



ROLES INSIGHTS

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Assessment of the Political Impact of the Russo-Ukraine War

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In a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, the Russo-Ukraine War stands as a watershed event with far-reaching implications. Not only has it redrawn physical borders, but it has also significantly altered the political and strategic equations both within Europe and on the global stage. This article examines the impact of the Russo-Ukraine War on global politics and its implications for sustainable peace worldwide.

Amid a climate characterized by heightened tensions, burgeoning alliances among certain nations, and widening rifts in others, the war stands as a stark testament to the return of geopolitics. It calls into question long-standing alliances, challenges the efficacy of international institutions, and prompts us to reconsider the dynamics of power in the contemporary world. Employing data, testimonials, and policy analysis, the ensuing discussion aims to illuminate the role of the Russo-Ukraine War as a catalyst for a spectrum of political shifts, some of which may have enduring consequences.

Unity, tensions, and divisions in Europe: The so-called 'return of geopolitics'

The unity of the West

The war has precipitated a marked consolidation of solidarity among Western nations, who have collectively rallied behind Ukraine while levying sanctions against Russia. This unity has been evident in the G7, NATO, and the European Union, and it has been a major factor in Russia's failure to achieve

its initial objectives in the war. Factors that unite the West: sanctions, the provision of financial and military aid; support for Ukraine's accession to the EU and possible NATO membership for Ukraine.

The tensions and divisions within the West

The war has also created tensions within the West, as some countries have been more willing to provide military aid to Ukraine than others. This has led to disagreements over how to respond to the war, and it has raised questions about the future of the transatlantic alliance. Elements contributing to division include disagreements over the level and timing of sanctions; divergent views on NATO and EU membership, as exemplified by the case of Hungary; and the complex relationship with China, highlighted by Macron and Scholz's diplomatic visits¹, Montenegro indebtedness to China², negotiations concerning Hamburg port infrastructure³.

The return of geopolitics

The war has been a major factor in the return of geopolitics to the European continent. This is evident in the renewed focus on security and defense, and in the reassessment of relations with Russia. The war has also shown that the European Union is not yet a fully unified actor on the world stage. Current trends include a renewed focus on security and defense, a concentrated effort on NATO development, and a reassessment of relations with Russia.

Fragility and Vulnerability in Africa

The impact of the war on the environment and economics

The war has disrupted global energy markets, leading to higher oil and gas prices. This could have a negative impact on the environment in East Africa, as countries are forced to rely on more ecologically

¹ Bermingham, Finbarr. "Chinese Envoys Help Plan Likely Visits to Beijing by French and German Leaders." South China Morning Post, September 22, 2022.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3193340/chinese-envoys-help-plan-likely-visits-beijing-french-and>.

² Jankovic, Srdjan, Reid Standish, and Gjeraqina Tuhina. "Montenegro Getting European Help To Refinance Its Massive China Debt." Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, June 23, 2021.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/montenegro-china-debt-eu-assistance-refinance-1-billion-motorway/31322151.html>.

³ von der Burchard, Hans, and Gabriel Rinaldi. "China's Hamburg Port Deal in Doubt After German Security Assessment." Politico, April 12, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/china-hamburg-port-deal-doubt-germany-security-assessment-cosco-olaf-scholz/>.

harmful energy sources. It could also lead to an increase in deforestation, as countries seek to meet their energy needs.

The war has had a significant impact on the global economy, leading to higher inflation and slower growth. This could have a negative impact on Africa, which is already struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of the war on food security in West Africa

West Africa is a major importer of wheat and other grains from Russia and Ukraine. The war has disrupted these supply chains, leading to higher food prices and food insecurity. This could have a particularly devastating impact on vulnerable populations, such as those living in conflict zones or areas affected by climate change.

In Niger, the price of wheat has increased by 40% since the start of the war. This has exacerbated food security issues in a country where 20% of the population is already food insecure.⁴

In Mali, the war has disrupted the delivery of food aid to displaced people. This has led to an increase in hunger and malnutrition.⁵

In Nigeria, the war has caused a shortage of fertilizer, which is essential for agricultural production. This could lead to a decline in crop yields and an increase in food prices.⁶

The impact of the war on political stability in West Africa

The war has created a new security environment in which countries are more vulnerable to instability. This transformed security landscape has increased the risk of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons, and the disruption of economic activity. In West Africa, this could lead to an increase in conflict and violence, as well as a decline in democratic governance. Predominant trends include military coups in

⁴ Roll, Nick. "A Year into Ukraine War, Food Prices Rise and Aid Drops in Niger." Al Jazeera, March 1, 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/3/1/yearlong-russian-war-in-ukraine-still-impacts-food-aid-in-niger>.

⁵ "Mali Humanitarian Response Plan Seeks \$686 Million." UN News, February 14, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111962>.

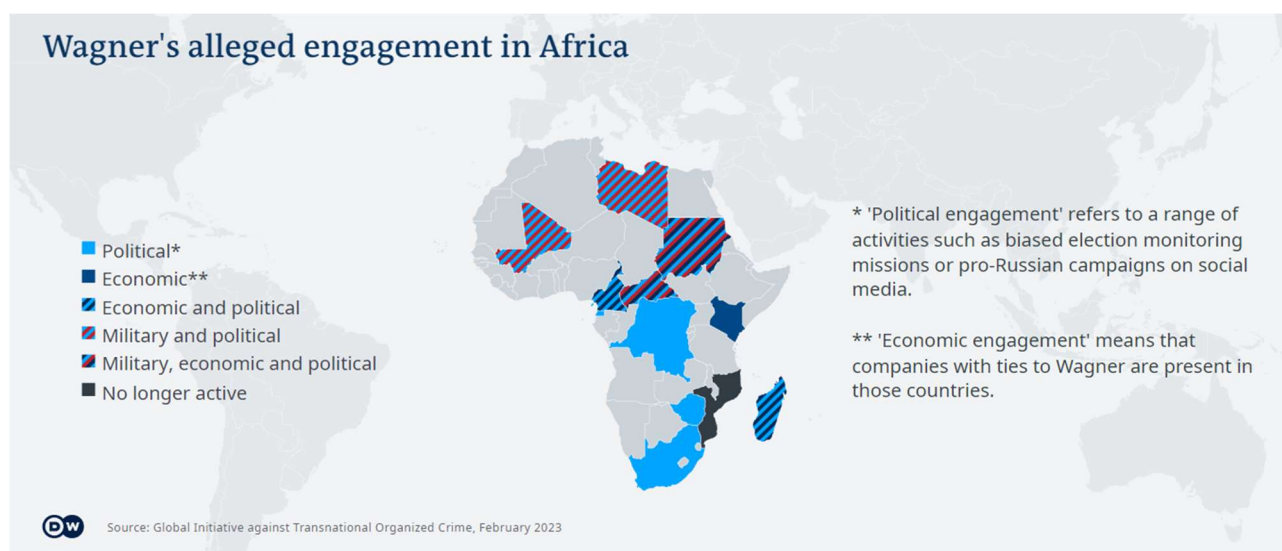
⁶ Broom, Douglas. "War-induced Fertilizer Crunch Threatens Global Food Security." World Economic Forum, March 2023. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/03/ukraine-fertilizer-food-security/>.

Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea; the weakening and possible disintegration of ECOWAS; and the rise of jihadist movements⁷.

'Wagner' case

Widely considered to be close to the Russian government, the Wagner Group has been implicated in military and security operations in countries like Libya, Sudan, and the Central African Republic. The group's presence and activities often align with Russian geopolitical objectives, such as securing natural resources, forging strategic partnerships, or counteracting Western influence in the region.

After death of Yevheniy Pryhozin it is likely that 'Wagner' will be integrated into structures of the Russian military or special services. This will strengthen Russian influence across the African continent.



Russian soft power

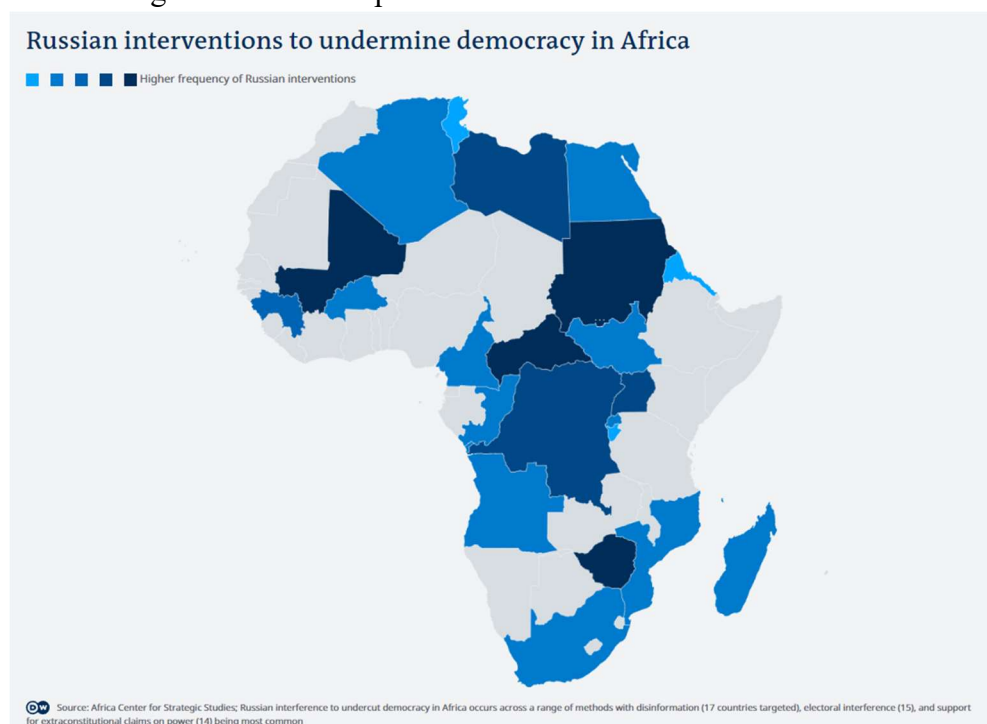
Russia has been employing a multifaceted approach to exerting soft power in Africa, which extends beyond military involvement through organizations like the Wagner Group to include influence via media and religious institutions.

Russia Today (RT), the state-funded international television network, plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions about Russia and global politics in Africa. By offering an alternative narrative to Western

⁷ Zimmerman, Katherine, and Nathan Vincent. "The State of al Qaeda and ISIS in 2023." American Enterprise Institute, September 11, 2023. <https://www.aei.org/articles/the-state-of-al-qaeda-and-isis-in-2023/>.

media outlets, RT seeks to influence public opinion and policy debates, serving as a critical tool in Russia's soft power arsenal.

The Russian Orthodox Church has been active in various African countries, often working in tandem with Russian diplomatic and cultural missions. By promoting Orthodox Christianity, the Church not only extends its religious reach but also serves as a vehicle for Russian cultural and ethical norms, thus contributing to Russia's soft power influence.⁸



Chinese economic influence

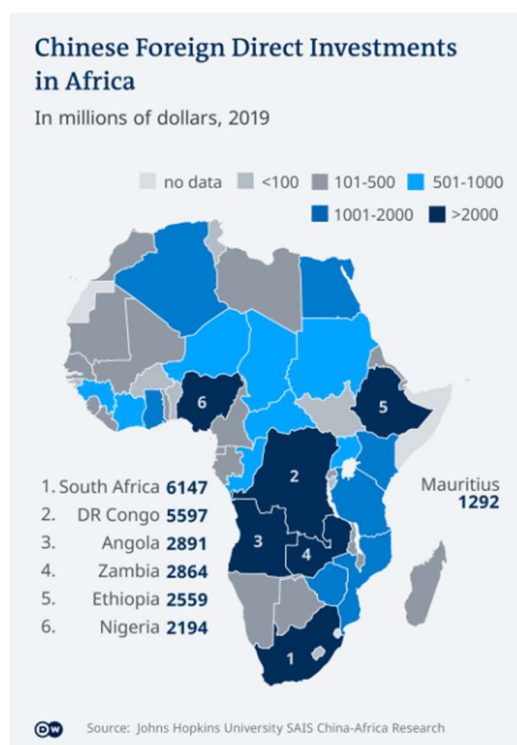
China's economic influence in Africa has become a focal point in the discourse on global geopolitics and international economics. Through a blend of investment, trade, and development initiatives, China has rapidly become one of the continent's most significant partners.

China's Belt and Road Initiative has been a cornerstone of its economic engagement with Africa. This ambitious project aims to connect various African countries through a network of infrastructure

⁸ Rozanskij, Vladimir. "The Alliance Between the Russian Orthodox Church and Ethiopia is Strengthened." AsiaNews, February 17, 2023. <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/The-alliance-between-the-Russian-Orthodox-Church-and-Ethiopia-is-strengthened-57772.html>.

projects, thereby creating new avenues for trade and investment. The BRI serves as a manifestation of China's long-term economic vision for its engagement with the continent.⁹

One of the more contentious aspects of China's involvement in Africa is the issue of "debt diplomacy". Critics argue that the large loans and financing options provided by China for infrastructure projects could lead to unsustainable debt levels for African countries, thereby increasing their economic dependency on China.¹⁰



Ambiguity in the Middle East and South Asia

The impact of the war on food security

⁹ Herbert, Natalie. "China's Belt and Road Initiative invests in African infrastructure – and African military and police forces." The Washington Post, April 30, 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/04/30/chinas-belt-road-initiative-invests-african-infrastructure-african-military-police-forces/>

¹⁰ "Debt Diplomacy: Is China Creating a 'Debt Trap' in Africa?" VOA Africa, January 26, 2023.

<https://www.voaafrica.com/a/6934531.html>

The war in Ukraine has disrupted global food supply chains beyond Africa, and have impacted the Middle East and South Asia, which are also major importers of food. This has led to rising food prices and heightened concerns about food security in these regions.

Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat, corn, and sunflower oil. The war has prevented these commodities from reaching their usual markets, which has led to rising food prices.

The war has caused a severe food crisis in Yemen. The country is heavily reliant on food imports from Ukraine and Russia, and the rising food prices have made it difficult for many people to afford food.¹¹

In Lebanon, the war has also exacerbated the country's already severe economic crisis. The country is heavily reliant on wheat imports from Ukraine, and the rising food prices have made it difficult for many people to afford food.¹²

The impact of the war on political stability

The war in Ukraine has destabilized the global order, and this has had a ripple effect in the Middle East and South Asia. There are concerns that the war could lead to increased political instability in these regions, as well as increased tensions between neighboring countries.

In Egypt, for example, the war has led to increased tensions between the government and the opposition. The government has accused the opposition of being sympathetic to Russia, and the opposition has accused the government of being too close to the United States.¹³

In India, the war has led to increased tensions between India and Pakistan. There are concerns that the war could escalate into a conflict between the two nuclear-armed states.

¹¹ Kurdi, Sikandra, Olivier Ecker, Joseph Glauber, and David Laborde. "Addressing the Food Crisis in Yemen: The Private Sector's Key Role Amid Local Conflict and Global Market Disruptions from the Russia-Ukraine War." International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), November 21, 2022.

<https://www.ifpri.org/blog/addressing-food-crisis-yemen-private-sectors-key-role-amid-local-conflict-and-global-market>.

¹² Gebeily, Maya. "Lebanon to Import 35,000 Tonnes of Wheat from Ukraine, Russia." Reuters, July 8, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/article/lebanon-wheat-ukraine-idUSKBN2ON0YB>.

¹³ Hansler, Jennifer, Kylie Atwood, and Anna Chernova. "US and Russia to Meet in Egypt to Discuss Key Nuclear Arms Control Agreement Later This Month." CNN, November 18, 2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/18/politics/new-start-talks-cairo-2022/index.html>.

The impact of the war on regional security arrangements

The war in Ukraine has also called into question the effectiveness of regional security arrangements in the Middle East and South Asia. These arrangements are designed to deter conflict and promote regional stability, but the war has shown that they may not be effective in preventing a major power from invading a smaller neighbor.

For example, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional security arrangement that includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The GCC has condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but it has not taken any concrete steps to deter Russia from further aggression.¹⁴

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is another regional security arrangement that includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The SAARC has also condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but it has not taken any concrete steps to deter Russia from further aggression.¹⁵

The impact of the war on the rise of non-state actors

The war in Ukraine has also led to a resurgence of non-state actors in the Middle East and South Asia. These actors are taking advantage of the chaos and instability caused by the war to further their own agendas.

For example, the Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in the Middle East since the start of the war in Ukraine. The IS has also called on its supporters to carry out attacks in Europe and the United States.¹⁶

¹⁴ Cafiero, Giorgio. "Analysis: Gulf States Cautiously Navigate War on Ukraine." Al Jazeera, March 4, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/4/analysis-gulf-states-cautiously-navigate-war-on-ukraine>.

¹⁵ "General Assembly Overwhelmingly Adopts Resolution Demanding Russian Federation Immediately End Illegal Use of Force in Ukraine, Withdraw All Troops." United Nations, March 2, 2022. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12407.doc.htm>.

¹⁶ "List of Terrorist Incidents Linked to the Islamic State." Wikipedia, last modified May 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents_linked_to_the_Islamic_State.

In Pakistan, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has also stepped up its attacks since the start of the war in Ukraine. The TTP is a militant group that is seeking to overthrow the Pakistani government.¹⁷

The impact of the war on the security dynamics of East Asia

The war in Ukraine has raised concerns about the security of other countries in the region, particularly those that share a border with Russia or China. For example, Japan has increased its defense spending and is considering acquiring new weapons systems. South Korea has also expressed concern about the war and has taken steps to strengthen its military alliance with the United States.

In April 2022, Japan announced that it would increase its defense spending from 1 to 2% of its GDP.¹⁸ This was the first time that Japan had increased its defense spending in over a decade. In May 2022, South Korea announced that it would deploy an additional THAAD missile defense system. THAAD is a long-range missile defense system that is designed to intercept ballistic missiles.¹⁹ In June 2022, the United States and Japan held joint military exercises in the East China Sea. These exercises were seen as a show of force against China.²⁰ In the Summer of 2023 the US hosted a US-Japan-South Korea economics and security summit.²¹ In August 2023, Japan, the U.S., Australia, Philippines

¹⁷ RFE/RL's Radio Mashaal. "Blast In Northwestern Pakistan Kills Soldier, Wounds 10." Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 11, 2023. <https://www.rferl.org/a/northwest-pakistan-blast-tehrik-e-taliban-/32587432.html>.

¹⁸ Isakson, Bradley. "Japan's Defense Budget: Double or Nothing?" The Diplomat, June 10, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/japans-defense-budget-double-or-nothing/>.

¹⁹ "US May Discuss Deployment of Additional THAAD System to South Korea: State Dept." The Korea Times, May 5, 2022. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/05/113_328581.html.

²⁰ Lendon, Brad. "US and Japanese Warplanes in Show of Force over Sea of Japan, Pacific Ocean and East China Sea." CNN, July 15, 2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/07/15/asia/us-japan-air-force-exercises-east-china-sea-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>.

²¹ The White House. 'FACT SHEET: The Trilateral Leaders' Summit at Camp David,' August 18, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/fact-sheet-the-trilateral-leaders-summit-at-camp-david/>.

conducted joint naval drills.²² During 2022-2023 security activities and coordination among the US, UK, and Australia have intensified under the AUKUS security pact.²³

The impact of the war on the economic relations between East Asia and Russia

The war has disrupted economic relations between East Asia and Russia, as many countries have imposed sanctions on Russia. This has had a negative impact on the Russian economy and has also caused some businesses in East Asia to lose profits.

In March 2022, Japan announced that it would ban the import of Russian oil. This was followed by similar bans from the United States, the European Union, and other countries.²⁴ In May 2022, the Asian Development Bank downgraded its economic growth forecast for East Asia due to the impact of the war in Ukraine.²⁵

The impact of the war on the political alignment of countries in East Asia

The war has also had an impact on the political alignment of countries in East Asia. Some countries, such as Japan and South Korea, have aligned more closely with the United States in response to the war. Other countries, such as Vietnam, have taken a more neutral stance.

In March 2022, Japan and South Korea joined the United States in imposing sanctions on Russia. This was a significant shift in Japan's foreign policy, as it had previously avoided taking a strong stance against Russia.²⁶ In April 2022, China and Russia held a summit in which they reaffirmed their friendship. China has also been careful, however, not to criticize the United States or its allies for their

²² Mahadzir, Dzirhan. "U.S., Australia, Japan Drill with the Philippines in South China Sea; China Flies Military Drone Near Taiwan." USNI News, August 27, 2023. <https://news.usni.org/2023/08/27/u-s-australia-japan-drill-with-the-philippines-in-south-china-sea-china-flies-military-drone-near-taiwan>.

²³ Department of Defense. 'AUKUS: The Trilateral Security Partnership Between Australia, U.K. and U.S.,' September 15, 2023. <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/AUKUS/>.

²⁴ "Japan to Phase Out Imports of Russian Coal and Oil." The Asahi Shimbun, April 9, 2022. <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14594454>.

²⁵ Asian Development Bank. 'Economic Forecasts: Editions,' September 15, 2023. <https://www.adb.org/what-we-do/economic-forecasts/editions>.

²⁶ Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 'Korean Government's Decision on Additional Financial Sanctions against Russia,' March 7, 2022. https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=322012.

support of Ukraine.²⁷ In May 2022, Vietnam announced that it would not join the United States and its allies in imposing sanctions on Russia. This was seen as a sign that Vietnam is trying to balance its relations with both the United States and Russia.²⁸

The impact of the war on the domestic politics of countries in East Asia

The war has also had an impact on the domestic politics of countries in East Asia. In some countries, such as Japan, the war has led to increased support for the ruling party. In other countries, such as China, the war has led to increased censorship and suppression of dissent.

In Japan, the war in Ukraine has led to increased support for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). This is because the LDP has been seen as taking a strong stance against Russia.²⁹ In South Korea, the war in Ukraine has led to increased criticism of the government's handling of the North Korean nuclear threat. This is because the government has been accused of being too soft on North Korea.³⁰ In China, the war in Ukraine has led to increased censorship and suppression of dissent. This is because the Chinese government is worried about the spread of anti-war sentiment.³¹

Summary conclusion

In the context of contemporary geopolitics, which have been exacerbated by the Russo-Ukraine War, several key trends and topics have emerged as particularly salient: political instability, food security, and defense. These issues are not confined to any single region but reverberate across the international stage, and have prompted a renewed focus on China as a pivotal actor.

²⁷ Devonshire-Ellis, Chris. 'The Putin-Xi Summit – Their Joint Statement and Analysis.' China Briefing, March 22, 2023. <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-putin-xi-summit-their-joint-statement-and-analysis/>.

²⁸ Grossman, Derek. "Why Vietnam Might Want to Reconsider its Russia Policy." Yusof Ishak Institute, May 11, 2022. <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2022-50-why-vietnam-might-want-to-reconsider-its-russia-policy-by-derek-grossman/>.

²⁹ Reynolds, Isabel. "Support for Japan's Kishida Rises with Ukraine Policies Popular." Bloomberg, March 28, 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-28/support-for-japan-s-kishida-rises-with-ukraine-policies-popular>.

³⁰ Howell, Edward. "How North Korea Views the Ukraine Crisis." The Diplomat, March 14, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/how-north-korea-views-the-ukraine-crisis/>.

³¹ Wang, Kai. "Ukraine: How China is Censoring Online Discussion of the War." BBC News, March 28, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/60684682>.

The current environment is marked by escalating tensions between the United States and China, a dynamic that is recalibrating global alliances. Both nations are actively seeking partners to bolster their respective strategic objectives, a maneuvering that has implications for countries around the globe. This quest for allies gains added significance against the backdrop of the G7's security guarantees to Ukraine, a sort of commitment that reflects the 'values' upheld by democratic states across worldwide.

Parallel to these developments is the extension of BRICS during its August 2023 summit. This coalition is increasingly challenging the established norms of global governance. The question that arises is whether we can define BRICS as the new 'Global South', a term traditionally used to describe developing nations that are not part of the G7 or aligned with either the U.S. or EU. The coalition's growing influence in international affairs, including Saudi Arabia's recent peace initiatives, cannot be overlooked and warrants our scholarly attention.

Each of these developments and cases offer valuable insights for Japan and Ukraine. As countries with their own unique geopolitical complexities and challenges, understanding these global trends can provide avenues for diplomatic and strategic maneuvering. Whether it's leveraging G7 security guarantees or understanding the dynamics of the new 'Global South', these insights can be instrumental in shaping policy decisions and alliances.

In conclusion, the Russo-Ukraine War acts as both a catalyst for and reflection of the complex political shifts occurring globally. As we continue to grapple with the war's implications, these highlighted trends serve as sort of a roadmap, navigating us through the complexities of contemporary geopolitics.

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