

## Indo Pacific and Ghost of WW3

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### Abstract:

*The article “The Ghost of World War-3” explores the evolving global geopolitical landscape marked by high-intensity conflicts, strategic alliances, economic sanctions, and the delicate balance of diplomacy that has so far prevented the outbreak of a full-scale world war. It begins with an analysis of the decline of global terrorism and transitions into recent flashpoints such as the Hamas-Israel conflict, the Russia–Ukraine war, and rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific. The author reflects on how modern warfare has shifted from conventional large-scale battles to hybrid conflicts involving cyberattacks, proxy wars, and economic disruption. The role of major powers like the USA, Russia, China, and India is critically examined, with particular emphasis on India’s non-aligned yet influential position in global affairs. Through a detailed account of military developments, international responses, and strategic diplomacy, the article contends that although the world is not officially in the throes of World War III, its ghost hovers in the form of persistent instability and near-miss escalations. Nuclear deterrence, economic interdependence, and diplomatic restraint are shown as key factors that have so far circumvented the outbreak of a catastrophic global war.*

**Keywords:** Geopolitical Conflicts, World War III, India’s Foreign Policy, Nuclear Deterrence, Global Diplomacy

### Introduction

Today the Entire World is witnessing some peculiar condition. Anticipating bigger breakouts in the morning and sleeping with the heavy heart with the fear of what is going to happen tomorrow.

Few years back, Terrorism was the most dangerous issue of the world, while terrorism remains widespread, its impact

has been waning in recent years. Globally, the number of deaths attributed to terrorism dropped. The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) lost its last territory in Syria in March 2019, The Syrian Democratic Forces and Iraqi Armed Forces, along with airstrikes and other support pushed back the ISIS. The

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coalition saw decisive results in its intervention against the Islamic State; the terror group lost its last remaining territory in Syria during the battle of Baghuz Fawqani and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi died during a US Special Forces raid in Idlib in October 2019.

There after World leaders successfully controlled the flow of funds to terrorist organizations and they succeeded in limiting it to a few borders. All of a sudden, world witnessed a bigger attack on Israel, Hamas terrorists launched an unprecedented surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7, which eventually turned into a full-scale War.

Number of casualties has different figures which at the moment is not authenticated, according to the Israeli prime minister's office, more than 1,200 people have been killed in Israel, with 6,900 others injured. Israeli officials say 383 Israel Defense Forces soldiers have been killed since Oct. 7, including 68 since the ground campaign began<sup>1</sup>.

The same source reveals that, The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry says at least 14,532 people have been killed in Gaza amid Israel's retaliatory campaign and ground operations began. More than 35,000 have been injured, the ministry

says, with almost 1.5 million people displaced, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. As of March, 3-2024, 67% of all deaths in Gaza were made up of women and children while thousands more have been injured, according to several U.N. agencies, including the UNRWA. In the West Bank, about 215 people have been killed and more than 2,500 injured, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Before this On Feb. 7, 2020 a passenger plane with 172 people aboard made an emergency landing at a Russian military base in Syria on Thursday after drawing fire from Syrian air defences in the aftermath of an Israeli airstrike in the area, Russian state news agencies reported. A spokesman for the Russian Defence Ministry, Gen. Igor Konashenkov, blamed Israel for the near miss, accusing its military of habitually using civilian aircraft to “cover” its airstrikes and “block” Syrian air defences from retaliating<sup>2</sup>. Even though Both Russia and Iran have backed the Syrian government with financing, militias and airstrikes during the Syrian civil war. But neither country has retaliated against Israel.

On Feb. 24, 2022, the world watched as Russia invaded its neighbouring country, Ukraine, which became Independent on

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson, B. (2023, November 22). *Israel-Hamas War: Timeline and key developments*. ABC News.  
<https://abcnews.go.com/International/timeline-surprise-rocket-attack-hamas-israel/story?id=103816006> accessed on 13/09/2024

<sup>2</sup> The New York Times Published On Feb. 7, 2020, Updated Feb. 11, 2020,  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/world/middleeast/syria-plane-israel.html> accessed 13/09/2024

Dec. 1, 1991. How did the two countries, once tied together by the Soviet Union, get to this point?

In February and March 2014, Russia invaded the Crimean Peninsula, part of Ukraine, and then annexed it. This took place in the relative power vacuum immediately following the Revolution of Dignity. It marked the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian War. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, Ukraine has seen a military conflict between the government and the Russia-supported separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. OHCHR (The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) estimates that between 14,200 and 14,400 people, including civilians and military personnel, were killed in relation to that conflict from April 14, 2014, to December 31, 2021. of them, at least 3,400 were civilians<sup>3</sup>.

The OHCHR verified a total of 35,160 civilian casualties during Russia's invasion of Ukraine as of July 31, 2024. of them, 23,640 people were reported to have been injured. However, OHCHR specified that the real numbers could be higher.

These are going on for Years, Is this just the War or World War? WW1 (28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918) had lasted for 4 years and WW2 (1 September

1939 – 2 September 1945) had lasted for 6 years.

The total number of casualties in World War I was around 40 million, with 20 million deaths and 21 million wounded. This includes 9.7 million military personnel and about 10 million civilians. The majority of casualties were due to war-related famine and disease.

Estimates suggest that around 75 million people died in World War II, including about 20 million military personnel and about 40 million civilians. Some of the causes of death include genocide, massacres, mass-bombings, disease, and starvation. Statistics reveals it's entirely a bilateral war still. What's stopping it from turning into the World War? The responsible cool headed Super Powers of the World? The absence of grouping of Nations in favour of particular nation. Improved trade relations.

**Sanctions:** America and its European allies are increasingly using sanctions as a geopolitical tool against its rivals, Russia, Iran and Venezuela. These countries are important partners for India, which needs to find ways around unilateral American sanctions. This means individuals and businesses outside of the western alliance including ones from India, now may face sanctions themselves, if they don't comply with the new rules. Most of the global South - including major countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America has refused to join the anti-Moscow sanctions regime and instead has chosen to maintain

<sup>3</sup> Statista. (2025, June 16). *Number of civilian casualties during the war in Ukraine 2022*.  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293492/ukraine-war-casualties/>

active political and commercial ties with Russia. It is also reshaping global trade patterns in ways that outweigh the conflict. In particular, Russia's efforts to avoid sanctions stemming from the use of the U.S. dollar could accelerate the process of dethroning the dollar as the world's established reserve currency in international transactions, with wide-ranging consequences for the course of U.S. economic and political leadership. India, a fast-growing, English-speaking Asian democracy with an increasingly West-leaning popular culture, serves as a prime example of why Western countries aren't getting a buy-in to sanctions - and how the world can reset.

Any Indian company that violates global sanctions against Russia will have to be aware of the “consequences” they face when they are trying to do business with countries in Europe, America and their global allies around the world, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti has said<sup>4</sup>. Garcetti says oil is an important commodity that US doesn't want to restrict as long as ‘price cap’ enforced. This is the major change in USAs behaviour, which helped world nations to survive from the brunt of Wars. India's strong feet again played the crucial role in changing Geo Political scenario.

<sup>4</sup> *Growing imbalance in India-Russia trade likely to be on Modi's agenda.* (2024, July 5). BusinessLine.  
<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/growing-imbalance-in-india-russia-trade-likely-to-be-on-%20modis-agenda/article68371167.ece>,

World had already experienced The Gulf War of 1990–1991, which had a significant impact on the price of crude oil, with prices increasing and then decreasing after the war: The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, led to a spike in oil prices. The average price of oil rose from \$17 per barrel in July to \$36 per barrel in October.

The Russia-Ukraine war too caused crude oil prices to fluctuate, with prices initially rising and then falling: After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, oil prices jumped to over \$120 per barrel due to concerns about supply disruptions and sanctions on Russia. On March 7, 2022, the WTI crude oil futures price touched \$133.460/barrel, and the Brent crude oil futures price reached \$139.130/barrel, the highest price since July 2008.

Out of the imports from Russia a growing amount is funnelled to the global market, starting with Southeast Asia, Africa and increasingly Europe and the United States. India sells all of these products at market prices, earning revenue for its companies and bulking up the country's reserves of foreign currency with dollars and euros.

The Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air, a research group based in Finland, published a report that highlighted the role of certain “laundromat” countries, which buy Russian oil, refine it into other products and sell it on to buyers in Europe, the United States and other jurisdictions that

have halted direct purchases from Russia. Chief among these countries named in the report was India, as well as China, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore.

The port of Sikka, which serves the Jamnagar Refinery, was both the largest global import point for seaborne Russia crude oil and the single biggest point of oil exports to the countries that had imposed the cap, the report said.

### **Role of India in World Order**

While India's neutral stance remains significant in global diplomacy. With growing international expectations, India aims to play a key role in resolving the conflict between different countries, offering a path toward dialogue and diplomacy. India, because of its independent foreign policy, is in a unique position to mediate between Russia and Ukraine. As Europe and its Western allies face a crisis with Russia backed by China, India opens up a third axis in a largely bipolar world.

"We (India) are not neutral. From the very beginning, we have taken sides. And we have chosen the side of peace. We have come from the land of Buddha where there is no place for war," PM Modi had said during his recent visit to Ukraine India is one of the few countries in the world that has never attacked any nation for expansion. For India, the concept of non-alignment began as a policy of non-participation in the military affairs of a bipolar world and in the

context of colonialism aimed towards optimum involvement through multi-polar participation towards peace and security. The Non-Aligned Movement is a forum of 120 countries that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. It was founded with the view to advancing interests of developing countries in the context of Cold War confrontation. After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide. With such a record on shoulders India is going to play the role of peace broker in today's geo political scenario. Both Russia and Ukraine want India to mediate and stop the war. The same thoughts are echoed by the world's powerful nations like US and UK.

Putin once again invited Modi for BRICS. Putin remarked, "We are waiting for our good friend (Narendra) Modi and best regards to him." Putin also proposed a bilateral meeting with Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit, suggesting October 22 as a potential date for the two leaders to review the progress of joint projects and discuss future collaborations.

India's new found correction with China, where it agreed to disengage troops in four areas in Eastern Ladakh, alerted US and its immediate offer of F-16, world's most successful, combat-proven multi-role jet fighter to India, Also The US State Department imposed sanctions on China-based firms, for their supply to Pakistan's ballistic missile program under the missile sanctions laws and Biden's personal invitation to PM



Narendra Modi to attend QUAD on September 21-23, before he attends BRICS in Russia.

### **The Indo - Pacific**

As the world is waiting to see the end of the Russia Ukraine war, the situation in Indo Pacific is no better. China claims sovereignty over the self-governing island of Taiwan, and while most countries consider the 177-kilometer-wide strait that separates it from the mainland an international strait, Beijing opposes transit by military vessels from other countries. U.S. And other countries, such as Canada, Australia, Japan, UK have sent warships through the strait to exercise their rights under international law. The latest to it is Germany's navy ship's entry, If a transit is made through the strait this time, it will be the first time that German warships have done so in 22 years. NATO countries and their Indo-Pacific partners Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea agreed to boost cooperation.

"Germany's reported decision to have two naval vessels pass through the Taiwan Strait would be a more assertive action than the 2021 deployment, in that it counters China's claim of special jurisdiction over the 110-mile-wide waterway under its 'one China' policy," said Stephen Flanagan, who served as senior director for defence policy and strategy at the National Security Council from 2013 to 2015<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, C. (2024, September 17). Warships in South China Sea signal Germany's willingness

Even though India has historically trodden the path of non-alignment, rising geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific region have made it imperative for India, as a key player and middle power, to actively participate in alliances in counterbalancing China's growing assertiveness. Consequently, India claims to have shifted to a multi-aligned strategy by playing a moderating part in the Quad, the G7, the G20, the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The State of Southeast Asia 2023 survey shows India's improved standing as a trusted partner in the region: it jumped from the bottom to third place when its approval rating doubled from 5.1% in 2022 to 11.3% in 2023. However, it's crucial to evaluate India's evolving foreign policy, given its challenges in upholding international law, as seen in its responses to events such as the Russia–Ukraine conflict and the Myanmar coup in 2021<sup>6</sup>.

Japan one of the QUAD's strongest pillar, India–Japan relations were initially strained when the main promoter of this bilateral relationship, Japan's PM Shinzo Abe, was assassinated in 2022. Coupled with differences in policy approaches to

to counter China's threats. *Voice of America*. <https://www.voanews.com/a/warships-in-south-china-sea-signal-berlin-s-willingness-to-counter-beijing-s-%20threats-/7782259.html>

<sup>6</sup> Deb, U. (2024, April 2). *India in the Quad: insider or outlier?* / *The Strategist*. The Strategist. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/india-in-the-quad-insider-or-outlier/>

the Ukraine–Russia war, that affected bilateral security cooperation, especially when India refused to land transport planes of the Japan Self Defence Force to carry UN stocks to support Ukraine. Nevertheless, India is still considered to be an important partner for Japan, as underscored at the recent Raisina roundtable held in Tokyo, where both the nations agreed to ‘step-up’ economic and security ties.

India's approach to demonstrating strategic alignment in a changing geopolitical landscape marked by different priorities among key stakeholders involves working empirically with a variety of long-standing friends and emerging partners on specific issues. This can position India as an important bridge connecting various points. However, New Delhi's geographic priorities are significantly different from those of its Quad partners, meaning that its willpower and leadership capacity in the Indian Ocean is far greater than in the Pacific.

Indian Ocean sea lanes are vital to India's energy security and economic prosperity. Threats in the region could threaten India's security and undermine efforts to project influence abroad. A sub-region of secondary importance to India is the Persian Gulf, which is a major source of energy imports and overseas trade. In contrast, the Pacific is not the focus of India's immediate strategic and geo-economic interests. New Delhi's preference for the Indian Ocean, coupled

with concerns about diverging priorities among Indo-Pacific partners, has led India to carefully manage its role in the region.

Despite initial reluctance, the Indo-Pacific framework has emerged as a critical component of India's foreign policy. Accelerated by China's growing economic and military involvement in the Indian Ocean and South Asia, the Indo-Pacific concept has provided India with a strategic blueprint for its broader foreign policy agenda.

### **Outbreak of WW3 Circumvented**

On 9-11 July, NATO Leaders met in Washington, D.C., where the North Atlantic Treaty – NATO's founding document – was signed in 1949. They gathered to commemorate NATO's 75th anniversary and took important decisions to set the strategic direction for the future of the Alliance. 20 Allies have signed bilateral security agreements with Ukraine. Allies agreed to establish NATO Security Assistance and **Training** for Ukraine, to coordinate the provision of military equipment and training for Ukraine. They also announced a pledge of long-term security assistance to Ukraine with a minimum baseline of 40 billion euros within the next year. “This pledge will ensure greater burden-sharing of military support,” said Mr Stoltenberg, The Secretary General. “It will also provide Ukraine the reliable support it needs to deter and defend against future Russian aggression now and in the future.”

NATO the powerful organisation in the world supported its partner Ukraine indirectly without direct participation has avoided the Outbreak of WW3. Membership of the NATO to Ukraine is still a distance dream.

Similarly, the Muslims countries are guided and guarded by OIC, The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an intergovernmental organization that represents the Muslim world. It was founded in 1969 and is the second largest intergovernmental organization in the world, after the United Nations. Except for condemning, almost all Muslim-majority states maintain a passive stance regarding Gaza. While they criticize Israel's ongoing slaughter in Gaza, they are well aware that mere criticism is ineffective.

Open-Ended Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on August 7, 2024, the meeting focused on Israel's ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people and its infringement on the sovereignty of Iran

The OIC decried the ongoing Israeli genocidal massacres and crimes against defenceless Palestinians in the Strip. It renewed its call to the international community, particularly the UN Security Council (UNSC), to assume their responsibilities towards the need for an immediate and comprehensive cessation of the Israeli genocidal aggression against

the Palestinian people<sup>7</sup>. The Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas was able to get tactical support only from Lebanon and Iran in the form of Hezbollah ("Party of God," also spelled Hizballah) is an Iran-backed Lebanese Shia militia. Pakistan – one of the greatest sponsors of cross-border terrorism and a hub of global Jihadist organisations – contributed to the military build-up of Hamas in past. But Today, Pakistan stands at a crossroad. It is grappling with the consequences from its decade-long support for Jihadists – the domestic political turmoil caused by radicalised religious extremists, a deteriorating security situation, and the miserable shape of the country's economy are just a few factors. Pakistan is the only Muslim-majority nation with nuclear capabilities, it is geographically distant from Palestine. The affinity for Hamas among the government and people in Pakistan is strong, but its situation is not favourable. On the other hand, the genocide in Palestine is obviously a problem for every Muslim state. Fortunately, other Muslim countries did not show the expected reaction, either.

Nuclear weapons are indeed deterrents to WW3. For example, the only reason North Korea is not attacked is its nuclear weapons. If the United States and its

<sup>7</sup> *OIC condemns Israel's ongoing mass massacres of Palestinians in Gaza.* (n.d.). Wafa Agency. <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/145875>



allies fight North Korea, they will win, but if North Korea manages to drop one or two atomic bombs before it is defeated, there will be no point in fighting. The Ghost of the WW3 eventually vanishes off.

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