

# BOOK REVIEW

**Russia-Ukraine War: Strategic Conundrum**

*Edited by Prof. Bharti Das and Dr. Uday Pratap Singh*



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*Russia-Ukraine War: Strategic Conundrum*, Edited by Prof. Bharti Das and Dr. Uday Pratap Singh (Published by Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2025) 265 pages, ISBN: 8197198659, 9788197198656

## **Introduction**

The book '*Russia-Ukraine War: Strategic Conundrum*' is an essential resource for studying one of the most significant wars when rapid global events are shifting the tides of the time in the 21st century. Edited by Prof. Bharti Das and Dr. Uday Pratap Singh, this book brings together a remarkable ordering of significant viewpoints from scholars, practitioners, experts in strategic studies, defense, and geopolitics. It provides a comprehensive examination of the ongoing conflict, including its effects on India's foreign policy and national security, changes in global strategy of nations, and the wider lessons it holds for future conflicts with estimated consequences. The book predominantly covers the themes to include India's perspective and Strategic Response, Global Impact and Geopolitical Implications, Regional Implications and Strategic considerations of the Russia-Ukraine war. Each section covers a different aspect of the war, giving readers a comprehensive overview of the conflict's wide-ranging out-turns on global security and stability. The subsequent authors in the book discuss the wide-ranging lessons for India on how to be better prepared for future conflicts while appreciating India's careful adoption of path of dialogue and diplomacy towards the conflict.

## **India's Perspective**

The first chapter "Russia-Ukraine and the Indian Approach," by Shekhar Adhikari discusses the origins of the conflict, Russia's interests in Ukraine in terms of trade and energy supplies and political and strategic influences in an elaborated manner. The chapter traces the previous conflicts and simmering tensions between the two nations, particularly with respect to Russia's invasion of Crimea and the Donbas region in the year 2014. The author briefly discusses the strict approach adopted by US and the European nations with heavy sanctions, seizing Russia's large foreign reserves along with central banks being blacklisted. The preceding section of the chapter discusses India's instant measures in the aftermath of initial phase of Russia-Ukraine war such as ensuring safe returns of Indian nationals from Russia and Ukraine. India's focus on humanitarian assistance, exemplified by Operation Ganga, signifies its commitment to safeguarding its citizens abroad during times of crisis. The author also discussed India's delicately balanced outlook maintaining India's 'neutral' approach amid the widespread criticism received from Western nations for abstaining from criticising Russia's actions in Ukraine. India has historical links to Russia and continues to rely heavily on it for its defense equipment, technology, and infrastructural needs. This unique strategy downplays the offensive overtones that the Western countries have adopted, reflecting India's

distinct combination of its strategic needs and preserving its 'strategic autonomy'. The chapter presents India as a country that is navigating the conflict with a blend of pragmatism, diplomacy, humanitarian responsibility prevailing for peace and stability.

Mr Manoj Kumar discussed the significant solutions India needs to adopt in the backdrop of changing modern warfare tactics. The author emphasises the need for investment under the Atmanirbharta program in advanced areas such as electronic warfare, digitization, sensors, satellite communications and unmanned systems along with boosting conventional military capabilities. Neeraj Singh Manhas also discusses the implications of Russia-Ukraine war on India's National Security and the essential need for India to develop its domestic military and industrial capabilities with the aim to enhance innovation and self-reliance. Dhruv Ashok's examination of the hybrid nature of warfare in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is another addition in this section. He highlights how the conflict highlights crucial need for India's advanced military readiness and technological independence in the backdrop of hybrid warfare and the techniques employed by both Russia and Ukrainian military forces against each other.

In his chapter "The Russia-Ukraine War: India's Diplomatic Stance and Strategic Engagement," Abhigya Langeh shows that the conflict has been triggered by a variety of causes, including military conflicts, diplomatic manoeuvres, and economic pressures.

### **Global Impact of the Conflict**

The conflict's global effects and geopolitical ramifications are examined in the second section, which also looks at how it has altered economic policies, trade routes, and geopolitical alignments. Bharti Das explores the resurgence of Cold War-era conflicts in her chapter on global diplomacy, highlighting how the conflict has revived great power rivalry. The author describes the need for international cooperation and the need of mediation by countries like India to resolve the crisis in the aftermath of severe loss of lives and livelihoods in both the countries. Mayank Saraswat and Dharendra Dwivedi offer a thorough examination of the war's long term economic impacts, examining global supply chains, including impacts on prices of supply of oil and natural gas, food, stock market, banking sector, global inflation and global security. Indigenization of defence of the defence industry is another factor that requires immediate attention for India.

Raghvendra Pratap Singh's chapter, 'Historical Survey', provides a brief overview of the origin and conflict within Russia and Ukraine. He looks at the 2022 invasion within a historical context trying to understand the territorial disputes, political shifts with deeper issues of national sovereignty, regional influence and the

international alliances that have led to current unfolding crisis. This is important in trying to understand what the motivations and stakes are for both Russia and Ukraine in this conflict.

The chapter contributed by Afsar Alam and Md Abusaad discusses to settle a practical compromise in the aftermath of the multi-faceted protracted conflict driven by violence and chaos. The authors also discuss the spillover effects of the war on the European nations.

### **Regional Implications**

The final section of the book examines the regional impacts of the conflict, focusing on regions of Europe, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Indo-Pacific. Abhishek Yadav's contribution discusses the strategic lessons for South and Southeast Asia, drawing parallels between the Russia-Ukraine war. This chapter discusses the Ukraine's importance as a transit country for Russian gas shipments to Europe. This has resulted in huge loss for Russia looking for diversifying partners in other regions and potential partners like India. The Black Sea region's significance, transit routes and the competition for resources notably natural gas are the main underlined points of this chapter.

In his chapter on the European Union's response, Dr. Uday Pratap Singh evaluates the EU's policies adopted during the ongoing conflict. He analyses Europe various policies that intersected with Russia sphere of influence like the EU Neighbourhood Policy. Singh in conclusion, raises pertinent questions about the EU's capacity to adapt to future crises and its role in shaping European security. The book also explores the war's influence on regions such as the Gulf States and the Indo-Pacific. Manvendra Kumar Verma and Vishal Dixit's chapter examines the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) shortcomings in addressing the conflict. They argue that the UNSC's inability to act decisively, due to structural issues such as the veto power of permanent members, underscores the urgent need for reform to make the institution more representative and effective.

In the concluding section, the chapter by Divya Rai and Harikesh Pratap Singh, discuss the geostrategic significance of the Indo-Pacific consisting of global maritime routes with key chokepoints like the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea. These trade routes might be directly impacted by the global supply chains hampered by the Russia-Ukraine war.

The book does an excellent job of presenting multiple viewpoints, offering a balanced perspective on the conflict, providing profound insights into the complexities of modern warfare highlighting threats emerging from hybrid, cyber and psychological warfare. This book presents key themes and perspectives that shape our understanding of contemporary conflicts. A significant focus is placed on the changing nature of warfare, highlighting how hybrid and multi-domain strategies, such as cyber operations and unmanned systems, are redefining military engagements. Through this lens, the contributors illustrate how emerging technologies are transforming military strategies and operational dynamics.

India's diplomatic balancing act and non-interventionist approach is the prominent theme of the book emphasizing the nation's strategic autonomy amidst evolving global power dynamics. The contributors underscore the importance of self-reliance under the Atmanirbharta initiative in defence and diplomacy, as India navigates its relationships with major powers while safeguarding its national interests. India's approach is constrained and independent adopting the path of diplomacy that balances the 'fractured world order'. India's policy has been moderate and practical, calling for peace through discussion and diplomacy rather than denouncing Russia directly, in contrast to several Western countries that have publicly criticized Russia. India abstained from voting against Russia in UN resolutions and even refrained from issuing statements on condemning Russia at the Summit for Peace in Ukraine held in Switzerland in the year 2024.

Additionally, the global shifts in power dynamics are assessed, inferring the ongoing conflict as a catalyst for the world transitioning toward a multipolar world. Nations like China, India, and Turkey are recalibrating their foreign policies, reflecting the broader implications of this war on the geopolitical shifts for the future.

In conclusion, *Russia-Ukraine War: Strategic Conundrum* is a significant addition to the study of geopolitics and modern warfare with changing techniques. With its rigorous analysis and perspectives, it serves as a valuable resource for scholars, researchers, experts and policymakers striving to comprehend the evolving dynamics of international relations and modern warfare.

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