**The SCO and Ukraine**

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The War in Ukraine is engendering wide-ranging geopolitical, geostrategic, and geoeconomic ramifications. Its ripple effects are reaching all corners of the world. The US policy on the Ukraine War is precipitating severe regional and global polarisation, alignments, realignments, and even multi-alignments.

The global economy is tottering under the astronomical rise in the prices of oil, gas, wheat, fertilisers, etc, and the consequent spiralling inflation. A timid, meek, and listless Europe is scrambling to overcome its debilitating economic crises, oil and gas deficiencies caused by US sanctions on Russia and the latter’s retaliatory measures. Energy costs, food insecurity, and scarcity are decimating weaker economies and exacerbating the international community’s nervousness. The overall impact of the war in Ukraine has been disastrous for the world in more ways than one.

The Ukraine War, directly and/or indirectly, threatens the integrity and solidarity of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) quite emphatically, too.

[Death toll from Indonesia football riot, stampede jumps to 174](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2022/death-toll-from-indonesia-football-riot-stampede-jumps-to-174)

To ensure its global pre-eminence, the US must, out of necessity, surmount the challenges posed by the China-Russia Combine. Its grand strategic design ostensibly aims to defeat it piecemeal; first Russia in Europe and thereafter China in the Indo-Pacific Region and South Asia.

To that end, it must endeavour to break/weaken the emerging bonds and strategic partnership between Russia and China. Furthermore, it must prevent them, at all costs, from amalgamating and jointly employing their massive human, economic, military, technological, informational, diplomatic et al resources against it. It has thus initially embroiled Russia in Ukraine, (The Ukrainian Conundrum Escalates, by this scribe, The Nation, 25 February 2022). It will seek to isolate it comprehensively and then turn it into a pariah state.

All countries (except a selected few) who continue to trade with Russia are likely to suffer US sanctions. It will persist with its famed Strategy of Offshore Balancing by continuously reinforcing Ukraine’s war effort in all domains, less than putting US military boots on the ground. It will intend to defeat Russia in Ukraine, failing which it will want to segregate, demean and weaken it sufficiently to make its strategic partnership with China inconsequential. A weakened Russia would mean a debilitated SCO and consequently an enfeebled China-Russia Combine!

[Former finance minister Miftah Ismail terms decrease in petrol prices 'reckless' decision](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2022/former-finance-minister-miftah-ismail-terms-decrease-in-petrol-prices-reckless-decision)

At a time when the Russians have suffered some reverses in the Ukraine War, President Putin has reacted rather strongly. He has not only mobilised an additional 300,000 troops but has also “placed all options (including nuclear) on the table”. Most western leaders and observers however have rubbished these as signs of weakness, and desperation.

However, at about the same time, President Putin faced some awkward moments at the recent SCO Council of Heads of State meeting at Samarkand. The Ukraine War spread its shadows there too. President Xi Jinping reportedly expressed his concerns on the Ukraine War which were acknowledged by President Putin. Indian PM Modi was surprisingly very blunt in opposing Russia’s war in Ukraine. He publicly rebuked President Putin by saying that this was not an era of wars and disputes and reminded him that he had advised him so on many occasions.

PM Modi’s outburst seems to be completely out of place and character. Is it that the Indians have suddenly started feeling confident enough to begin asserting themselves at the regional and global levels? Or have they started believing in their strategic autonomy, themselves? It seems out of place and character because India, despite its pretensions to non-alignment (now multi-alignment), is and has always been a very strong ally of the USSR/Russia. Its military and nuclear power industry still depend heavily upon it.

[Islamabad lawyers' body slams Imran Khan for attitude towards Judge Zeba Chaudhry](https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2022/islamabad-lawyers-body-slams-imran-khan-for-attitude-towards-judge-zeba-chaudhry)

Secondly, the Indians have been buying oil at very concessional rates from it despite the threat of US sanctions under CAATSA. Did PM Modi then plan this risky initiative himself; was it a knee-jerk reaction to match President Xi Jinping’s comments or did he undertake this task at US’ instigation? Regardless, a fractured, splintered SCO would question its raison d’etre, isolate and disillusion Russia further, force President Putin’s hand in Ukraine and weaken the China-Russia strategic partnership in the process. Is India then playing the US-led West’s Trojan Horse in the SCO, as many have long suspected?

The SCO is well poised to play a very important proactive role at the regional and global levels. Its members collectively possess tremendous human, economic, mineral, fossil fuel, military, nuclear, technological et al resources. Its power potential is colossal. It must acquire definite political, diplomatic, economic, and military dimensions and start asserting itself as a viable, unified force in the international arena. It must establish its sphere of influence and strategic reach and demonstrate both categorically. It must emerge as a counterpoise in this increasingly unipolar world. (Asia Realigns, by this scribe, The Nation, 26 March 2022). Most importantly, it must adopt well-considered and prudent joint policy options on issues like international terrorism, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Taiwan, Palestine, Ukraine, the eastward expansion of NATO, global multipolarity, etc.

[England seal series after Pakistan's lacklustre last show](https://www.nation.com.pk/02-Oct-2022/england-seal-series-after-pakistan-s-lacklustre-last-show)

At the global level, there seems to be no real effort to resolve the Ukraine imbroglio. The UN has been singularly ineffective while the US-led West will not rest till Russian power and prestige have been roundly besmirched, degraded, and denigrated a la the USSR. The SCO thus must help resolve the Ukrainian conundrum, as a priority.

At the regional level, it could move decisively into Afghanistan and ease it into the regional and international communities. It will help defeat international terrorism and operationalise trade corridors generating regional-extra regional connectivity and economic interdependence. It could adopt unequivocal, combined stances on Taiwan and Palestine. And where everyone else seems to have failed it could even venture to mediate on Kashmir.

The SCO must move decisively into the GMER and the Far East too. China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey (CRIPT), as a subset of the SCO, could form the kernel around which the SCO could reinvent itself.

[Govt wants 'civil war' in country, says Babar Awan](https://www.nation.com.pk/02-Oct-2022/govt-wants-civil-war-in-country-says-babar-awan)

An expanded, rejuvenated, reoriented SCO can coalesce, harness, and collectively employ its phenomenal power potential as an alliance. It must become the agent to undo the global status quo, deter/counter unilateralism, and bring about multipolarity, balance, stability, and sanity in global affairs!