

Russia-Ukraine War: Global and Regional Impacts in the Context of Türkiye's Seeking Balance

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Abstract: This article aims to reveal the historical background and causes of the Russia-Ukraine War, analyze its global and regional consequences in the context of Turkey's search for balance, and ultimately predict its possible effects in the future. In this context, a literature review was made at the beginning, and the developments from the beginning of the war until today were listed. In continuation, the sanctions of the international community against the annexation of some regions in Ukraine by the Russian Federation (RF) were explained in general terms. In this process, all of the effects of the war were searched in the selected dimensions, by specifying the diplomacy and mediation efforts carried out by Türkiye within the scope of the search for balance. This study was conducted with the qualitative research method, which includes the collection, evaluation and analysis of data from various sources. On the conclusion, the situation reached as a result of the policies followed by the global and regional actors, including Türkiye, have been evaluated for the future by the forecasting possible developments in international politics.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, Türkiye, War, International Politics

1. Introduction

Ukraine, one of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) countries, declared its independence in 1991, like the others, turned its direction to the West and formed its policies until today within the framework of the goal of developing relations with EU countries and finally becoming a member of this community and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On the other hand, Russian Federation (RF), has never lost its interest in Ukraine, which has an important place in its history, especially when it was in the USSR, a large agricultural country and granary with its fertile lands.

RF, which showed that it will continue this stance with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, has recently ignited the fuse of war by encouraging the establishment of de facto countries in Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk and Luhansk in the western region of Ukraine. When Zelenski, who was elected President of Ukraine in 2019, did not step back from his goal of becoming a member of the EU and especially NATO, the RF Army, which used the border conflict as an excuse, started to attack to Ukraine on February 24, 2022. And despite the peace talks, it turned into a war that has continued until today which has become a phenomenon that has great effects for the world trying to get rid of the effects of the pandemic.

With this article, it is aimed to research the global and regional effects of the Russia-Ukraine War by revealing the historical process in the context of Türkiye's search for balance within the scope of peace efforts. In addition, solution proposals will be presented by analyzing the perspective in international political economy due to the war in question and, finally, predictions will be made by evaluating the global and regional developments that may be experienced in the future.

2. Literature Review

Although it has not been three years since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, it is possible to find many researches and reports on the subject in the literature. In this article, the underlying ones will be ranked.

UN's briefing no. 1 published in April 2022 covers the global impact of war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems. Mbah and Wasum (2022) research the economic impacts of the war on the global

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actors, specifically in USA, Canada, UK and EU. Liadze, Macchiarelli, Mortimer-Lee and Juanino (2023) estimate in their study that the war would add up to 3% to global inflation and reduce the level of global GDP 1% by 2023. Steinbach (2023) underlines that Russia took advantage of the war about foreign trade until August 2002 that Ukraine lost \$19.4 billion in exports, while Russia gained \$68.3 billion. Ece (2022) studies the war's impact on foreign trade and also global security taking attention to the importance of Montreux Convention in her journal. Moreover, Sezgin (2022) researches specifically how the war will effect the Turkish trade.

While Demir (2022) researches reasons and impacts of the war, Sezer (2024) analyzes "the geopolitical consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war" in her study considering that "Russia would plan a military intervention against the Baltic states in the future." On another perspective, Breuer (2022) asserts in his study that Europe may now be on the eve of a new cold war after February 24, 2022. Additionally, Çatuk (2023) examines the issue by focusing on the impact of the war on Türkiye's foreign trade and tourism.

This war caused many consequences about food security. In this context, Ozili (2022) explores the global economic consequence of the Russia-Ukraine War in the month of invasion especially in the food and food ingredients. Hassen and el-Bilali (2022) also examine the impacts on the food security in the world. Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE)'s colleague Bown (2022) arranges a "sanctions timeline" for the Russia's war on Ukraine.

On the other hand, the global energy issues also got affected largely because of the war. Şahin and Narin (2022) state that energy security concerns have increased, many countries have re-evaluated their dependence on Russian natural gas and turned to alternative efforts such as expanding Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) infrastructure and increasing renewable energy production in their proceeding. In this context, Henderson (2024) puts forth that gas flows from Russia to Europe has fallen by 80% leading to a dramatic surge in LNG imports to the EU, which has in turn affected prices and trade flows in the rest of the global energy economy.

In this work, the selected dimensions all of the effects of the war were examined in details as the other researchs handled, and researches especially the diplomacy, mediation and peace efforts carried out by Türkiye within the scope of the search for balance. Additionally, the changing security needs and military doctrine were briefly handled in this journal. Therefore, this study will give a different perspective to Russia-Ukraine War by dissociating from other studies mentioned above.

3. Method

This study was conducted with the qualitative research method which includes analyzing statistical data of international organizations and also scanning news and the other media sources. By evaluating the obtained data, it is aimed to reach the findings as a result of the analysis and make an accurate prediction about the international politics.

4. Russia-Ukraine War in The Historical Process and Sanctions

4.1. Russia-Ukraine war

A part of the territory of the State of Kievan Rus, which is considered to have formed the first core of the Russian State in history and was founded by Knez Oleg in 882, is located in the territory of today's Ukraine (Semercioğlu, 2020, p. 139). Ukraine, which has a long history and same origin with Russia, as it turned its direction to the West with the support of its people after gaining its independence in 1991, have tense relations until today.

After the election of pro-Russian Victor Yanukovych as the head of state in Ukraine in 2010, the "Cooperation Agreement" was signed with the RF and the "Partnership and Cooperation Agreement"

which was signed with the EU in 1998 was suspended. And the political tension in the country increased because of this political choice. Large masses of people who opposed these policies of the government made great protests and these actions made Yanukovych fall from power and ensured that Arseni Yatsenyuk became the prime minister. In March 2014, because of the referendum held in Crimea with the encouragement of the RF, an autonomous de facto state was established. Despite the opposition of the USA, EU, Türkiye and many countries and also not being accepted by the majority in the UN General Assembly, some countries, such as Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea knew this new state (Semercioğlu, 2016, pp. 190-191).

Tensions between the two countries have escalated since 2021 due to the separatist actions allegedly promoted by the RF, which has increased in the Donbas region in recent years by pro-Russian groups in Ukraine. On the other hand, NATO's 'Steadfast Defender 2021 Exercise', which was carried out with 28,000 soldiers with the participation of 26 member countries in May 2021, was carefully monitored by the RF (Euronews, 2021). In addition, the increase of the military power of the USA by starting to establish military bases in Alexandroupoli and Volos by the USA was seen as a threat on the opposite front, and these developments caused the perception of being surrounded by Russia (AA, 2022a).

As a result of all these developments, the RF, which has been carrying out exercises by concentrating on the Ukrainian border with a military force of more than 100 thousand since November 2021, started an attack on Ukraine in February 2022, citing the border conflicts. On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia had begun land, sea and air attacks in Ukraine to disarm, to denazify and stop the genocide against Russians on Ukrainian territory. In response, US President Biden declared the attack as "unprovoked and unjustified" and announced that the most severe sanctions would be imposed on Russia. On March 2, 141 of 193 UN member states condemned the Russian occupation of Ukraine and voted to demand the immediate withdrawal of the Russian Army from Ukrainian territory (Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

Mostly women and children, approximately 10 million refugees, fled from Ukraine mostly to Poland and the other neighboring countries. As a result of the RF Army offensives, referendums are held in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia and Kherson, which it occupied in Ukraine, to end on September 27, 2022. And it is desired to create de facto autonomous states in the said regions. Ukraine and the West stated that this is unacceptable and contrary to international law. In addition, they declared that they would not recognize such a development (NTV, 2022). However, after the four regions referendum's positive conclusion, RF President Putin declared that 104,000 square kilometers of eastern and southern Ukraine would become part of Russia (New York Times, 2024).

Starting from the second half of 2022, the Ukrainian Army has regained some of the territory of their country by counterattacks with the support of millions of USD of weapons and ammunition aid provided by the USA and western countries. In March 2023, the International Criminal Court in the Hague issued an arrest warrant for many Russian officials including RF President Putin, on the grounds that they committed war crimes. In May 2023, after 9 months of bloody conflict, the Russian Army conquered Bakhmut. In June 2023, the Ukrainian Army launched a counterattack with the support of tanks and other heavy weapons provided by Western Countries and tried to pierce the Russian defense line in many places. After the failure of Ukraine's 2023 counter-offensive, the Russian army, which gained battlefield momentum with the advantage of long-range firepower and heavy weapons, regained the upper hand and opened a new front by attacking the Kharkiv region in May 2024 (Reuters, 2024).

By September 2024, the Russian Ukraine War continues at full speed and continues to cause civilian and military losses on both sides. Although Putin stated in his statement at the beginning of 2024 that he wanted to end "the war in Ukraine as soon as possible, but only on its own terms", it does not seem possible for it to end for a long time (BBC News Türkiye, 2024a). It is understood that with this strategy,

the RF wanted to create a buffer zone with these regions and Crimea between Ukraine which will extend from Luhansk to the Black Sea, and this strategy achieved success.

4.2. Sanctions and RF's response

The RF's attack and invasion of Ukraine caused a great reaction in the international community and a call was made to end the operation immediately. As the RF did not take a step back and continued its stance, the USA and the West began to impose economic and military sanctions instead of using military force. Some of these are listed below (Ozili, 2022, pp. 7-9):

- Preventing RF banks from using the SWIFT system used by nearly 200 countries,
- Suspension of RF's Nord Stream 2 Gas Pipeline Project by Germany,
- Restriction of the export of defense industry, war and space technology products to the RF by the USA,
- Blocking the accounts of RF companies in their banks within the scope of financial sanctions by the EU, stopping the sale of oil production, air and spacecraft equipment, closing the airspace to aircraft, exclusion from cultural events and sports organisations such as UEFA Champions League,
- Restriction of trade with the RF by Canada,
- Freezing RF's individuals assets, by Switzerland and Japan,
- Sanctions by the UK on RF banks and a ban on airspace for RF's Aeroflot aircrafts.
- The US treasury sanctions over 100 individuals and entities in numerous third countries for the facilitation and procurement of weapons and technologies to RF.

In contrast, the RF declared that it is prepared for a global economic war by challenging all of these sanctions and will implement counter-sanctions. In this context, Russia restricted the export of more than 200 products, including medical supplies, communication and agricultural products, as well as various vehicles and equipment. Additionally, it banned Russian companies from paying dividends to their overseas shareholders. To protect the value of the ruble and reduce the need for foreign currency, Russia introduced a requirement that some transactions be conducted in rubles. Furthermore, Russia's decision to prohibit foreign cargoes and transportation from using its waterways and airspace has disrupted the global supply chain, making it very difficult to maintain (Ozili, 2022, pp. 9-10).

It is clear that as a result of all these sanctions, the decrease in the trade of raw materials and final goods, the supply interruption of foreign international companies, the reducing in consumer and industrial demand, the shrinkage of the domestic market and the lower than expected oil and natural gas prices adversely affected the RF economy. On the other hand, approximately one-third of foreign direct investments to RF come from the USA, the UK and France paused (Aslanlı, 2022, pp. 19-20). Under these conditions, it is estimated by many experts that RF's GDP may shrink by around 10 % by the end of 2023, RF's GDP actualized as 2,2 trillion USD by decreasing 12 % in the same year (Worldbank, 2024).

5. Global and Regional Effects of War in the Context of Türkiye's Search for Balance

5.1. Türkiye's search for balance and its reflections

Since the aforementioned war started, Türkiye has carried out an important diplomacy process by using all its means, especially the peace efforts carried out by President R. Tayyip Erdoğan at the level of heads of state.

After the war started, the first peace meeting between the two countries was held in Istanbul on March 29, 2022, hosted by President Erdoğan. Although there was no positive result from the negotiations

between the delegations, it was considered an important development in terms of the fact that there is still hope for peace and that communication channels are open (Troianovski, 2022).

In addition to many phone calls, President Erdoğan met face-to-face with RF President Vladimir Putin in Tehran on July 19, Sochi on August 5, and finally in Samarkand on September 16, 2022. On the other hand, President Erdoğan met with President Vladimir Zelenski of Ukraine on August 18, 2022 in Lviv (TRT Haber, 2022; CNN Türk, 2024; BBC News Türkçe, 2024b).

Türkiye continued its peace efforts by allowing the Foreign Ministers of the two countries to meet face to face at the Diplomacy Forum held in Antalya on March 11-13, 2022 (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2022). And also, 'Black Sea Region Grain Initiative Summit' was held by the authorities of Türkiye, RF and Ukraine with the participation of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on August 20, 2022. And measures were taken to ensure safe delivery of grains and other food products from Ukraine and RF to the world market (A Haber, 2022). RF President Putin thanked to Turkish counterpart Erdoğan for his efforts to coordinate the meetings between two countries' delegation in this summit (Daily Sabah, 2024). On the other hand, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Smytso Kuleba stated, "Türkiye is the most successful state in the conflict mediation about to end the war between RF and Ukraine" (AA, 2022b).

As another important development, 'Global Maritime Forum 2022 Annual Summit' was held in New York on September 22, 2022. General Secretary of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Rebeca Gryspan emphasized the importance of the 'Black Sea Region Grain Initiative' in this summit stating that "4 million metric ton grain being shipped out of Ukraine but it is not well enough and UNCTAD would try to effort much grain shipping and enough fertilizers to feed in next year for coming down the food prices especially in developing countries" (Gryspan, 2022).

Despite the peace efforts between the two countries, led by Türkiye, the UN and the International Community could not bring an end to the ongoing war. Although it did not give a clear date for Western Ukraine's NATO and EU membership, it showed its military support by providing weapons, equipment and financial resources without using force, and started to impose heavy economic and political sanctions against the RF, in which many countries participated (Semercioğlu, 2022, p. 151).

Ukrainian President Zelensky met with President Erdoğan in Istanbul on March 8, 2024 and held a joint press conference. President Erdoğan particularly emphasized Türkiye's efforts to end the war and stated that "the developments in the war were evaluated with his counterpart and that no steps were taken to hold negotiations by the international community and the parties to the war from the time." As concrete results of Turkey's peace efforts; it is possible to point out the developments such as the grain agreement in July 2022 and the exchange of prisoners of war between Russia and Ukraine. It is known also that RF did not extend the agreement after July 2023, citing restrictions on grain exports (AA, 2024).

On July 11, 2024, President Erdoğan met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Washington on the margins of the NATO Summit, and the course of the Ukraine-Russia war and regional and global issues were discussed in the meeting. Stating that Turkey continues its efforts to end the Ukraine-Russia war with a just peace, President Erdoğan also declared that they are trying to revive the Black Sea Grain Initiative and that Türkiye is ready for all kinds of initiatives, including mediation, to prepare the ground for peace (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı, 2024).

In addition to all these developments, the war that started with Palestine-Israel in Gaza in December 2023 caused the Ukraine-Russia war to fall behind in international politics, causing it to fall into the background, and the relative relaxation of the West's support for Ukraine reduced the negative impact of this issue on Türkiye-RF Relations.

5.2. Global and regional effects of war

Since the beginning of the RF-Ukraine war, it has created and continues to create significant effects in many dimensions, especially in the global economy, which has deteriorated with the effect of the pandemic. In addition to the effects of this war on the global economy and energy issues, it also had very important political and humanitarian consequences and a great impact on the development of security policies and military doctrines. All of these effects have been analyzed under the following headings.

5.2.1. Economic

As of 2023, RF which is a member of G8 has a GDP of 2.02 trillion USD and Ukraine has a GDP of 178.75 billion USD. The war between the two countries not only caused a great collapse for their own economies, but also created negativities for the global economy with a size of 96.1 trillion USD (Worldbank, 2024). It is reported that the EU and its Member States have supported Ukraine with almost €88 billion in this war (as of January 2024), including financial, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian and military aid (European Parliament, 2024).

RF and Ukraine provide 30% of the world's wheat and barley, 20% of corn and 50% of sunflower oil. The difficulties in sending these products to the world markets due to the war caused an increase in food prices. For this reason, food prices increased 34% in April 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year. At the same time, crude oil prices have increased 60% and fertilizer prices have more than 50% (UNCTAD, 2022). On the other hand, the destruction of Ukrainian ports and some of the natural gas pipelines has also led to a decrease in the grain and natural gas shipments to be made. In addition to the RF's curtailment of natural gas, this caused some of the natural gas to be carried by ships. And as the transports made by ship became more expensive due to the increase in fuel oil, it caused the countries in need to procure natural gas at an even higher price. The increase in the cost of electricity and fertilizer produced from natural gas has increased the prices of energy inputs and agricultural production. And as a result, the cost of all kinds of products and food has increased as a chain effect has occurred.

Another negative development experienced in the global economy is the excessive increase in shipping and freight costs. Due to the sudden increase in the global supply of goods and services after the pandemic, the need for bulk carriers increased by 30 % for 2022. For this reason, the increase in transport costs caused the prices of all trade goods and services, especially food products, to increase rapidly, thus causing an unusual increase in inflation in the countries (UNCTAD, 2022).

Because of all these developments, including developed countries such as the USA, the UK and the EU, high inflation figures reached to 7%, as 50% in the developing countries, and over 200% in poor countries in 2023. The inflation rates for the selected countries are shown in the table below.

Table 1

Inflation Rates for the Selected Countries, 2023

	Enflation %
PRC	0.2
USA	4.1
UK	6.8
Italy	5.6
Türkiye	53.90
Iran	44.60
Lebanon	221.30

Source: World Bank, 2024

5.2.2. Politics

In the face of the sanctions imposed by NATO and the West and the unexpected military resistance of Ukraine, the RF increased its efforts to develop cooperation with previously formed blocs such as the Shingai Five, including China and India. Finally, at the meeting held in Samarkand-Uzbekistan in September 2022, in which Türkiye was represented as a guest at the Presidential level, decisions were taken on cooperation in primarily in security, economic, digital/technological, medical issues and in the fight against infectious diseases (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2022).

The RF's policies, which challenge the US's global hegemony, while China's policies aiming to gain economic leadership by attaining more comfortable access to the Western-controlled markets and to break the US dominance in the Pacific, are in a position to shake the world's multidimensional and Western's economic, political and cultural power. It can be seen as an indicator of this that the RF captured and annexed the regions that RF determined as a strategic target, especially as a result of the Ukrainian war, and stretching from the North to the Black Sea. In the next period, using the advantage of having energy, rich natural and large human resources, the possibility of forming a stronger bloc against the West around the Shanghai Five is not far away.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused especially the Eastern European and Nordic countries to review their security measures and take precautions against a possible Russo intervention. Finland, which has a 1340 km long border with Russia, decided to enter under the NATO security umbrella in order to avoid a Russian invasion again, as happened in history, and in the same way, Sweden decided to become a member of the same organization in case of a possible Russian threat. In this context, NATO decided to include these two countries, which had previously remained militarily neutral, and at the same time to increase the Rapid Reaction Force from 40,000 to 300,000.

On March 7, 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) decided to arrest President Vladimir Putin and Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Alekseyevna, in accordance with the Rome Statute, due to their actions and responsibilities that caused harm, especially to children and innocent civilians, during the Ukrainian War International (International Criminal Court, 2023). On the other hand, RF, similar to its previous practices, declared that they do not recognize the relevant international court and its decisions, and stated that the decision has no importance for them. Despite this, it is certain that it is a restrictive element, especially for the travels that Putin will have to make within the framework of international meetings and negotiations (Beaumont, 2023).

On the other hand, Putin attended the meeting held in Astana in July 2024 and met with the leaders of the participating countries, especially in order to strengthen his relations with the Shanghai Five countries. He also had a meeting with the President of Türkiye, R. Tayyip Erdoğan, who attended as an observer, and many issues were discussed including the latest situation in Syria and mediation for peace in the Ukrainian War (Gezer, 2024).

It was also emphasized that bilateral relations between Russia and Turkey are progressing despite current global challenges. Foreign trade between the two countries reached a value of 55 billion USD, and 6.3 million Russian tourists visited Turkey in 2023. Additionally, cooperation on the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant and other energy sectors is set to continue (President of Russia, 2024).

5.2.3. Energy

After the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the natural gas prices accelerated much more than before due to RF decreasing the supply because of the sanctions (UNCTAD, 2022). RF's Gazprom announced that as of July 2022, it will reduce the natural gas shipments to EU countries from the Nord Stream pipeline by nearly 60 %, using the maintenance works as an excuse. Therefore, experts calculate that if there is no positive development, the decrease in natural gas imports used for industry

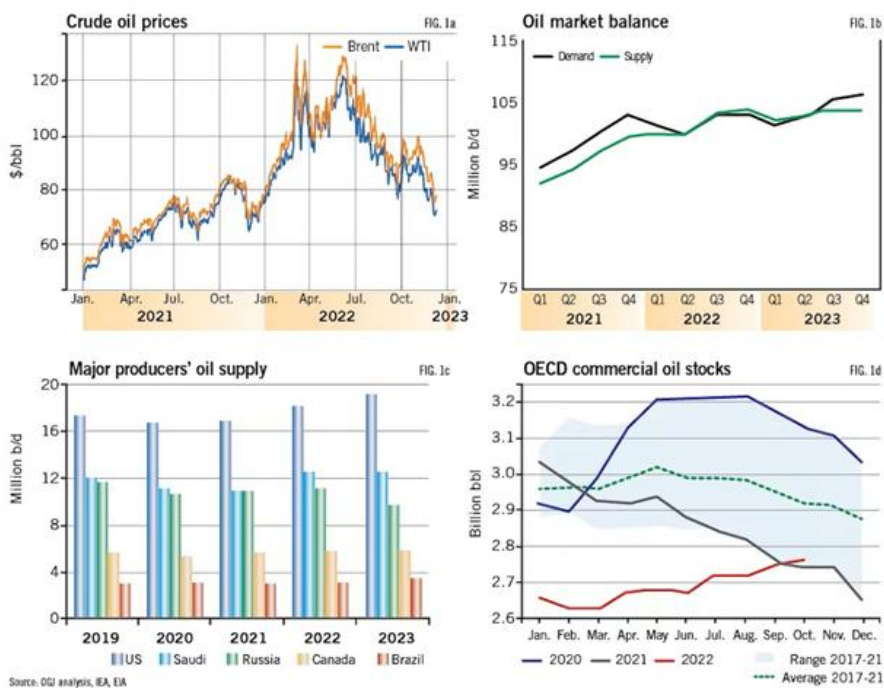
and electricity production in EU countries will reach 16 billion m³, resulting in a natural gas import shortage of approximately 10% in total (AP, 2022).

Oil and natural gas export revenues are at the forefront of the main income sources of the RF economy, which corresponds to approximately half of the revenues in its budget. Owning 26% of the world's natural gas reserves, 23% of coal reserves and 13% of oil reserves (Semercioğlu, 2016, p. 193). Russia is in the three major producers in the World and is an alternative to the Middle East countries in this regard. After the war began, the crude oil prices reached 130 USD/bbl as of January 2022.

In EU countries, natural gas is mainly used in electricity generation, heating of residences and workplaces, and industrial production processes. As a result of the sanctions imposed on Russia and RF's use of natural gas exports to Europe as leverage, while the EU imports more than 40 % of its total natural gas from Russia in 2021, this rate has decreased to 8 % by 2023. Focusing on alternative supplier countries such as Norway and the USA, increasing energy resources and focusing on LNG imports from USA were effective in this decrease. The amount of LNG imported from the USA in 2023 increased three times compared to 2021 (European Council, 2024). Crude Oil Prices, Oil Market Balance, Major Producers, OECD Commercial Oil Stocks are shown in the Figure 1.

Figure 1

Crude Oil Prices, Oil Market Balance, Major Producers, OECD Commercial Oil Stocks



Source: (Xu & Hammer, 2023).

Due to the increase in input costs because of these policies followed and the higher prices of alternatively supplied LNG and natural gas transported by ships, input costs will increase and this will cause directly prices to rise. So that this caused the highest inflation experienced in recent years to continue for a while and cause higher losses in the GDP of countries that cannot manage this process well (Bella et al, 2022).

5.2.4. Sociocultural and humanitarian dimension

It is estimated that the number of people who crossed the border of Ukraine and went to neighboring and other countries, as of October 2022, was approximately 11 million, and 2.5 million to other

countries. According to UNCHR 6.25 million individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe. It is known that most of these people, mostly women (87%) and children, went to Poland (approximately 1.5 million people), and followed by the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary (UNHCR, 2022).

It is estimated that approximately 5 million children of school age in Ukraine need educational support due to the war. When we add displaced children and destroyed educational institutions and teacher shortages, this number is likely to reach 5.5 million. On the other hand, it is clear that people who have been displaced by the war and lost their relatives, parents or children in the war will need psychological support. Additionally, it would be beneficial to support people who have taken refuge in different countries with adaptation and integration programs to the host countries (ACAPS, 2022).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), other and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) are trying to take some measures for humanitarian aid both within Ukraine and in its neighboring countries. In this context, by establishing protection and support hubs on the transit routes, these organisations try to provide services especially for children, the elderly, the sick and those in need of help health, psychological support, education, etc. In addition, cash support is provided by UNHCR until they find a job or receive sufficient social support in the countries they migrate to.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the war caused great damage to Ukraine's historical and cultural heritage, as well as to its art buildings and museums. As a result of missiles and heavy bombardment, it is seen that historical buildings and structures, along with many cultural heritages, have been destroyed (Datskevych, 2022). Ultimately, all these losses should also be considered a loss of human civilization.

Additionally, the war between RF and Ukraine has had significant effects in the field of tourism. These are; a) restriction of the citizens' tourism activities of the two countries and therefore the decrease in the income of the countries engaged in tourism, b) the prevention of international flights due to the closure of the airspace in the war zone and the change of their routes, c) the decrease in other tourist movements because of the lack of enough tourism and travel security, and Russian and Ukrainian citizens' travel within the country or to very close regions due to their decreasing purchasing power as a result of economic difficulties.

Because of this conflict, the states in the tourism destination of two countries could translate into a loss of approximately 45 billion USD in tourism receipts in 2022. Especially, EU and Balkan countries and Türkiye are the leading countries that will suffer from tourism income loss due to the war in question. Again, there has been a decrease in the number of tourists in Bulgaria and Montenegro in the Balkans, as the number of Russians and Ukrainians, who had increased in previous years, did not come due to the war (Nikolova, 2022). Additionally, tourism flights dropped to Moldova with 69%, Slovenia with 42%, Latvia with 38%, and Finland 36% in 2022 (UN Tourism, 2024). On the other hand, due to the conflicts, the number of tourists coming from other countries due to security concerns to countries close to the war zone has also decreased.

5.2.5. Changing security needs and military doctrines

After the independence on 1991, Ukraine that is a neighbor and bridge with Europe and has deep historical and cultural ties with Russia, turned its face to the West and has increased its social acceptance since the 2000s. The last President Zelensky's insistence on this policy and even his statements that they would become a member of the EU and NATO caused the RF to perceive it as a threat to its national security. On the other hand, Russia's need to use Ukraine's geostrategic position in order to become a superior power again and its desire to increase its presence in the Black Sea can be seen as the strategic reasons for this operation.

Starting from April 2021, the Russian Army began to build up on the Ukrainian border, turning this buildup into a large army and launching a conventional attack in February 2022. It was not a

development that could be foreseen by both the international community and many military experts. Because it was believed that the USA, EU and NATO's deterrence and pro-Ukrainian attitude could deter Russia, and that it could not carry out this operation against the reaction of the international public and possible sanctions. However, despite all these conditions, the RF started to invade Ukrainian lands by launching a classic joint operation in which using a powerful air force, fire support guns and missiles and armored units were used heavily. Having seen the doctrine of using air power and long-range fire support vehicles, which shaped the basis of this operation, as in the Iraq Gulf wars, Russia has accelerated its modernization projects within this framework after 2000's. In addition, Russian Army has virtually rehearsed its operations in Syria by supporting its Air Force as well as its Naval Forces with long-range missiles (Baev, 2022, pp. 10-11).

Although both Russia and much of the international community initially expected the RF to conquer the targeted regions in Ukraine quickly—given its military doctrine, strategic war plans, and strong army—the Ukrainian forces defied these expectations. Armed with weapons, ammunition, air defense systems, and drones supplied by the West, as well as supported by volunteer fighters and determined commanders; the Ukrainian Army successfully launched counteroffensives and recaptured many regions. Consequently, this war has underscored the critical importance of accurately assessing security needs and effectively applying military doctrines on the battlefield.

6. Conclusion

As a result of all these developments, it will be possible to deepen the analysis by revealing the winners and losers of the examined war. It is also necessary to take into account the background of the conflict, which started with Ukraine's aim of joining the West and NATO membership, and the RF took action against the USA and NATO, which also tried to surround it. The political economy preference of the USA, which remained the only hegemonic power after the cold war, turned inward with the Trump administration, and as a result of Biden's coming to power in 2021, it turned into an international policy centered on global and hard power. It seems that the primary goal of the USA is to prevent the hegemonic leadership of China, which is expected to sit on the top of the world economically in the 2030s. In this framework, it is in the national interests of the USA that countries such as China, RF and India, which are progressing towards becoming a global power, are interrupted.

Before the Ukraine War, the USA and NATO's military build-up in Eastern Europe and taking measures to contain it, as if there was a threat, was perceived as a hostile policy towards itself by the RF. On the other hand, the RF also supported the separatist actions by encouraging the people of Russian ethnic identity in eastern Ukraine, and eventually carried out activities towards the goal of establishing buffer zones at the western end of its border from Crimea to the north. While applying this, it is seen that especially Putin and his staff in the historical process, Russia has based the establishment on the territory of Ukraine and that its peoples are from the same origin. In this process, a mentality prevails in the RF State administration, which, in the words of Putin in his article published in July 2022, states that "Russians and Ukrainians are the same people and one nation" and that "the provocation of Ukraine should be seen as an anti-Russian project implemented by the West" has been.

Due to the war, many historical buildings, factories, agricultural lands were damaged, factories, airports, roads, bridges and other facilities were destroyed, more than 10 million people were displaced, agricultural and industrial activities that form the basis of the Ukrainian economy stopped. As a result, the country suffered great damage by losing the large amount of historical and cultural accumulation and its economy was paralyzed.

On the other hand, due to the sanctions in the RF, its exports decreased and its economy shrank, it was largely isolated from the West, went backwards technologically, and the people became impoverished as a result of the high cost of the war reflected in the budget. Thousands of soldiers and civilians from

both countries died and many were injured. As a result of the decrease in energy resources, especially natural gas and oil, and grain supply, the people of all countries including the EU, especially the poor and developing countries, have become poorer and more difficult. In addition, the most basic rights and freedoms of millions of people such as accommodation, nutrition, tourism and travel activities have been restricted due to the security threat.

In addition to all the negative consequences of the war, NATO has demonstrated that it is the leading actor in the world in terms of international security by renewing its legitimacy by enlarging with Sweden and Finland. In addition, the USA tried to gain an advantage in the competition with China by managing to turn the high inflation and deteriorating economic situation after the pandemic into a positive direction with the contribution of LNG which it tripled and weapons, war equipment and ammunition exports. Again, we should not ignore the corrective effect of this war on the Biden administration's reputation, which has been damaged by the economy.

In this last war, it is possible to foresee that this process will come to an end in the near future, since the RF achieved its strategic goal by annexing four regions and taking control of these regions extending to the Black Sea, including Crimea. And the sanctions would not not be sustainable for both sides in the long run, as it is clear that Ukraine's EU and NATO membership will also take some more time. On the other hand, Türkiye, has come one step closer to its goal of becoming a 'regional power' by stepping forward in international politics due to the policies of neutral balance and peace efforts it has been following in the recent period.

In conclusion, as exemplified by the Russia-Ukraine War, wars generally have no true winners apart from arms manufacturers, while the losers are often the fallen soldiers, the elderly, women, children, and displaced populations. Furthermore, the destruction of material assets and invaluable historical artifacts—irreplaceable legacies of human civilization—has once again been witnessed. Moreover, policies pursued within the framework of the dominant hegemonic actors' interests in the international system often devolve into a form of "arm wrestling on the chessboard."

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