

Strategic Implications of the War in Ukraine for the Post-Soviet Space

A View from Caucasus and Central Asia

Edited by

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Series in Politics



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Wilmington, Delaware, 19801
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In the rest of the world:
Vernon Press
C/Sancti Espiritu 17,
Malaga, 29006
Spain

Series in Politics

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025933900

ISBN: 979-8-8819-0266-7

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Editors' Comments

Events in Ukraine, marked by Russia's invasion campaign of this country in February 2022, became an unforeseen circumstance for many. Even though relations between the two countries deteriorated in 2014, few could have imagined the culmination would be a real war.

Russia and Ukraine are the two most extensive former Soviet republics in size and population. Russia's desire to continue to dominate the post-Soviet space and Ukraine's desire to integrate into the European space led to progress from disagreement to active confrontation.

The international community, perhaps not at the proper level, responded to the events in Eastern Europe. In short, the West subjected Russia to harsh economic sanctions while assisting Ukraine simultaneously.

The Ukrainian conflict could not but affect other former republics of the Soviet Union, in particular the Central Asian and the South Caucasus regions. Given the close relations of the countries of the region with both Russia and Ukraine, as well as the reaction of the world community to current events, all regional countries mentioned in this book, either forced or by their national interests, began to adjust their international political and economic perceptions and expectations.

Even though two years have passed since Russia's intervention, some factors influencing regional security in light of the Russo-Ukraine war are already observed. It would be interesting to analyze how relations with other regional and non-regional actors in international relations were affected.

This book is the first to provide an in-depth understanding of the major geopolitical impacts of the Russo-Ukraine war in the Eurasian region. It encompasses topics like energy security, renewed intraregional cooperation formats, the rising influence of external actors, such as China and Turkey, and the growing importance of non-state actors like the Organization of Turkic States in the wake of Russia's all-out war against Ukraine since 2022.

The book argues that Russia's dangerous war games in Ukraine have dramatically changed the perception of threat in Europe since the Cold War era as Russia, under the rule of Vladimir Putin, had become obsessed with using hard power to restore the Cold War era security architecture in Europe. From Russia's point of view, the West's aggressive enlargement toward its borders in the north and south is an attempt to exert more influence on it and undermine

its national interests. In this regard, the collective West is stuck with the sanctions policy to isolate Russia amid its devastating war in Ukraine and mounting casualties and is keen to make additional inroads into the critically essential and energy-rich Caspian Sea basin through Central Asian and South Caucasus regions.

Considering the wider impact of the Russo-Ukraine War, chapters will discuss the point of view of the Caucasus and Central Asian states, providing much-needed context for readers. As editors of this book, we believe that it will be of interest to students and scholars of international relations, political science, gender studies, international and national security, and public politics.

List of Contributors

Dr. Rovshan Ibrahimov is a professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea. He has held academic positions at Qafqaz University, served as Head of Foreign Policy Analysis at the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of Azerbaijan, and taught energy diplomacy at ADA University in Azerbaijan. He has authored over 200 articles and is recognized for his expertise in energy security, Azerbaijan's foreign policy, and international politics.

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