particular, according to the results of 2022, Europe increased the volume of LNG imports from 75 million tons (102 billion cubic meters) to almost 125 million tons (170 billion cubic meters), and according to the data of 2022, the United States of America became the largest supplier of liquefied gas to Europe. In particular, imports from the USA increased from 21.4 million tons (29 billion cubic meters) to 53 million tons (72 billion cubic meters) [15].

**Embargo against Russia in the field of oil policy**

As for oil policy, the following should be noted here. In particular: As a result of the ceiling imposed by the Group of Seven on Russian oil prices, which amounted to $60 per barrel, the price of Russian oil, Urals, fell to $50.47 per barrel in December 2022. By comparison, March Brent crude futures were trading at $78.28 per barrel at press time, while February WTI crude futures were trading at $73.11 per barrel. In addition, in the last four weeks of 2022, oil exports from Russia fell to a minimum. In particular, in December 2022, the offshore supply of oil from Russia decreased by 117,000 barrels per day to an average of 2.615 million barrels per day [16].

In addition, the issue of oil exports from the Caspian Sea region is on the agenda, bypassing Russia in Europe and the international market as a whole.

For example, Kazakhstan formed a working group to increase oil exports through Georgia to 15 million tons. The purpose of this group is to work on the development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) for the export of Kazakh oil. According to the Kazakh authorities, the goal of the working group is for TITR to provide transport capacity for the export of 6.5 million tons of oil in 2023, increase it to 7.5 million tons in 2024, and to 15 million tons by the end of 2025 [17].

The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), i.e. the “Middle Corridor”, passes through China, Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, and then through European countries. The Baku – Tbilisi – Kars railway, currently in operation, is a part of this corridor.

Currently, the main export route for Kazakh oil is the Caspian pipeline consortium system, which passes
through the territory of Russia and ensures the exit of Kazakh crude oil to the international market through the Russian port of Novorossiysk. Kazakh oil comprises more than 80% of the volume transported by this pipeline. In total, the capacity of the pipeline is 67 million tons of oil per year [17].

Discussions on the diversification of oil export routes in Kazakhstan started in 2022. The reason for this is primarily political. In particular, in June 2022, at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the President of Kazakhstan Tokayev told Putin to his face that the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk regions recognized by Russia as people's republics are “quasi-state territories” and that Kazakhstan never recognized them.

In July 2022, Tokayev instructed the national gas and oil company Kazmunaigaz to urgently diversify its oil supply. At that time, Tokayev included this issue in his pre-election program [17].

Reflection of the Russia-Ukraine war on transport links

The war caused an increase in the duration of commercial aviation flights as the world's leading countries suspended direct air flights with Russia, and at the same time, Russia declared its airspace closed to Western airlines. As a result, a flight from London to Tokyo that took 12 hours before the war now takes more than 14 hours [6].

Economic factors of the Kremlin aggression

The war has led to the isolation of the Russian economy. In particular, due to the enactment of Western sanctions, the Russian economy shrank by 2.1% in 2022, according to the data of the Russian Ministry of Finance, although according to the World Bank experts, Russia’s gross domestic product decreased by more than 3% [18].

At the same time, for 2022, the budget deficit of the Russian Federation in this period amounted to 3.3 trillion Russian rubles, or about $45 billion, which is 2.3% of the country’s GDP [18].

In January 2023, Russia’s income from oil and gas exports decreased by 46% compared to the previous year, and income from other products’ exports decreased by more than 20%. At the same time, the value of Russia’s exports of goods and services in January-March fell by 35% [19].

Regarding the imposition of sanctions against Russia by the West, it is interesting to note that many countries have not joined the sanctions, but the question is whether other states can replace the West with Russia. The answer is unequivocally negative, the main reason for which is that the developed states of the West account for 60% of the world’s GDP, less than 20% for China, and only 2% for Russia. Three important conclusions can be drawn from the above:

First – before the war, Russia had trade and economic relations with the whole world, and at the present stage, half of the world is closed to Moscow (in whole or in part), especially since the most developed part of the world – the source of investments and know-how – is inaccessible. This includes the USA (accounting for 25% of the world’s economy) and the European Union (17%), as opposed to Russia’s main partners except for China, namely India (share in the world economy ~ 3.5%), the Middle East (5%), Africa (3%) and Turkey (1% less than) [6].

Second, China is a bigger partner for Russia than others. Its economy is ten times larger than Russia’s, and its dependence on Russian energy carriers is relatively less than the dependence of pre-war Europe on Russia’s energy resources. That is, Russia, which has cut off its way to the West, has turned from being China’s junior trade partner into being Beijing’s vassal.

Third, the prosperity of China, India, and other developing countries depends on their access to Western markets, technology, and money. For example, trade and economic turnover between China and the USA total about $700 billion per year, and between the European Union and China, about €500 billion. Ultimately, official Beijing is not ready to let relations with the West deteriorate due to Russia. The fear of secondary sanctions from the US and the EU forces China to exercise caution and prudence in its contacts with the Kremlin [6].

As already mentioned, the West has not used secondary sanctions against anyone. The West, on the whole, is not opposed to China or India taking advantage of the situation Vladimir Putin has put Russia in – the Kremlin is forced to give these countries cheap Siberian oil and gas in exchange for Russia’s imports from those countries to get lost energy revenues in Europe and to keep its partners. Thus, in general, the trade with China and India instead of trade with Europe is absolutely unprofitable for Russia.

Economic sanctions hit Russian billionaires the hardest along with ordinary citizens. For example, there were 123 Russian billionaires in the Forbes ranking in 2021, but a year later their number decreased to 88. Since then, due to the situation in Ukraine, Western sanctions, and the economic crisis, their number is decreasing. The largest amount of money lost by one person during this time was $11 billion. Later, Forbes compiled a ranking of those Russian billionaires who were the least fortunate in recent years [6].

Western sanctions forced many of them to bail out their multi-billion dollar empires, and the stock market crash made their situation worse.
According to Forbes’ data, 68 Russian businessmen became poor in one year [6].

Financial losses as a result of the war

The war caused great financial losses for Russia. It is important to determine how much Russia has spent on the war against Ukraine.

According to reports, Russia spent about $82 billion during 9 months of broad-scale warfare in 2022, which is about a quarter of Russia’s annual budget [6].

It should be noted that Russia spends about $200 per soldier. After mobilization, the total cost of the salaries of the soldiers involved in the fighting amounted to $2.7 billion. Also, the compensation amount allocated to the families of the wounded and dead soldiers exceeded $3.5 billion.

Russia used up to 50,000 shells per day, which is worth more than $5.5 billion.

Russian forces have launched more than 4,000 missiles at Ukrainian cities, the cost of each of them is $3 million.

In addition, as already mentioned, Russia lost 293 aircrafts, each with an average cost of $18 million, as well as 261 helicopters worth $104 million. The total loss of Russian military aviation is about $8 billion [6].

In the war against Ukraine, the total value of equipment lost by Russia in nine months was $20.8 billion.

Russia and the global economy

The economic recession that began in 2022 is expected to continue into 2023 as the massive and historic energy shock caused by Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine continues to weigh on inflationary pressures, reduce confidence and household purchasing power, and increase risks around the world. For example, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development highlights an unusually unbalanced and fragile outlook for the global economy over the next two years. In particular, in 2023 the world economy will slow down to 2.2 %, and in 2024 it will moderately recover to 2.7 % [6].

On the other hand, due to the deterioration of the economic situation in the world, the World Bank has sharply reduced the global economic growth forecast for 2023. According to WB forecasts, the economy will grow by 1.7 % in 2023, which is almost half of the previous rate of economic growth of 3 %. In 2024, a 2.7 % increase is expected [6].

According to the international organization, the slowdown of growth is caused by the high inflation level, the increase of interest rates by national banks, the decrease of investments, geopolitical tension, and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. For these reasons, a global recession is expected this year, and it will be the first time in 80 years that there will be two global recessions in a decade.

Growth in advanced economies will slow from 2.5 % in 2022 to 0.5 % in 2023. In the US, 0.5 % growth is expected, while the previous forecast was 1.9 %. As for the Eurozone, the forecast has been reduced to 0 % from 1.9 %, while China’s rate will be 4.3 %, which is 0.9 percentage points lower than the previous forecast [6].

In developing economies (excluding China), the growth rate will decrease from 3.8 % in 2022 to 2.7 % in 2023. Over the next two years, the average rate of per capita income in developed countries will be 2.8 %, which is 1 % less than the average of 2010–2019 [6].

The global economic recession is accompanied by food shortages. In particular, in the first half of 2022, according to the forecast of the World Bank, the war in Ukraine would cause “the biggest commodity shock” since the 1970s. In particular, according to the World Bank.

The price of wheat will increase by 42.7 % and will reach new record levels in dollars. Noticeably, the price of barley will increase by 33.3 %, soy – by 20 %, oil – by 29.8 %, and chicken – by 41.8 %. Such increases in prices are determined by the fact that exports from Ukraine and Russia have decreased sharply [6].

Other raw materials will become more expensive, including fertilizer, metal, and minerals. However, the costs of timber, tea, and rice are among the few commodities expected to decline.

It is important to note that before the war, Russia and Ukraine accounted for 28.9 % of global wheat exports and 60 % of global supplies of sunflower, a key ingredient in many processed food products.

It is also worth noting that due to the war, the supply of grain and oil crops from Ukraine decreased by more than 80 % [20].

In this case, it should be emphasized that according to preliminary estimates, in 2023, grain crops in Ukraine will decrease by 45 %, and the grain harvest will be 60 % less than in 2021 before the war [20].

As of December 2022, of the 28.4 million hectares of cultivated area in Ukraine in 2021, 24.6 million hectares, or 86 % of the entire area, were in unoccupied territory. Of this, 3.8 million hectares of land cannot be sown due to proximity to the front line and shell debris. Sowing of winter crops has already been completed, albeit with a significant reduction of cultivated areas. A total of
3.8 million hectares of winter cereals were sown, which is 26% less in controlled areas and 43% less than in the fall of 2021. Among the reasons, agricultural specialists cite limited export opportunities, expensive logistics, and the resulting price difference between regions. In particular, the prices of agricultural products are higher in the regions bordering the seaports and the European Union, compared to the northern and eastern regions of the country [20].

Accordingly, the total volume of grain in 2023 may not exceed 34 million tons, which is 37% less than in 2022, and 60% less than in 2021. As for oil crops, the forecasted total harvest is 19.3 million tons, which is 13% more than in 2022, and 15% less than in 2021 [6].

As a result, the export potential of cereals and oilseeds in the 2023/24 marketing years will be approximately 35 million tons, which is 3 million tons per month. For comparison: In the 2021/22 marketing years, the export potential of these crops was 85 million tons or 7 million tons per month [6].

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has created major problems for world trade, the total volume of which is about $28 trillion. The greatest negative impact has been felt by low-income countries. The World Trade Organization has lowered its expectations for 2022 growth in the volume of goods trade. According to the forecast, the import and export of goods at the global level would decrease from 4.7% to 3% [20].

**Historical factors**

Along with the imposition of economic, political, and other sanctions on Russia by the world democratic community, the international community is gradually reviewing the historical processes taking place in light of current events. In particular, many countries already have a different perception of the aggressive and criminal policy of the Russian Federation towards other peoples and countries after the collapse of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union.

In this case, it is probably necessary to recognize that the Cold War did not end in the early 1990s, and it only took a different form. In particular, on the one hand, the world communist system collapsed and many, primarily Central and Eastern European countries and the majority of post-soviet republics, including Russia, moved from a centrally planned economy to a market economy; but the geopolitical confrontation between the West and Russia, i.e. Atlanticism and Eurasianism, continued.

For example, from the period after the Second World War until the beginning of the 1990s, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and other countries with a communist regime (except China) were considered to be the sphere of geopolitical influence of the Soviet empire. After the loss of geopolitical and geoeconomic influence on these countries, the legal successor of the USSR, the Russian Federation, considered the former Soviet space (except the Baltic States), which the Kremlin called and still calls the "near abroad", as its sphere of geopolitical influence. In addition, clear examples of the geopolitical conflict between Russia and the West from the 1990s to the present day are Russia's intervention in Georgia and Moldova, as well as in the ongoing conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the Kremlin's support of the Bosnian Serbs in the ongoing war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995). Against the background of the Russia-NATO confrontation, there was the support of the Yugoslavian President Milosevic's regime in the Kosovo conflict in 1999, the two bloody wars launched by Russia in Chechnya, and the criticism of the hostilities launched by the USA against the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Georgia in 2008, and Ukraine in 2014. Aggression, criticism of the EU and NATO expansion, gross interference in presidential and parliamentary elections in the USA, Germany, France, and other countries at different times and encouragement of political forces acceptable to Russia, energy blackmail directed against European countries, and political use of Russian oil and gas resources were used to form anti-Western alliances in the form of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as the Shanghai Treaty Organization (with China and Central Asian states) and BRICS (with Brazil, India, China, and the Republic of South Africa). The "crowning" of all of the above will certainly be the large-scale aggression launched against Ukraine in February 2022.
The results of the Second World War were well used by the Soviet authorities and subsequently by Russia for their propaganda. The anniversaries of the victory over Nazism and Fascism were held every year in Moscow, as the capital of the “liberating country”, to which world leaders were invited every year.

The above-mentioned facts confirm the fact that the Soviet empire made the greatest contribution to the start of the Second World War, and the issues related to the Second World War can be reconsidered after more than 80 years.

By the end of the Second World War, it can be said that the occupation of Central and Eastern European countries by Nazi Germany was replaced by Soviet occupation after the establishment of communist regimes there. Accordingly, the events in East Germany first in 1948 (the Berlin Blockade) and then in 1953, as well as the events in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in the early 1980s, demonstrate the fact that in final stages of World War II and after World War II, there was no liberation of the peoples of Eastern Europe from the side of the USSR.

Considering that there were 53 concentration camps in the Soviet empire between 1930 and 1940 and that more than 15 million people died during the Bolshevik and Soviet repressions, we must admit that the Soviet empire made the greatest contribution to the start of the Second World War under the principle of “victors are not judged”. That is why the issue in question needs to be re-examined.

Various countries of the world have already recognized the mass murders and genocide committed against the Ukrainian nation by the Soviet empire in the 1930s as part of the Holodomor. According to various data, more than 4 million people died [21].

Also, if only at the level of scientific circles, a discussion has begun on the topic that if the international community has significantly investigated the genocide committed by Nazi Germany against the Jewish people, it is possible to investigate the genocide committed by the Russian empire against the Circassian and Abkhazian peoples in the 19th century, and also the mass deportation of Chechens, Ingush, Crimean Tatars, and various Caucasian peoples from their native regions by the Soviet empire in the 1940s.

After the end of the Russia-Ukraine war, appropriate grounds will be created to investigate the ethnic cleansing of Georgians by the Russian Federation in Abkhazia and the former South Ossetia Autonomous Region in 1992–1993 and then in 2008.

It will also investigate the genocide of the Chechen people by the Putin regime, based on the deaths of more than 200,000 civilians in Chechnya during two Russian-led wars (1994–1996 and 1999–2004) [11].

Due to its actions, Russia is already recognized as a terrorist state. Accordingly, crimes against humanity committed by the Russian empire, the USSR, and the Russian Federation should be recognized as “state terrorism” based on UN General Assembly Resolution 39/158: “On State Terrorism” adopted in 1984 [22].

Of course, the crimes committed by the Russian Federation against the Ukrainian people will be on the agenda at this stage.

Just as Germany was financially responsible for the crimes committed against the Jewish nation during Nazi Germany, so the Russian Federation – the successor of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union – must be responsible and make reparations (monetary, legal, political, and moral) for the harm done to various peoples, which is connected with the Kremlin. This includes genocide, mass deportation, etc.

**Conclusion**

Let’s briefly consider the possible scenarios of the development of events within the framework of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Although considering the above examples, Russia’s positions in geopolitical, economic, military, informational, and other terms in today’s world have been significantly shaken, the fact is that the war is still going on and it seems that the Russian dictator Putin intends to use his military, human and economic resources to the maximum so that the war in Ukraine continues and Putin’s regime maintains its power for as long as possible. In this case, it is possible to consider several scenarios of the development of events, in particular.

**Pessimistic**

Against the background of the sanctions imposed against Russia, Russia will try to improve its ties with its potential partners, primarily with Iran, China, and India. This will allow it to avoid the sanctions imposed against it by the Western democratic world with fewer losses, and the financial resources obtained as a result of trade with these and other countries will be used for military operations in Ukraine. To continue to lead and commit many war crimes against.

The second problem may be the fact that even if Putin is removed from power, another dictator will take his place.
The reason for this is the fact, that the democratic forces operating in Russia are supported only by approximately 2–3 % of the Russian population and main opposition to the ruling party “edinaya rasia” (united russia) (that supports Putin) are “communist party” and the so-called “liberal democratic party”, i. e. the ultra-left and ultra-right forces, which, despite being in opposition to Putin and his party, may be even more supportive of Russia’s imperialist ambitions and the bloody war in Ukraine [6]. Therefore, even in the case of Russia’s defeat in the war, revanchist forces will remain at the head of the government in Russia, which will constantly want to start a war again and prevent the development of democratic processes in Russia.

If we draw a certain parallel with post-World War II Germany, it became clear that after the destruction of Germany and its ruling power, the National Socialist Party, the Federal Republic of Germany was established in the Western (American, British, and French) occupation zone and a democratic party came to the head of the country, namely the Christian-Democratic Union. That is, a democratic force appeared in West Germany (together with others, including opposition parties) which took responsibility for the democratic and peaceful development of West Germany. Russia does not harbor an equivalent, especially since the goal of the West is not to transfer combat operations to Russian territory and overthrow the existing regime in Russia by force.

Also, one of the important problems is the fact that, in light of its failure in Ukraine, the Kremlin may decide to take control of the occupied regions, including (or primarily) Abkhazia and the so-called further integration of South Ossetia, and most likely Belarus, with Russia, or military intervention against same Georgia or some other post-Soviet republic.

**Optimistic**

Russia, in the face of economic and military weakening, will eventually be forced to give up its imperialist ambitions, which will create fertile ground for a much more peaceful world. Moreover, it is well known historically that it was in the 1980s that the involvement of the Soviet empire in the war in Afghanistan and later the fall in world oil prices forced the Soviet empire to pursue a more lenient policy towards the international democratic world. The amount of military aid provided by the West, primarily the US, to the Afghan mujahideen exceeded $2 billion a year, and in 1985–1987, as a result of the oil deal between the US and Saudi Arabia, world oil prices decreased by about 2.5 times, which resulted in the budget deficit of the Soviet Union increasing approximately five times between 1985 and 1988, and the revenues from oil exports of the Soviet empire decreased by 73 % [23]. All of the above ultimately led to the collapse of the world communist system and the Soviet empire. Even today, approximately the same situation is repeated, in particular, as a result of the embargo imposed by the West on Russian oil and gas. The budget deficit of the Russian Federation exceeded $45 billion in January–April 2023 [24].

The defeat of Russia in the war with Ukraine will create a prerequisite for the conflicts in the world, primarily in the post-Soviet space, to be resolved peacefully and for humanity to live in the conditions of a new world order, where war and conflicts will be replaced by the principle of peaceful coexistence between nations and international peace.

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