

Foreword by the editor

War and crisis are two abhorrent and unfortunate terms deeply ingrained in the annals of human history. Over the ages, nations have engaged in prolonged conflicts for various reasons and pretexts, resulting in the loss of countless lives both on the battlefield and among civilians. However, viewing war as a tool within the realm of international relations and defense sciences, it becomes evident that the repercussions of military tensions between nations hold immense significance for scholarly research. The specter of war casts a profound and far-reaching crisis upon the nations directly involved and even beyond, leading to diverse cultural, political, economic, and legal ramifications. It's crucial to emphasize that these effects unfold over both short-term and long-term timelines. In the short term, the impact of war on inter-state dynamics is noticeable and often predictable. Conversely, its indirect effects on various aspects of people's lives manifest with delay and prove difficult to control. In recent years, one of the paramount military tensions that plunged the world into an undeniable crisis was Russia's special military operation in Ukraine commencing from February 2022. This operation, having a global scope, bears immense importance for study due to its yet unknown consequences. In the Journal of Countries Studies, the winter issue of the year 1401 was dedicated to a special focus on the crisis in Russia and Ukraine. Among the submissions received, six carefully peer-reviewed articles covering a range of topics were selected for publication.

In the inaugural article of the special edition, Faryadras and Maleki, affiliated with Shahid Beheshti University and Sharif University, respectively, delve into the intricacies of energy security through the lens of the Jervis spiral security puzzle, utilizing the war between Russia and Ukraine as a pertinent case study. The authors assert that the analysis of energy security can be elucidated through two distinct approaches: psychology and game theory. Despite lacking a direct stake in an energy source, the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine holds far-reaching implications for regional and global energy market dynamics. The authors emphasize that energy security in the region is poised to become increasingly complex in the foreseeable future. Russia, a major global supplier of fossil fuels, and Ukraine, a critical energy transit route, find themselves positioned on opposite sides of the military tension arising from this crisis. It is indisputable that the war between Russia and Ukraine has disrupted the equilibrium of the global energy market, underscoring the profound impact of this conflict.

In the second article, Mirfakhrai, associated with Allameh Tabataba'i University, delves into the repercussions of the political

tensions between Russia and Ukraine, exploring their impact on reshaping the polarization of the international system. The focus of this study is the acceleration of this shift, transitioning from a unipolar state to a multipolar structure. It delves into the realignment of governmental relationships and alterations in regional alliances, posing a crucial inquiry: do these changes fortify the strategic partnership between specific nations, particularly Iran and Russia? This article employs an analytical strategy grounded in Waltz's approach within the realm of structural realism theory. The objective is to glean insights into the potential development of a comprehensive strategic partnership between Iran and Russia stemming from the escalation of political tensions between Russia and Ukraine. The analysis underscores two primary catalysts for this potential shift: environmental uncertainty and the mutual resolve of Iran and Russia to strategically adapt their political and economic frameworks.

In the third article of this specialized edition, Zarei and Barzegarzadeh, affiliated with the Islamic Azad University of Bushehr, direct their attention to the predicament facing the International Court of Justice in assessing third-party intervention in the Ukraine crisis vis-à-vis Russia. The article delves into the possibility and potential scope of involvement by a third government in this crisis, warranting a comprehensive examination. The discussion navigates through Articles 62 and 63 of the Court's Statute, elucidating the provisions pertaining to the involvement of third-party countries in legal proceedings. The mentioned articles shed light on the legal framework regarding the participation of third countries in the context of Ukraine's complaint against Russia. These countries, in their declarations, have invoked their obligations in response to Ukraine's complaint, highlighting their commitment to addressing crimes outlined in the Convention on the Prohibition of Genocide—a universal imperative binding upon all of humanity.

In their contribution to the special edition, Bagheri and Kazemi, affiliated with the University of Tehran, employed the lens of collective security theory to assess the transformative impact of the crisis in Russia and Ukraine on NATO's approach to engaging with Russia. Their research scrutinized how NATO's posture shifted over time in response to the unfolding events. The research findings revealed a notable shift occurring post-2014, where Russia's status within NATO evolved from being a partner country to being perceived as a threat entity by the alliance. Consequently, NATO's agenda incorporated the reevaluation of Russia's security dynamics. Key catalytic events in this transformation included the annexation of Crimea and the crisis in Donbass, which significantly hastened this shift in NATO's stance. This altered NATO position raised concerns in the Western sphere regarding the need for collective action vis-à-vis Russia, a concern that can be analyzed through the lens of collective

security theory.

In the fifth installment of this special edition, Niknami, associated with the University of Tehran, investigated the far-reaching impacts of the Russian-Ukraine war crisis on global food security. Highlighting the significant roles played by Russia and Ukraine in the export market of agricultural products, the study scrutinized the shifts in food security following the disruptions to international and production economies in both nations, commencing from February 2022. The article employed a post-analysis approach to underscore how the world's food security, already strained by the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, further deteriorated due to the war between Russia and Ukraine. This deterioration was attributed to alterations in strategic food product reserves held by various nations, further exacerbating the existing challenges in global food security.

In the sixth article, Emamifar, Sazmand, and Mozafari Falarti, affiliated with the University of Tehran, explored the impacts of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine on the defense relations between India and Russia. Through the lens of neo-realism, the study analyzed how the war and the imposition of targeted Western sanctions against Russia influenced India's defense strategy. The research delineated a shift in India's approach, propelled by the crisis and the sanctions, where India sought to diversify its defense partnerships and reduce its reliance on Russia. This was perceived as an effort to replace Russia with a multitude of defense allies. Additionally, India has been strategically investing in its domestic defense sectors and reformulating its operational planning, aiming to decrease dependence on Russia and other defense partners in the foreseeable future.

The inclusion of insights from distinguished scholars affiliated with reputable institutions such as Sharif, Tehran, Allameh Tabatabai, Shahid Beheshti, and Azad universities within the articles underscores the scholarly rigor and efficacy of this special edition in analyzing the aftermath of the war between Russia and Ukraine. It is anticipated that this issue, featured in the *Journal of Countries Studies*, will significantly contribute to the scholarly discourse by providing a substantial framework for contemplation and analysis of the Russia-Ukraine war, benefiting both researchers and policymakers.

**Best regards,
Editor in chief, Dr. Ehsan Rasoulinezhad**