

The Russian War's Impact on Global Order

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Key Points

- The Russian invasion of Ukraine may be considered as transformative for the international order.¹
- While Russia declares it is cutting ties with the "collective West," it is seeking allies and international partners in the Global South.
- Russia's strategic decisions have compelled China to reassess the international landscape and adapt its approach to achieving foreign policy objectives.
- The emergence of the Global South as a significant player on the world stage signifies a shift in the global order.
- The war in Ukraine has been a turning point for Russo-Iranian relations.

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has challenged established international norms and principles. The annexation of Crimea and subsequent full invasion of Ukraine violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are fundamental principles of international law. The conflict has tested the effectiveness of international institutions and other mechanisms to maintain peace and security. It has prompted actions dictated by the need for stronger enforcement of international norms and brought into sharp relief the role of major powers in upholding the international order. It is a significant turning point in relations between Russia and the West. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has had significant consequences, including the displacement of over six million people, destruction of infrastructure, cultural treasures, private homes, and industrial centers, and the pillaging of goods sent to Russia in an organized manner.² The war has also impeded post-pandemic economic recovery for emerging and developing economies in the Europe and Central Asia region.³ Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine has

¹ Collective work by PISM, "W kierunku Eurazji – nowa koncepcja polityki zagranicznej Rosji", *Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych*, May 10, 2023, <https://pism.pl/publikacje/w-kierunku-eurazji-nowa-koncepcja-polityki-zagranicznej-rosji>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

² Robert Pszczel, "The consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine for international security – NATO and beyond", *NATO Review*, July 7, 2022, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2022/07/07/the-consequences-of-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-for-international-security-nato-and-beyond/index.html>, (accessed August 14, 2023).

³ Press release no: 2023/ECA/18, "Russian Invasion of Ukraine Impedes Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery in Emerging Europe and Central Asia", *The World Bank*, October 4, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/04/russian-invasion-of-ukraine-impedes-post-pandemic-economic-recovery-in-emerging-europe-and-central-asia>, (accessed August 14, 2023).

impacted energy and food markets.⁴ The invasion has raised concerns about international security and the balance of power in the Middle East.

Russian New Definition of International Order

The Russian authorities were taken by surprise and were ill-prepared for the decisive response and strong sanctions imposed by Western countries following the attack on February 24th, 2022. The determined reduction of the EU's reliance on Russian energy, particularly natural gas, was an unexpected reaction that had a significant impact on Russia's position in the global energy market. In response, Russia resorted to energy blackmail by halting gas supplies to countries that refused to make payments in Russian rubles. To compensate for the loss of European markets, Russia redirected its oil, petroleum products, and coal to Asian markets, primarily China, India, and Turkey. President Putin's actions, such as labeling Russian citizens who gained wealth in the West as "traitors," marked a notable shift in the sense of security and impunity previously enjoyed by the Russian elite. This move aimed to consolidate loyalty to the president and his regime. With Western sanctions imposed on politicians and oligarchs, the Russian elite had little choice but to remain loyal to President Putin. Additionally, some politicians and oligarchs may have held a belief in Russia's inevitable victory in Ukraine, a view not uncommon among Western commentators as the conflict unfolded. The absence of viable alternatives to the current president, as well as the profits some politicians and oligarchs derive from the ongoing war, contribute to their decision-making. Russian society recognized the prolonged nature of the war and adapted accordingly. The middle class shifted their savings out of Europe, such as to the United Arab Emirates, while oligarchs chose to spend their holidays in Dubai due to EU travel bans. Meanwhile, Russia experienced a significant decline in tourism, including from China.

Unless Russia suffers outright defeat, the ongoing war with Ukraine is anticipated to contribute to further militarization of its domestic and foreign policies. Additionally, even in the event of a successor to President Putin assuming power, a repetition of aggressive actions towards neighboring countries or NATO nations is likely.⁵ A new leader could attempt to consolidate power by rallying Russian society around the defense of the homeland and a rekindling of Russia's imperial past.

The Russian new definition of international order was introduced in the newest Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation,⁶ approved by President Putin at the end of March 2023. In Russia's perception, the United States will continue to be its main rival. Given close US-European ties that prompted the Russian authorities to cease seeking partners within the European Union. The primary objective of Russia's foreign policy will be an attempt to undermine the collective West, while increasingly seeking allies and international partners among including countries from so-called the Global South.⁷ Russia will aim to strengthen its diplomatic efforts, particularly in the context of BRICS countries (Brazil, India, China, South Africa). Russia is trying to persuade the Global South that the

⁴ European Council Policy, "Impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the markets: EU response", *European Council of the EU*, May 31, 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-the-markets-eu-response/>, (accessed August 14, 2023).

⁵ Mark Trevelyan and Alexandra Hudson, "Putin warns Russia against pro-Western 'traitors' and scum", *Reuters*, March 16, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-warns-russia-against-pro-western-traitors-scum-2022-03-16/>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

⁶ Agnieszka Legucka "W kierunku Eurazji – nowa koncepcja polityki zagranicznej Rosji", *PISM*, May 10, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/w-kierunku-eurazji-nowa-koncepcja-polityki-zagranicznej-rosji>, (accessed May 12, 2023).

⁷ According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "the Global South" is a term that refers to the developing economies that broadly comprise Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia without Israel, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and Oceania without Australia and New Zealand; Source: UNCTAD, <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications.html>, (accessed May 1, 2023).

West is responsible for destabilizing Europe.⁸ Moreover, Russia employs the threat of nuclear weapons to dissuade Western states from providing military support to Ukraine.⁹ At the same time, it is apparently understood among most of the Russian establishment (excluding President Putin himself) that Russia is incapable of providing an effective alternative to world order, which may lead to disappointment among authorities in the Global South and their respective societies.¹⁰

China is Watching Closely

After years of fostering closer economic cooperation with the West, China is increasingly focusing on itself, challenging the West to defend a rules-based international order, perceived by China's political elite as a threat to its the long-term survival.¹¹ China's shift is the outcome of a long-standing process of ideological transformation in its foreign policy, which has been further reinforced by the effects of Russian aggression against Ukraine. Like Russia, the objectives of the People's Republic of China (PRC) are revisionist in nature. Although their methods may be different, both countries, or more precisely their elites, perceive the current international situation as a threat posed by the US to their future power and interests. China is now "peacefully" implementing this strategy through nationalist policies and the development of military and economic capabilities. However, there is a clear shift in attitude towards confrontation with the West. The decisions made by the Chinese authorities in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine are part of the existing dynamics of internal processes, such as the pursuit of self-sufficiency (e.g., export control of rare metals, electromobility technologies) or emphasis on the domestic market instead of foreign interactions, which have formed the foundation of China's economic development over the past few decades. However, structural problems within the Chinese economy, compounded by global economic slowdown, have hindered the implementation of the Chinese Communist Party's plans outlined at the 2017 party congress, including focusing on the domestic market and recognizing the importance of the growing middle class.¹²

The situation was exacerbated by Chinese "zero COVID" policy, which in 2022 served more effectively as political and social control rather than as containment of the pandemic. Even with the zero COVID policy cancellation in December 2022, the PRC's economy was unable to escape recording its second lowest level of growth since 1976 at 3%. Concurrently, social problems, including unemployment, are on the rise. To address political and economic dilemmas, the Chinese Communist Party, driven by security concerns, has tightened its grip on power both within the party and the country, while adopting a confrontational approach towards the United States and the European Union.¹³ China's primary objective is to diminish the potential influence of the US and to enhance its own impact on the functioning of international institutions, including the United Nations, using areas such as budgetary influence,

⁸ Hans Kundnani, "The War in Ukraine, Democracy, and the Global South: We Have a Problem", *The International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS)*, May 23, 2023, <https://icds.ee/en/the-war-in-ukraine-democracy-and-the-global-south-we-have-a-problem/>, (accessed May 24, 2023).

⁹ Lauren Sukin, "Rattling the Nuclear Saber: What Russia's Nuclear Threats Really Mean", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 04, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/05/04/rattling-nuclear-saber-what-russia-s-nuclear-threats-really-mean-pub-89689>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

¹⁰ Agnieszka Legucka, "Russia turns its back on the West", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

¹¹ Jim Garamone, "DOD Is Focused on China, Defense Official Says", *U.S. Department of Defense, DOD News*, Feb. 9, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3294255/dod-is-focused-on-china-defense-official-says/>, (accessed May 03, 2023).

¹² By *Asia Society*, "Decoding the 20th Party Congress", 2023, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/decoding-chinas-20th-party-congress>, (accessed May 1, 2023).

¹³ Marcin Przychodniak, "China: End of illusions and confrontation with the West", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

staffing and rhetoric in official documents.¹⁴ Cooperation with Russia and developing countries, as well as countries like Iran or South Africa, is important for China. From the Chinese perspective, restraint in NATO actions towards China is also a key objective, as it undermines trans-Atlantic cooperation and potentially jeopardizes the security of the EU, given the growing US involvement in the Indo-Pacific and the persistent threat from Russia, that is unopposed by China.¹⁵

Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine have compelled China to reassess the international landscape and adjust its approach to achieving foreign policy objectives. It can be assumed that the Chinese leadership perception is that Russian actions were clearly aggressive but are precipitated by the unacceptable dominance in global affairs by Western nations, particularly the US. This negative assessment of the international situation was a central theme in President Xi's report at the 20th CCP Congress in October 2022. He explicitly stated that there was no return to the era of "peace and development" that had facilitated China's dynamic economic growth over last several decades.¹⁶ Considering these factors, according to the Chinese President: "independence, particularly in the economic context, and security for China are paramount".¹⁷

A key element of China's plans is to reconstruct the international order, with the aim of reducing the importance of the US and establishing a system that allows for the use of force against other states. This concept aligns with China's Global Security Initiative (GSI) announced by Xi Jinping in April 2022 and the notion of "indivisibility of security" (like the Russian justification for the invasion of Ukraine). By echoing Russian concerns about NATO threats and the US support to the Ukraine war effort, China is positioning itself as a state opposed to the escalation of war and arms supply to Ukraine. China aims to present itself internationally as a stabilizing force that stands out from the United States. This stance also seeks to foster cooperation with countries in the Global South, which may view China's policies favorably and potentially provide economic opportunity.¹⁸

A victory for Russia in the war with Ukraine which included the retention of Ukraine territory and the preservation of President Putin's regime, would weaken the West.¹⁹ This is significant for China, especially in the context of its policy in the Indo-Pacific region, including its stance on Taiwan. While Russian military setbacks and the West's determined response, particularly an apparent strengthening of NATO, may not have deterred China from acting against Taiwan entirely, it might have lengthened the timeline within which it expects to act. Russia's faltering steps and NATO's resolute support to Ukraine have prompted China to recognize the need to strengthen its military capabilities and economy before taking such a significant step. Consequently, preparations are underway within the CCP leadership to construct a new narrative of peaceful "reunification" with Taiwan.²⁰ This narrative can be utilized by Beijing in the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2024, to redress fear among Taiwanese

¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, "US Hegemony and Its Perils", February 20, 2023, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230220_11027664.html, (accessed May 8, 2023).

¹⁵ Eva Dou, "What is — and isn't — in the joint statement from Putin and Xi", *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/04/russia-china-xi-putin-summit-statement-beijing/>, (accessed May 12, 2023).

¹⁶ By *Asia Society*, "Decoding the 20th Party Congress", 2023, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/decoding-chinas-20th-party-congress>, (accessed May 1, 2023).

¹⁷ Ibid 16.

¹⁸ Marcin Przychodniak, "China: End of illusions and confrontation with the West", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ By *Asia Society*, "Decoding the 20th Party Congress", 2023, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/decoding-chinas-20th-party-congress>, (accessed May 1, 2023).

citizens following the undermining of the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong.²¹ The war in Ukraine has set back China's interest in undermining the extant world order, international institutions and the US' influence on both. In addition, those that seek to trade with China are beginning to see the jeopardy in doing so.²² The trajectory that China is on, including reunification with Taiwan, has been unchanged by Russian aggression in Ukraine. However, it has likely changed the way China seeks to exert influence over the global order and potentially extended the timeline for doing so. Internal security challenges, or unforeseen events may re-accelerate China's ambitions.

Sino-Russo Pact

China will serve Russia as a strategic partner, not only because of the attractiveness of its political model, but also because of a reliance on Chinese economic and technological support for the survival of the Russian economy. While China describes its relationship with Russia as strategic cooperation, it has a key dimension from the perspective of the security of NATO countries. Russia serves as "China's armed arm" in international relations, and how Russia handles the situation in Ukraine, and the West's reciprocal actions, will shape China's future actions, particularly concerning Taiwan.²³

Strengthening Russian-Chinese relations may intensify the threats to democratic Western countries, including through malign activity which seeks the erosion of social resilience through disinformation campaigns and challenges to security, supply chains, and technologies. For the West, the post-Cold War peace dividend has long since evaporated and attempts to include Russia in cooperative endeavors have been futile. The West must learn to contain challenges on two fronts i.e., Russian and Chinese, recognizing that a shift in alliances has already occurred. The sooner the West as a collective comprehends this reality and takes appropriate action, the better.²⁴

The Sino-Russian declaration of 4 February 2022 confirmed an asymmetric partnership, with China as the stronger partner. Consequently, China has chosen to align itself with pro-Russian positions and intensify political and economic cooperation. Beijing has expressed strengthening its relationship with Russia due to their shared opposition to the United States' global influence.²⁵ Publicly, China has stressed they will not interfere with Russian internal affairs and have not declared material support for Russia's war effort in Ukraine. China's potential to support Russia, coupled with its rhetoric on stabilizing the situation in Ukraine, may strengthen China's leverage in pursuing its own political goals as an opportunist²⁶, promoting themselves as a "peacemaker" as an example.

²¹ Eva Dou, "What is — and isn't — in the joint statement from Putin and Xi", *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/04/russia-china-xi-putin-summit-statement-beijing/>, (accessed May 12, 2023).

²² Joe McDonald, "Foreign companies are shifting investment out of China as confidence wanes, business group says", *The Associated Press*, June 20, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/china-foreign-companies-investment-trade-a47887e2c89050d291ebd169b0989cc4>, (accessed July 24, 2023).

²³ Rajan Menon, "What the United States Does in Ukraine Won't Matter in Taiwan", *Foreign Policy*, March 16, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/16/usa-china-ukraine-taiwan-credibility-resolve/>, (accessed March 17, 2023).

²⁴ Marcin Przychodniak, "China: End of illusions and confrontation with the West", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

²⁵ Laurie Chen, "Explainer: A year into Ukraine war, how has China stood by 'no limits' partner Russia?", *Reuters*, February 21, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/year-into-ukraine-war-how-has-china-stood-by-no-limits-partner-russia-2023-02-21/>, (accessed May 1, 2023).

²⁶ Ibid 23.

China vs. the West

China's vision of increasing self-sufficiency, combined with declining economic growth, the ideological dimension of its foreign policy, and their perspective regarding Taiwan, diminishes the belief in some countries that cooperation with China is a priority. These countries (e.g., Australia²⁷ and EU member States²⁸), concerned about political risks, are seeking to reduce excessive interdependence with China, despite its large population as a market, its considerable financial power, or its achievements in certain areas.

The resulting threats to the interests of the trans-Atlantic community will perpetuate the ongoing rivalry between the US and China. At worst, this rivalry could even escalate into open confrontation. This presents the EU challenges which, despite its current reluctance to fully align itself with the US's critical view of China, will not be able to return its relations with China to business as usual, especially considering the Sino-Russian partnership and Russia's continued offensive operations in Europe. The dynamics of this rivalry will largely define the relationship between the EU and the US with other countries such as Iran, Egypt, South Africa, or Brazil, which China seeks to win over as a patron rather than mere partner.²⁹

From Foes to Allies: Strengthened Russo-Iranian Ties

The war in Ukraine has been a turning point for Moscow and Tehran's relations.³⁰ It has led to the opening of multiple new areas of cooperation between the two countries.³¹ The view in Moscow and Tehran is that a lack of cooperation could be costly for both states, while there are plenty of opportunities if they work together.³² Iran has become Russia's top military backer since mid-2022, reflecting the expanding strategic alliance between the two countries.³³ The defense cooperation between Russia and Iran has raised concerns about the potential transfer of military capabilities and technology to Iran, which could impact the Middle East region.³⁴ Russia and Iran share a common opposition to Western domination and a mutual need to circumvent sanctions.³⁵ This has contributed to the deepening of their cooperation and alignment on critical global and regional questions.³⁶ Iran and Russia are nearing

²⁷ Takashi Terada, "Australia and "Interdependence Trap" by China: Means of Reducing Trade Reliance on China", *World Inside*, July 26, 2022, <https://worldinsight.com/news/politics/australia-and-interdependence-trap-by-china-means-of-reducing-trade-reliance-on-china/>, (accessed June 6, 2023).

²⁸ Jörg Wuttke, Luisa Santos, Friedolin Strack, Jürgen Matthes, Francesca Ghiretti, François Chimits, "Calibrating interdependence with China", *MERICs*, January 26, 2023, <https://www.merics.org/en/comment/merics-eu-china-opinion-pool-calibrating-interdependence-china>, (accessed June 6, 2023).

²⁹ Marcin Przychodniak, "China: End of illusions and confrontation with the West", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

³⁰ Alex Vatanka, Abdolrasool Divsallar, "Can the West Stop Russian-Iranian Convergence?", *Middle East Institute*, April 3, 2023, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/can-west-stop-russian-iranian-convergence>, (accessed May 1, 2023).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ By the editors of *The Iran Primer*, "Iran's Deepening Strategic Alliance with Russia", *The United States Institute of Peace*, April 25, 2023, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2023/feb/24/iran%E2%80%99s-deepening-strategic-alliance-russia>, (accessed May 3, 2023).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Emil Avdaliani, "Russia & Iran converge in attempt to build a new Eurasian order", *The Stimson Center*, April 11, 2023, <https://www.stimson.org/2023/russia-iran-converge-in-attempt-to-build-a-new-eurasian-order/> (accessed May 3, 2023).

³⁶ Ibid.

the signing of a comprehensive agreement on expanded cooperation.³⁷ The dynamic between the two countries has shifted, and they have managed to find common ground despite their historic rivalry.³⁸

The Global South Under Pressure: Emancipation or Opportunism

One of the most significant, but less noticed, effects of Russian aggression against Ukraine is the political emancipation of developing countries – the Global South. Many of these countries have refrained from taking sides in the conflict and to openly condemn Russia. As Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, a significant number of states (141) supported a resolution condemning Russian aggression in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on March 2. Nevertheless, approximately 50 states expressed disagreement by rejecting the UNGA resolution (5), abstaining from voting (35), or not participating in the vote at all (12).³⁹ Notably, these states belong to the Global South. Furthermore, no country from the Global South has joined Western sanctions against Russia, indicating a lack of inclination to isolate Russia internationally. By rejecting Western pressure to condemn Russia, the developing countries aimed to assert their independence in international relations.⁴⁰ Their intent was to demonstrate that their decision-making process is not dictated by external pressures but is based on a calculated assessment of their own national interests. This attitude does not necessarily indicate acceptance or support for Russian policy, but it weakens Russia's isolation and diminishes the effectiveness of Western sanctions.⁴¹ Consequently, the emancipation of the Global South did not directly result from Russian aggression but offered these countries the opportunity to assert their subjectivity on the global stage.⁴²

Prior to the war in Ukraine, Russia's influence in developing countries was relatively limited, largely stemming from their historical ties with the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. This influence was primarily concentrated on arms trade, military cooperation, and energy partnerships. However, in recent years, Russia has sought to rebuild its presence by deploying Russia's Wagner mercenaries to African nations, pursuing nuclear power contracts, and intensifying propaganda campaigns. Russia has strategically positioned itself as an alternative to the liberal order, criticizing unilateral interventions and the conditional nature of aid that is perceived as imposing Western values. Paradoxically, it is not Russia's inherent appeal that has bolstered its influence, but rather mistakes of the West.⁴³

The Russian narrative of the war in Ukraine found fertile ground in Africa and the Middle East, resonating with sentiments of anti-colonialism, accusations of Western hypocrisy and double standards,⁴⁴ and a perceived disregard for conflicts and crises in other regions of the world. Many countries of the Global South viewed the distant conflict as "not their war," but as a clash between the West and Russia. As in the past, they resisted pressure from the Trump

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Patrick Kugiel, "Emancipation of the Global South", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Patrick Kugiel, "Emancipation of the Global South", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *double standard* – a rule, principle, judgement, etc., viewed as applying more strictly to one group of people, set of circumstances, etc., than to another. Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2023, <https://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=Double+standard&searchBtn=Search>, (accessed June 6, 2023).

administration to choose one side of the rivalry between the US and China, and now they hesitated to ally themselves either exclusively with the West or Russia.⁴⁵

The countries in the Global South do not feel compelled to defend an international order based on principles of law, which they often perceive as unfavorable and unfair to developing nations. Their concerns about the ramifications of Western sanctions outweigh their apprehensions about Russian aggression. For instance, Indian Prime Minister Modi asserted that the world is currently in a state of chaos and emphasized that developing countries, despite not being the primary instigators of global challenges, bear the brunt of the consequences. He further proclaimed that the time has come for the Global South, representing three-quarters of humanity, to no longer be excluded from the benefits of development. Consequently, efforts must be made to transform the global system of political and financial governance.⁴⁶

In summary, Russia's increasing strength in the context of developing countries can be seen as a weakness of the West. The mistakes and perceived shortcomings of Western approaches have inadvertently provided Russia with an opportunity to expand its influence and challenge the prevailing international order. This shifting dynamic has prompted the countries in the Global South to question their allegiances and prioritize their own national interests in navigating the complexities of global politics and governance.⁴⁷

The growing emancipation of the countries of the Global South is the outcome of a gradual and relative process marked by their increasing wealth and international significance. Their decision to assert their independence reflects their perception of being adequately prepared for such a step. After the end of the Cold War, the G7 countries, representing the seven wealthiest nations, accounted for over half of the global GDP (based on purchasing power parity), while two billion people in the Global South lived in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$2.15 per day.⁴⁸ Over the following three decades, the share of G7 economies in global GDP has declined to 30%, while the number of individuals living in poverty in the Global South has decreased to 650 million. Moreover, the contribution of developing countries to world GDP has increased from 37% in 1990 to 58% in 2022.⁴⁹

Developing countries have not only experienced a growth in their wealth and self-confidence but have also cultivated alternative economic and political partnerships that diverge from traditional Western influence. The declining influence of the West may enable the Global South to exercise greater self-agency and make independent choices. Russia assumes a significant role in this complex tapestry, as its involvement contributes to the further enhancement of these countries' autonomy in the realm of international politics.⁵⁰

Conclusions

The emergence of the Global South as a significant player on the world stage signifies a shift in the global order, leading to a more intricate and competitive international environment. The once-assured Western influence in these

⁴⁵ Sara Nowacka Jędrzej Czerep, "Fertile ground: How Africa and the Arab World found common language with Russia on Ukraine", *PISM*, Jan 17, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publications/fertile-ground-how-africa-and-the-arab-world-found-common-language-with-russia-on-ukraine>, (accessed May 11, 2023).

⁴⁶ Ibid 41.

⁴⁷ Ibid 41

⁴⁸ Ibid 41.

⁴⁹ Patrick Kugiel, "Emancipation of the Global South", *PISM*, May 15, 2023, <https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/point-of-no-return-the-transformation-of-the-global-order-after-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>, (accessed May 18, 2023).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

countries can no longer be taken for granted. The Global South has become a hotly contested arena for major powers seeking to secure their interests and exert their influence.

Russia, isolated by the West due to its actions in Ukraine, is determined to maintain and enhance its presence in developing countries. By framing the conflict in Ukraine as an ideological clash between the affluent North and the rest of the world, Russia aims to challenge US dominance and garner support from nations in the Global South. In addition to military cooperation, Russia employs economic tools such as offering energy resources, agricultural product, and fertilizers at competitive prices to strengthen its impact. Russia's strategy seeks to exploit the emerging North-South divide and use it to forge political and economic partnerships that undermine the significance of international isolation and sanctions upon them. This poses a considerable risk to the West and its interests in the Global South.

The war in Ukraine has led to a deepening of the strategic alliance between Russia and Iran, with potential implications for the region and global security. Therefore, it is important for USCENTCOM to expand partnerships with regional actors who share common concerns about Russian, Chinese, or Iranian influence. Particular attention should be paid to China, Russia, and Iran collaboration in the AOR and how these countries can benefit from each other through cooperation and the use of certain capabilities.⁵¹ US and CENTCOM approach in the region should be carefully calibrated so as to retain stability, resolve underlying grievances while reassuring partners and advertise US willingness to engage bilaterally and multilaterally as a reliable partner. It should be borne in mind that the binary approach of “you're with us or against us,” no longer applies in today's world. With many smaller nations now being more assertive, their sovereignty and ambitions are an important factor to consider when dealing with them. This is particularly germane when considering GCC and CASA nations who look in all directions in pursuit of their own interests.

By acknowledging the multipolarity in foreign affairs and adopting a more nuanced and inclusive approach, US CENTCOM can enhance its position as a preferred partner in the Middle East and CASA, contributing to regional stability and cooperation.

⁵¹ Hubert Mroz, Essa Almansoori, „The Red Sea – Neglected Nexus“, USCENTCOM CSAG’s Strategic Paper, 14 April 2023.