



ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE

# THE GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE:

GAINING STRATEGIC FORESIGHT IN AN  
ERA OF GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

**6-7 June 2023**

Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA)  
National Defence University, Islamabad

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# Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine war presents a new reality for international security that is being shaped by changing geoeconomic and geopolitical dynamics, shifting power centres, and the emergence of new hybrid threats. It fundamentally restructures the European security system and has profound implications for the rest of the world. With the breakdown of Western engagement in Afghanistan in 2021, the war in Ukraine can transform major powers' strategic trajectories and alignments. This calls for research and deliberation as well as strategic foresight to plan and prepare.

In an era of strategic change, knowledge-sharing and institutional cooperation are essential to preparing for the future and maintaining and promoting stability and security. In the spirit of such mutual cooperation, the National Defence University (NDU) of Pakistan, and the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) collaborated on a joint two-day international conference at the NDU in Islamabad. The two-day conference focused on the implications of the war in Ukraine for peace and security as the overarching theme. This included an introductory session and four working sessions:

1. Global Response to the Russian-Ukraine War and its Implications
2. Major Powers Contestation in the Evolving World Order
3. New Issues of Security: Energy, Climate and Societal Security
4. Forgotten Afghanistan: Implications for Regional Stability

Each session included a presentation from the NDU, the RDDC, and an international expert followed by a plenary debate.

The joint seminar was part of the series of the long-standing RDDC and NDU cooperation on research activities, which entails many joint ventures since 2014. The constructive relationship between the two institutions provides an excellent platform for sharing experiences and deliberating upon ideas with an academic approach. This allows for unique, candid, and honest discussions on otherwise sensitive topics of international security and strategic importance. In 2017, the RDDC-NDU cooperation was formalised with an Academic Cooperation Agreement (ACA).

The following report is a summary of the findings from the discussions at the conference across the sessions. As the topics discussed were of strategic importance to both countries and institutions, the authors have tried their best to balance perspectives, include nuances, and highlight points of disagreement – all while respecting the mutually agreed upon Chatham House Rule, which the entire conference was held under.

# PROGRAMME

| DAY 1<br>6 June 2023 (Tuesday)  |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Introductory Session:<br>Gaining Strategic Foresight through Military Cooperation     |   |   |  |
| Time (hours)  | Activity  | Remarks                                     |  |
| 0900-0930   | Arrival, Coffee/ Tea and Registration   |   |  |
| 0930-0935   | Recitation of Holy Quran  |   |  |
| 0935-0945   | Welcome by Deputy President NDU   |   |  |
| 0945-0955   | Introductory Remarks by Dr Niels Bo Poulsen, Director of Institute of Strategy and War Studies, and Head of RDDC Delegation |   |  |
| 0955-1005   | Keynote Address by H.E. Jakob Linulf (Danish Ambassador to Pakistan)  |   |  |
| 1005-1010   | Group Photo   | North Entrance                              |  |
| Working Session I:<br>Global Response to the Russian-Ukraine War and its Implications |   |   |  |
| Time (hours)  | Activity  | Guest Speaker                               | Remarks  |
| 1010-1015   | Introductory Remarks by Moderator   | Amb Dr Aman Rashid                          |  |
| 1015-1030   | Presentation from Pakistan  | Lt Gen Aamir Riaz (Retd)                    | Theme / Scope: Impact on Security in Asia                                |
| 1030-1045   | Presentation from Denmark   | Dr Annemarie Peen-Rodt, RDDC                | Theme / Scope: Impact on European Security                               |
| 1045-1100   | Presentation by International Subject Matter Expert <b>(Online)</b>   | Oksana Boyko (RT Journalist)                | Theme / Scope: Impact on US, Russia, Europe Relations                    |
| 1100-1200   | Interactive session   |   |  |
| 1200-1210   | Wrap-up by Moderator  |   |  |
| 1210-1310   | Lunch   |   |  |
| Working Session II:<br>Major Powers Contestation in the Evolving World Order          |   |   |  |
| Time (hours)  | Activity  | Guest Speaker                               | Remarks  |
| 1310-1315   | Introductory Remarks by Moderator   | Mr David Vestenskov, RDDC                   |  |
| 1315-1330   | Presentation from Pakistan  | Dr Moeed Yousaf                             | Theme / Scope: Impact on South Asia with focus on Pakistan               |
| 1330-1345   | Presentation from Denmark   | Ambassador Michael Zilmer-Johns (RDDC)      | Theme / Scope: Small states in a changing world order                    |
| 1345-1400   | Presentation by International Subject Matter Expert   | Dr Andrea Ghiselli (Fudan University China) | Theme /Scope: Impact of US-China, Russia power contestation on the world |
| 1400-1500   | Interactive Session   |   |  |



|   |  |                                     |  |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1500-1510   | Wrap-up by Moderator   |                                     |  |
| 1510-1515   | Exchange of Souvenirs  |                                     |  |
| 1520  | Dispersal  |                                     |  |
| DAY 2   |  |                                     |  |
| 7 June 2023 (Wednesday)                                       |  |                                     |  |
| Working Session III:  |  |                                     |  |
| Forgotten Afghanistan: Implications for Regional Stability    |  |                                     |  |
| Time (hours)  | Activity   | Guest Speaker                       | Remarks  |
| 0930-1000   | Arrival, Coffee/ Tea and Registration                        |                                     |  |
| 1000-1005   | Introductory Remarks by Moderator                            | Mr Jens Vesterlund Mathiesen (RDDC) |  |
| 1005-1020   | Presentation from Pakistan                                   | Amb Muhammad Sadiq                  |  |
| 1020-1035   | Presentation from Denmark                                    | Mr David Vestenskov, RDDC           |  |
| 1035-1050   | Presentation by International Subject Matter Expert          | Amb Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal           |  |
| 1050-1150   | Interactive Session  |                                     |  |
| 1150-1200   | Wrap-up by Chair/Moderator                                   |                                     |  |
| 1200-1300   | Lunch  |                                     |  |
| Working Session IV:   |  |                                     |  |
| New Issues of Security: Energy, Climate and Societal Security |  |                                     |  |
| Time (hours)  | Activity   | Guest Speaker                       | Remarks  |
| 1300-1305   | Introductory Remarks by Moderator                            | Ms Aisha Khan                       |  |
| 1305-1320   | Presentation from Denmark                                    | Major Alexander Tetzlaff, (RDDC)    | Theme / Scope: Energy and Societal Security issues |
| 1320-1335   | Presentation from Pakistan                                   | Dr Rashid Bajwa                     | Theme/ Scope: Societal Issues                      |
| 1335-1350   | Presentation by International Subject Matter Expert (Online) | Prof Olaf Corry                     |  |
| 1350-1450   | Interactive session  |                                     |  |
| 1450-1500   | Wrap-up by moderator   |                                     |  |
| Closing Session   |  |                                     |  |
| Time (hours)  | Activity   |                                     | Remarks  |
| 1500-1510   | Closing Address by President NDU/ DG ISSRA                   |                                     |  |
| 1510-1520   | Closing Remarks by head of RDDC                              |                                     |  |
| 1520-1525   | Exchange of Souvenirs  |                                     |  |
| 1525-1530   | Group Photo  |                                     | North Entrance                                     |
| 1535  | Dispersal  |                                     |  |
| 1930-2100   | Dinner   |                                     | Danish Embassy                                     |
| DAY 3   |  |                                     |  |
| 8 June 2023 (Thursday)  |  |                                     |  |
| Cultural Visit Murree   |  |                                     |  |
| 0900 – 1835 hrs   |  |                                     |  |



## Key Conclusions of the Conference

The Russia-Ukraine war is a global geopolitical event, which has far-reaching consequences in terms of first-order effects; alliances and defence spending, and second-order effects, such as global economic integration, food security, and energy security.

The current global situation calls for increased efforts to attain strategic foresight to anticipate and counteract future threats. Sharing perspectives, through military and academic cooperation, is paramount for this.

There exist different analyses of the Russia-Ukraine war. Some argue that Ukraine is a geopolitical tool of the West to contain China and weaken Russia. Others argue that the West is supporting Ukraine out of fear that if Ukraine loses and becomes part of Russia, this would embolden Putin into pursuing military actions against other European countries.

The strict stance of the US against China and Russia has pushed both countries to forge deeper ties. However, Russia and China are not aligned on all issues of security.

In the US-China rivalry, due to deep economic integration, both states do not have the liberty to function in isolation. This also limits the possibility of other countries adopting a policy of neutrality or non-alignment as compared to the Cold War era.

The response of smaller European states to changing world order includes a tougher stance on Russia,





investing more in defence, strengthening homeland security, relying more on NATO and EU, and the greater importance of 'realism' in foreign policy.

The European Union (EU) needs to devise a new stabilisation policy as its previous policy was based on 'stabilisation by association', which has repeatedly failed to appropriately respond to the emerging challenges.

The Russia-Ukraine war has completely altered the context of energy geopolitics and brought this to the top of the political agenda.

Many Western countries have turned their backs on Afghanistan after August 2021, leaving regional countries to face the implications of the instability. The regional countries are ready to manage the issue, but it requires Western support which is badly missing.

In global geopolitics, due to geographical proximity, Pakistan finds itself in the centre of three theatres of great power contestation i.e., Indo-Pacific, Middle East, and Eurasia.

Due to security implications, Pakistan is apprehensive about the growing US support for India as a counterweight to China.

# DAY 1

## Introductory Session



## THEME OF THE SESSION

Gaining Strategic Foresight  
through Military Cooperation

## SPEAKERS



Deputy President NDU  
Rear Admiral  
Muhammad Shafique, HI (M)



Danish Ambassador to Pakistan  
H.E. Jakob Linulf



Director of Institute of  
Strategy and War Studies, and  
Head of RDDC Delegation  
Dr Niels Bo Poulsen



The introductory session commenced with warm welcome remarks by Rear Admiral Muhammad Shafique, HI(M), Deputy President NDU, while Dr Niels Bo Poulsen, Director of the Institute for Strategy and War Studies, represented the RDDC delegation. Finally, the Danish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Ambassador Jakob Linulf presented his opening remarks. This initial gathering was characterised by an outspoken willingness from both institutions, NDU and RDDC, to not only sustain but also expand their existing collaboration. One of the salient features of the discussions was the recognition of the importance of institutional cooperation. The delegates emphasized that amid global geopolitical shifts, conflict, and war tend to obscure and overshadow nuanced deliberation. In such times, the exchange of diverse perspectives - even when they are disagreed upon - becomes paramount to understanding and analysing the global security situation. This is not only important for NDU-RDDC collaboration, but also for Pakistan-Denmark relations.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The global geopolitical landscape is in a state of flux. This dynamic is influenced by factors such as the contestation of major powers, rising conflicts, cyber warfare, and the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. Such a volatile global environment necessitates that established policies and strategies be re-examined. Put differently, the current global situation calls for increased efforts to attain strategic foresight to anticipate and counteract future threats.

Two significant events have redrawn the contours of the geopolitical map in recent times: the US and NATO force's withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022. The repercussions of these events are felt universally, with Pakistan being no exception.

Already in the introductory session, differences in perspectives regarding the Russia-Ukraine war became apparent. Western states, and Denmark in particular, perceive Russian actions as an invasion of Ukraine manifesting an imperialistic ambition with blatant disregard for international laws or norms, violating the sovereignty of Ukraine. Conversely, Pakistan tends to assess the situation through an economic lens, acknowledging the conflict, but focusing on the pursuit of a peaceful solution and stability by both sides.

The Russia-Ukraine war has had tangible economic implications for Pakistan. The nation has grappled with an acute energy crisis in its aftermath. The ripple effects of this crisis are manifold: energy prices in Pakistan have soared, exerting immense pressure on foreign exchange reserves. This strain has culminated in a significant devaluation of the Pakistani Rupee, which has, in turn, exacerbated inflationary pressures and raised prices.

There is a silver lining, however. Pakistan possesses the requisite resources to undergo a transformative green energy shift. What it calls for is sustained commitment and meaningful international collaboration. Denmark has extended its hand, indicating a readiness to assist Pakistan in this venture.

Finally, the detrimental impact of climate change was underscored. It is a global concern that threatens the livelihood of countless individuals. The session concluded with the consensus that transitioning to green energy solutions is not merely an environmental imperative; it is intrinsically linked to peace, security, and prosperity.

# DAY 1

## Working Session I



## THEME OF THE SESSION

Global Response to the Russian-Ukraine War and its Implications

## SPEAKERS



**MODERATOR**  
**Amb**  
**Dr Aman Rashid**



**Speaker 1**  
**Lt Gen**  
**Aamir Riaz (Retd)**



**Speaker 2**  
**Dr**  
**Annemarie Peen-Rodt**



**Speaker 3**  
**Ms Oksana Boyko**

The first working session of the conference centred on the global reactions and responses to the Russian-Ukraine war. These have been wide-ranging in ambition, scope, and focus, but also vary significantly across regions. Therefore, the first working session included perspectives on both European and Asian security as well as the future of US-Russia relations.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

There was agreement among all participants, that the key to global peace and stability lies in the peaceful settlement of disputes, adherence to fundamental principles of the UN charter, self-determination of nations, and no use of force.

European countries have experienced a major shift in threat perception followed by major increases in defence budgets, especially in Eastern Europe and the Baltics. Despite these consequences and the general proximity of the war, there is still a lack of debate of understanding in the European capitals about the underlying causes of the war in Ukraine, and there is a need to understand the multiple factors that contribute to conflicts. After the Russia-Ukraine war, the EU has seen an increased focus on security and defence. The concept of strategic foresight remains especially important to the EU, as it could not foresee or prevent the Russian-Ukraine war, despite having experienced over six decades of advancement in peace, reconciliation, diplomacy, and human rights activism.

The EU has, for a long time, pursued the concept of “stabilisation by association”, meaning the EU could change its surroundings by having a transformative power and using strategic partnerships (also with Russia). This has previously been effective in preventing conflicts in Europe through economic integration, demilitarisation, and cooperation. However, most recent experiences suggest that this cannot be universally applied due to regional contradictions and historical sensitivities. Some participants pointed out that the US vision of a unipolar world combined with NATO's eastward expansion, which was described as triggers for the Russia-Ukraine war, are not in line with the EU concept of stabilisation by association.

It was argued by some participants, that Ukraine seems to be a geopolitical tool of the West to contain China and weaken Russia. The same participants argued that Ukraine should focus on its sovereign destiny rather than being used by the West as a proxy against Russia. Contrarily, other participants argued that the West was not using Ukraine in the pursuit of opportunistic goals, but simply helping Ukraine out of fear that this would embolden Russia into pursuing other invasions of European countries. Following this, it was also argued that Ukraine is pursuing its sovereign destiny when protecting its territory in self-defence.

Finally, it was highlighted how the Russia-Ukraine war has entailed a range of second (and even third) order effects, which has negatively impacted global trade, food, and energy security, and socio-economic development. The energy-deficient countries like Pakistan that tried to maintain a neutral stance, have paid the economic price of this war. On the other hand, countries like India preferred the geo-economic advantages linked with Russia and did not stand with the US despite having a “strategic partnership”.



# DAY 1

## Working Session II



### THEME OF THE SESSION

Major Powers Contestation in  
the Evolving World Order

### SPEAKERS



MODERATOR

Mr David Vestenskov



Speaker 1  
Dr  
Moeed Yousaf



Speaker 2  
Amb  
Michael Zilmer-Johns



Speaker 3  
Dr  
Andrea Ghiselli



The second working session of the conference discussed how the war in Ukraine has restructured parts of the global security system, and changed the way global politics is conducted. This has implications for the world order, and will likely result in changes in the orientation and focus, alliance, and alignments of both major powers and smaller states. The second working session discussed these elements, specifically focusing on South Asia and Pakistan, small states such as Denmark, and global approaches to the Middle East.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) of Pakistan reflects the strategic approach of the country, based on 'no-camp politics', geo-economics, and internal stability. Pakistan's geoeconomic strategy aims to use its geographical location as an asset to become a corridor for economic integration through incentives for major powers.

In terms of geopolitics, Pakistan finds itself in the middle of multiple “theatres of conflict”. Because of this, Pakistan must be proactive or it risks being caught in the eye of the storm. This is especially the case of the global US-China contestation, in which Pakistan is a case study on the risks and opportunities in balancing great power interests.

The Western “liberal rule-based order” is becoming increasingly challenged and dangerous. This had been in the making for a long time and its effects are becoming increasingly visible after the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war. The European security structure, which was based on economic integration and 'stabilization by association', as well as other confidence-building measures (CBMs), is in ruins due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

European countries, and especially small states, feel less secure and are consequently moving towards organisations such as the EU and NATO to “not be alone”. Finland and, potentially, Sweden joining NATO marks a major policy shift in the foreign policies of European nations, especially for Sweden, which has a historical tradition of neutrality. Denmark was already a member of NATO but has joined the common EU defence policy. Overall, European countries have significantly increased their defence budgets, strengthened homeland security capabilities, and turned away from an idealist foreign policy based on normative values.

While Russia's influence is waning, Western influence in the Middle East, is still strong, both politically and economically. Therefore, from a Chinese perspective, stability cannot be achieved without the involvement of the US. Recent trends show that Beijing desires a Middle Eastern region that is premised on economic development and is free from great power contestation. Although there exist shared interests between Russia and China, Russian behaviour in the Middle East is seen as somewhat similar to the West as being opportunistic and prone to conflict. From a Chinese perspective, this is often not positively perceived.

The strict stance of the US against China and Russia has pushed both countries to forge deeper ties, which may lead to the dilution of the growing power imbalance between the two countries. The US strategy to contain China, through strategic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region and the Middle East, has compelled Beijing to focus more on South Asia and especially its neighbourhood leaving less room for regions such as the Middle East.

## DAY 2

# Working Session III



## THEME OF THE SESSION

Forgotten Afghanistan:  
Implications for Regional Stability

## SPEAKERS



**MODERATOR**  
Mr Jens Vesterlund



**Speaker 1**  
Amb Muhammad Sadiq



**Speaker 2**  
Mr David Vestenskov



**Speaker 3**  
Amb Hazrat Omar

The third working session focused on the situation in Afghanistan. The end of Western engagement in Afghanistan in August 2021 and the war in Ukraine serve as the two major geopolitical events that have shaken the international security system. While the humanitarian and security situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating, the Russian-Ukraine war has diverted the world's attention from Afghanistan even further. Including both Western and regional perspectives, the fourth session discussed the future of international engagement with Afghanistan and the implications on regional stability.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

While many Western countries had already turned their backs on Afghanistan after August 2021, the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war (in February 2022) accelerated this process. Because of this, regional countries have been left alone to face the implications of the instability. The regional countries are ready to manage the issue, but it requires Western support which is badly missing.

Over twenty years, the US-led NATO presence in Afghanistan did bring some positive developments in Afghanistan, such as opportunities for education and employment, social mobility, infrastructure projects and the protection of minority ethnicities. However, while some of this impact will last, much of it has been quickly reversed. This was mostly due to the Afghan economy and political system, which predominantly relied on US support and US-backed foreign aid. This created an artificial economic and political system which had to collapse one day. The Trump Administration's deal with the Taliban in 2020 provided the final nail in the coffin and the end date for the system.

Some of the participants argued that there is a new ethnic balance in Afghanistan, which has favoured the Pashtuns and weakened other ethnicities in Afghanistan. On the other hand, some participants pointed out that the government of Northern Alliance had disfavoured Pashtuns so there was no ethnic balance during or before the Taliban government. The issue of security is once again on top of the agenda when discussing Afghanistan. There are several regional and international terrorist organisations stationed in Afghanistan (TTP, ETIM, ISKP and Al-Qaeda), which is a concern for both regional and extra-regional countries. This risk is further exacerbated, by the socioeconomic conditions of the 64% youth bulge of Afghanistan, which could serve as a large recruiting pool for such organisations. However, the youth of Afghanistan is also the future and economic driver of the country and thus provides an opportunity.

Stabilisation is the core concept behind Western engagement in Afghanistan which requires well-coordinated sustainable policy development. For this, the West should coordinate and support Pakistan to achieve stabilisation in the region. In this regard, it is imperative to define what kind of stability is required in Afghanistan because every country views stability from a different angle.

In Afghanistan, regional rivalries and proxy scoring have prevented border regional cooperation. The regional countries should remain prepared to prevent another cycle of violence in Afghanistan. Therefore, to put Afghanistan back on the path of peace and stability, the regional and extra-regional players should be aligned with the Afghan stakeholders. This relies on mutual coordination and understanding. The West should recognise the legitimate interests of regional countries, such as Pakistan, and regional countries should recognise the limits to the level of engagement, which many Western countries pursue.

An isolated Afghanistan could risk strengthening the Taliban, while an engaged and integrated Afghanistan would help common Afghans. Therefore, the West should engage with Afghanistan for the long-term betterment of the common people.



## DAY 2

# Working Session IV



## THEME OF THE SESSION

New Issues of Security: Energy,  
Climate and Societal Security

## SPEAKERS



**MODERATOR**  
Ms Aisha Khan



**Speaker 1**  
Major Alexander Tetzlaff



**Speaker 2**  
Dr Rashid Bajwa



**Speaker 3**  
Prof Olaf Corry



The fourth working session of the conference focused on the devastating spillover effects of the Russia-Ukraine war. This includes a negative impact on the global economy, climate change as well as global energy and food production. While these areas are not typical or traditional security issues, they are increasingly becoming part of the security and defence policies of states. The third working session discussed some of these areas and their implications for defence and security.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The term “Societal Security” is a Nordic concept that fosters a comprehensive approach to security to address all threats or risks to society. Using this perspective, the wide spectrum of threats must be managed with a holistic approach where the coordination and integration of multiple government agencies is essential. This can also be termed as “societal robustness” or “resilience”.

The current supply chain crisis of goods and services is worsened by geopolitics. The destruction of the Nord Stream Gas Pipeline is an example of this, as it is a spillover effect of the Russo-Ukraine War on Denmark.

Both Pakistan and Denmark are facing hybrid challenges in the contemporary environment. These threats and challenges are complex and harder to categorise as being part of a war/conflict, or peace; they purposefully exist in the “grey area”. On one hand, development and dependency on technology make Denmark more vulnerable to new threats. On the other hand, Pakistan is suffering disproportionately from the impact of climate change or disruptions in the global energy and food supply.

Pakistan with a population of around 240 million people needs a consistent growth rate of 6% or above to have any significant impact on the economic condition. However, due to the current economic pressure, there is very little fiscal space to invest in societal security. Pakistan is stuck in a vicious circle of taking loans to pay back previous debts. The root of the crisis is Pakistan's inability to finance its external debt payments as dollar outflows significantly outpace inflows — dollar revenues generated via exports are simply not sufficient to pay for imports.

The Ukraine conflict has politically pushed climate action, climate finance, and climate cooperation down the global agenda. The political attention to climate change in the global sphere is being overshadowed by security and defence interests, such as armament production.

# PICTURE GALLERY











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