

UKRAINE SHOULD NOT BECOME A BANGLADESH FOR EUROPE

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The ongoing Ukraine War has drawn significant attention to Europe's broader concerns and apprehensions regarding Russia's ambitions in the region. Many European nations fear that these ambitions could potentially extend to their own territories. In response to this threatening scenario, European countries have unified to provide aid to Ukraine, aiming not only to protect the nation's territorial integrity but also to reinforce its sovereignty. This collective effort underscores a pivotal moment in European geopolitics, highlighting the necessity of solidarity among nations facing external threats. Additionally, this situation has prompted discussions about the importance of regional security alliances and the need for a robust response to prevent further aggression, thereby ensuring stability across Europe. The Ukraine War reminds people of India's similar struggle to provide independence for Bangladesh in 1971, when the Indian military fought bravely to ensure Bangladesh's independence. However, over four decades and several leadership changes, Bangladesh's inclination has shifted towards Pakistan.

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However, over four decades and several leadership changes, Bangladesh's inclination has shifted towards Pakistan. However, within four decades and change in leadership, Bangladesh's inclination has shifted towards Pakistan. It is worth noting that before its independence, Bangladesh was part of Pakistan and was known as East Pakistan. However, ill treatment meted out towards people of East Pakistan by Pakistan and to prevent migration of people to India, resulted in India having to intervene in the chaotic situation in Bangladesh and lend a helping hand to the people of the then East Pakistan. It is in this context that the article aims to caution against the future complexities of engaging in a war that could ultimately prove futile. This concern grows more pressing should there be any significant shift in government leadership or if the current Ukrainian administration decides to alter its policy direction. Such changes could dramatically reshape the landscape of the conflict, potentially altering the priorities and strategies that have been established. The implications of these scenarios are significant, as they could affect both local and international support for the ongoing efforts in Ukraine, leading to unpredictable outcomes. Therefore, understanding the potential for shifts in governance and policy is essential for a comprehensive analysis of the current situation and its evolving challenges.

In most cases, papers aim to delve into conflict situations to draw lessons for their country. However, this paper delves into India's own lessons that New Delhi has recently learnt to enable the world to realise the nuances of being engaged in a war that could bear adverse results in the future. This is because each state is subjected to change in leadership, and leaders are directed by changing circumstances that suit their country's present-day policies and not past glories. Of course, Bangladesh has its own rights to decide its foreign policies and choose its allies and partners, and also strengthen its own military capabilities and think about its own threat perceptions, but decisions that are resultant of these factors cannot be

eschewed by India, nor can it be shunned in global politics. Lessons would need to be drawn to help carve a positive future for the Eurasian region.



INDIA'S BANGLADESH WAR AND RECENT POLICY SHIFTS IN BANGLADESH

India supported Bangladesh, then known as East Pakistan, during its War of Independence in 1971. The conflict between West Pakistan and East Pakistan stemmed from a profound identity crisis that plagued the two regions. West Pakistan struggled to reconcile its cultural beliefs with those of East Pakistan, where the population was predominantly Bengali. Although the only common ground between East and West Pakistan was their shared faith in Islam, the two regions were vastly different in terms of culture, traditions, and language. This dissonance exacerbated tensions

and ultimately contributed to East Pakistan's quest for autonomy. The struggle was not merely a political one; it was deeply rooted in the aspirations of the Bengali people who sought recognition of their identity and rights. As the situation escalated, India's involvement became crucial, as it not only provided support to the Bengali liberation movement but also addressed the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict.

This war was one of its kind, as despite the support of the United States in the war, Pakistan eventually accepted defeat. The Indian Army fought against the Pakistani Army with the support of the air force, while the Indian Navy played a crucial role too. Mukti Bahini in Bangladesh was supported and also trained by the Indian Army. In December 1971, India won the Bangladesh Liberation War, freeing East Pakistan from West Pakistan and helped create a separate state system called Bangladesh. Nevertheless, this win was not without sacrifices from India's side. The Indian Army and Air Force lost many personnel in the war, while reports also claim that there were Indian prisoners of war held captive by Pakistan.¹

*In **December 1971**, India won the **Bangladesh Liberation War**, freeing **East Pakistan** from West Pakistan and helped create a separate state system called **Bangladesh**. Nevertheless, this win was not without **sacrifices** from **India's side***

¹ Manjeet Sehgal, "1971 Prisoners of War: Why 54 Indian soldiers are still languishing in Pak jails?," *India Today*, March 7, 2019, <1971 Prisoners of War: Why 54 Indian soldiers are still languishing in Pak jails? - India Today>

Over the years since its independence, Bangladesh has shared cordial relations with India, and India shared full-fledged trade relations with Bangladesh. South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) further benefited the two countries in carrying out robust trade with each other. However, in recent times, with the change in leadership, Bangladesh's stance on India has altered. The country no longer views India as a crucial partner, nor does it find the necessity to maintain cordiality with New Delhi. The reason is Bangladesh's own leadership, which now wants to venture into the prospects of strengthening its relations with Pakistan. This strengthening of relations also extends to military relations and defence cooperation.

There is a potential for the sale of JF-17 Thunder Fighter Jets as part of Islamabad's beefing up of ties with Dhaka.² Dhaka has been reliant on Chinese arms sales for all these years³, but now Bangladesh also wishes to cater to its security needs by strengthening its ties with Pakistan. However, despite Bangladesh's defence deals with Beijing in the past, one could well understand the logic behind the same because India's own defence manufacturing sector was not developed. Today, India is exporting defence systems to friendly countries as a crucial part of its foreign policy mission. But Bangladesh's reliance on Pakistan for weapon systems clearly highlights Dhaka's mistrust of India, despite the hardships Indian soldiers went through to attain independence for them.

This stance of Dhaka highlights a very crucial aspect that threat perceptions and security dilemma are above historic ties. A state which decides to make its saviour its calculated adversary would tend to forget past histories and would navigate its policies according to present circumstances. Such measures have not only to do with support for Pakistan because India seems to be a threat, but also the easier option is to join the herd to gain its own political leverage. In addition, in future, because Pakistan is willing to

² "Pakistan confirms talks with Bangladesh on potential defence pact, JF-17 jet sale," *The Daily Star*, January 15, 2026, <Pakistan confirms talks with Bangladesh on potential defence pact, JF-17 jet sale | The Daily Star>

³ Amir Erez, "China's Enduring Grip on Bangladesh's Defence Hardware Supply," *Bangladesh Military Forces*, October 28, 2025, <China's Enduring Grip on Bangladesh's Defence Hardware Supply - Bangladesh Military Forces>

share its nuclear weapons with friendly countries sharing similar religious beliefs, Bangladesh could leverage its defence ties to extend the ties towards extended nuclear deterrence. It must not be forgotten that recent reports confirm the nuclear role of JF-17 fighter jets⁴ which could equip nuclear-capable cruise missiles for combat and deterrent roles.



UKRAINE AND THE SOVIET UNION: PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

It must be noted that during the Cold War, Ukraine was part of the former Soviet Union and, as a consequence, was classified as a satellite state of this powerful superpower. The geopolitical landscape shifted dramatically with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, when Ukraine emerged as an independent nation, marking a crucial moment in its history. Furthermore, in 1922, Ukraine was one of the key signatories, alongside Russia, to the founding document of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,

⁴ Eliana Johns, "Photo Depicts Potential Nuclear Mission For Pakistan's JF-17 Aircraft," *Federation of American Scientists*, July 1, 2024, <Photo Depicts Potential Nuclear Mission for Pakistan's JF-17 Aircraft>

which established the framework for the Soviet state. This early involvement played an important role in shaping the political and social dynamics within the region for decades to come. Ukraine's journey from a Soviet satellite to an independent country is emblematic of the broader changes that swept through Eastern Europe in the late 20th century.

Ukraine hosted Soviet Union nuclear weapons during the Cold War, and in 1991, during the disintegration, Ukraine reportedly hosted one thousand and nine hundred Soviet strategic nuclear weapons and between two thousand six and fifty to four thousand two hundred.⁵ Ukraine hosted even Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), including the SS-19s and SS-24s. However, in 1991, under the Minsk Agreement, Russia signed an agreement with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that included Ukraine too, which underlined that Russia would take back its nuclear arsenals from CIS countries hosting nuclear weapons.⁶

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They also decided to give back to Russia several jets in return for payment for natural gas debts.⁷ Under the Budapest Memorandum, signed by Ukraine, the US and Russia, it was assured that Ukraine's territorial integrity

⁵ "Nuclear Disarmament Ukraine," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, November 13, 2025, <Nuclear Disarmament Ukraine>

⁶ "Nuclear Disarmament Ukraine," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, November 13, 2025, <Nuclear Disarmament Ukraine>

⁷ Eleanor Beardsley and Polina Lytvynova, "For Ukrainians, a nuclear missile museum is a bitter reminder of what the country gave up," *WUFT*, December 28, 2025, <For Ukrainians, a nuclear missile museum is a bitter reminder of what the country gave up>

would be respected.⁸ Following the ongoing Ukraine War, many Ukrainians are also of the belief that the decision to give up nuclear weapons was unwise.⁹ In January 2026, the Defence Intelligence of Ukraine released new data detailing the use of foreign-made industrial equipment by Russia's defence industry to manufacture defence and military hardware, and this also includes a JVM-360 LS CNC milling machine made by the US company JET Tools, used by a manufacturer of components for Kh-101 cruise missiles for Russia.¹⁰

Ukraine has been driven into a scenario which leaves it to grapple with the shenanigans of attrition warfare coupled with siege warfare. It has also become the first country in history to become a victim of such kinds of warfare made possible through long-range missile capabilities. It is amidst this nastiness of attrition warfare when US threatens NATO members of annexation. Under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO members are expected to protect each other. However, the Article now falls flat over USA's new foreign policy agendas that remain consistent with its globalism policy. Coupled with these developments, Ukraine continues to face Russia's jolt, and as recently as January 2026, the country has been targeted with a Russian nuclear-capable missile - Oreshnik.¹¹ Russia claimed that the attack was in retaliation against Ukraine's efforts to target Russian President Vladimir Putin's residence. In addition to these nuances, any peace deal to lead to a positive outcome of the war has also failed.¹²

This is not to forget that Ukraine's own officials have been accused of theft, and the country is grappling with corruption issues of its officials, which

⁸ Eleanor Beardsley and Polina Lytvinova, "For Ukrainians, a nuclear missile museum is a bitter reminder of what the country gave up," *WUFT*, December 28, 2025, <For Ukrainians, a nuclear missile museum is a bitter reminder of what the country gave up>

⁹ Eleanor Beardsley and Polina Lytvinova, "For Ukrainians, a nuclear missile museum is a bitter reminder of what the country gave up," *WUFT*, December 28, 2025, <For Ukrainians, a nuclear missile museum is a bitter reminder of what the country gave up>

¹⁰ Daria Mykhailenko, "Ukrainian Intelligence Uncovers Foreign Machines Powering Russia's War Industry Despite Sanctions," *United 24*, January 14, 2026, <Ukrainian Intelligence Uncovers Foreign Machines Powering Russia's War Industry Despite Sanctions — UNITED24 Media>

¹¹ Samya Kullab and Ilia Novikov, "Russia says it used new Oreshnik missile in major attack in Ukraine," *Defense News*, January 9, 2026, <Russia says it used new Oreshnik missile in major attack on Ukraine>

¹² Samya Kullab and Ilia Novikov, "Russia says it used new Oreshnik missile in major attack in Ukraine," *Defense News*, January 9, 2026, <Russia says it used new Oreshnik missile in major attack on Ukraine>

include even its former prime minister.¹³ This corruption arises from the funds that Ukraine is receiving from many countries to sustain its war. In 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government suspended eleven political parties, citing their links with Russia. These parties are also reported to be pro-Russian.¹⁴

In December 2025, an interesting turn took place in the Ukrainian crisis, wherein the country decided to give up its aspirations to join NATO,¹⁵ the same reason and aspirations which led to its dismay, marking a major shift in policy-making for Zelenskyy. Ukraine is now aware that many NATO countries will not approve of Ukraine's ambition of Ukraine joining NATO to join NATO. Russia is also keen to usurp more Ukrainian territory, which could become a possibility in case the war does not end any time soon.¹⁶ NATO members like Italy have clearly stated that they would not station troops in Ukraine for security guarantees. Spain, on the other hand, contributes to military aid, but according to reports, this contribution is not on par with other European allies' contributions to military aid in Ukraine. One reason identified for this is the Spanish government's softer stance towards Russia.¹⁷

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¹³ "Ukraine's former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko accused of bribery: Report," *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2026, <Ukraine's former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko accused of bribery: Report | Russia-Ukraine war News | Al Jazeera>

¹⁴ Volodymyr Ishchenko, "Why did Ukraine suspend 11 'pro-Russia' parties," *Al Jazeera*, March 21, 2022, <Why did Ukraine suspend 11 'pro-Russia' parties? | Russia-Ukraine war | Al Jazeera>

¹⁵ Holly Ellyat, "Ukraine gives up joining NATO in bid to shift dial in Russia peace talks," *CNBC*, December 15, 2025, <Ukraine gives up joining NATO in bid to shift the dial in peace talks>

¹⁶ Peter Harris, "Ukraine is under pressure to trade lands for peace- if it does, history shows it might never get it back," *The Conversation*, January 12, 2026, <Ukraine is under pressure to trade land for peace – if it does, history shows it might not ever get it back>

¹⁷ Anton Filippov, "What prevents Spain from increasing military aid to Ukraine," *European Pravda*, November 27, 2025, <What prevents Spain from increasing military aid to Ukraine | European Pravda>



Again, even if the peace deal comes to fruition, Ukraine may not be positioned for genuine peace. This scepticism arises from the fact that France and the United Kingdom signed a declaration in 2026 expressing their intent to deploy troops within Ukraine, referring to these deployments as “military hubs.” This plan is designed to function as part of what they describe as ‘double security guarantees,’ aimed at providing reassurance in a volatile region. The establishment of these military hubs raises questions about Ukraine's future sovereignty and the potential for ongoing conflict. As long as foreign troops remain in the country, tensions could linger, undermining the very essence of peace that the agreement hopes to achieve.’¹⁸ Such arrangements would only delay peace talks, leaving Russia more concerned regarding its security post-peace talks. In addition, new rules for Ukraine make Ukraine’s War more complex in today’s scenario. Europe’s ninety-billion-euro loan to Ukraine would require Kyiv to

¹⁸ Jaroslav Lukiv and Wyre Davies, “UK and France to send troops Ukraine if peace deal agreed,” *BBC*, January 7, 2026, <UK and France to send troops to Ukraine if peace deal agreed with Russia>

buy European and Ukrainian weapons.¹⁹ But in this plan too, there are discrepancies as France wishes to put stringent limits to restrict the US sale of weapons to Ukraine, while other European countries like Germany and the Netherlands wish for more flexibility.²⁰



CONCERNS

Amid these ongoing issues, it is conceivable that in the future, Ukraine could adopt a strategy in which aligning itself with Russia becomes a potentially advantageous option. This shift could arise due to various repercussions within NATO and the internal disagreements among European Union member states regarding their individual decisions and policies. New leadership or even a return to familiar political figures could favour approaches to peace negotiations with Russia that are influenced by the United States' models. The acceptance of foreign military troops on Ukraine's territory signifies a complex reality, suggesting that the nation

¹⁹ Yuval Molina Obdeman, "EU shuts out US weapons in \$95billion Ukraine loan amid deepening transatlantic split," *Courthouse News Service*, January 14, 2026, <EU shuts out US weapons in \$95 billion Ukraine loan amid deepening transatlantic split | Courthouse News Service>

²⁰ Yuval Molina Obdeman, "EU shuts out US weapons in \$95billion Ukraine loan amid deepening transatlantic split," *Courthouse News Service*, January 14, 2026, <EU shuts out US weapons in \$95 billion Ukraine loan amid deepening transatlantic split | Courthouse News Service>

may be perceived as a satellite state under the influence of more powerful countries.

For many years, Ukraine has been striving for complete independence and full membership in NATO, both of which remain fervent ambitions that many citizens hold dear. However, whether Ukraine would actually be willing to host European troops in a manner that might unnecessarily provoke Russia is a nuanced and intricate question. This decision will depend heavily on Ukraine's political leverage and its evolving choices regarding alliances, which are increasingly complex in the current geopolitical climate. When the conflict initially erupted, an alliance with the United States virtually guaranteed support from NATO members. However, under the present circumstances, this perception has shifted, particularly in light of recent US threats directed at Canada and Greenland, which have complicated the traditional understanding of solidarity within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Ukraine also views its own journey in the defence industry along with Belarus, another satellite state of the erstwhile Soviet Union. Today, Ukraine grapples with its own problems, making it dependent on other countries for weapon systems, while Belarus' defence industries are likely to grow in the near future, owing to the deep integration of its own military industrial complex with Russia's.²¹ Post 2014, Ukraine's arms industry was reaching new scales and heights with private sector participation in this sector.

*Though **Ukraine's defence industry** is receiving an impetus owing to **the war**, which transformed the Ukrainian **economy** into a **war-driven economy**, its **technology remains outdated***

²¹ Dmytro Shumlianskyi, "Role of Defense Industry of Belarus in Russian Aggression Against Ukraine," *MILITARNYI*, November 24, 2025, <Role of Defense Industry of Belarus in Russian Aggression Against Ukraine - Militarnyi>

Though Ukraine's defence industry is receiving an impetus owing to the war, which transformed the Ukrainian economy into a war-driven economy, its technology remains outdated, and it also faces financial constraints as the budget is allocated not only towards Ukraine's own defence industry but also towards buying arms from foreign countries.²² The new loan scheme from the European Union could also restrict Ukraine's choices of weapon systems.

The French President Emmanuel Macron's offer for a European Union nuclear security guarantee has been misconstrued by many European countries as a NATO nuclear security guarantee. This misunderstanding reflects a broader tension within Europe concerning national security and defence strategies. While some states appear willing to exploit both the options of U.S. and French nuclear weapons, this situation raises critical questions about the unity and strategic direction of the European Union. The differing interpretations of Macron's proposal highlight the complexities of international security dynamics, as countries navigate their relationships with both NATO and the EU in an increasingly uncertain global landscape. As nations assess their own security needs and alliances, the ramifications of this confusion could significantly impact their defence policies and collaborative efforts within the region.

As the author has pointed out in an article:²³

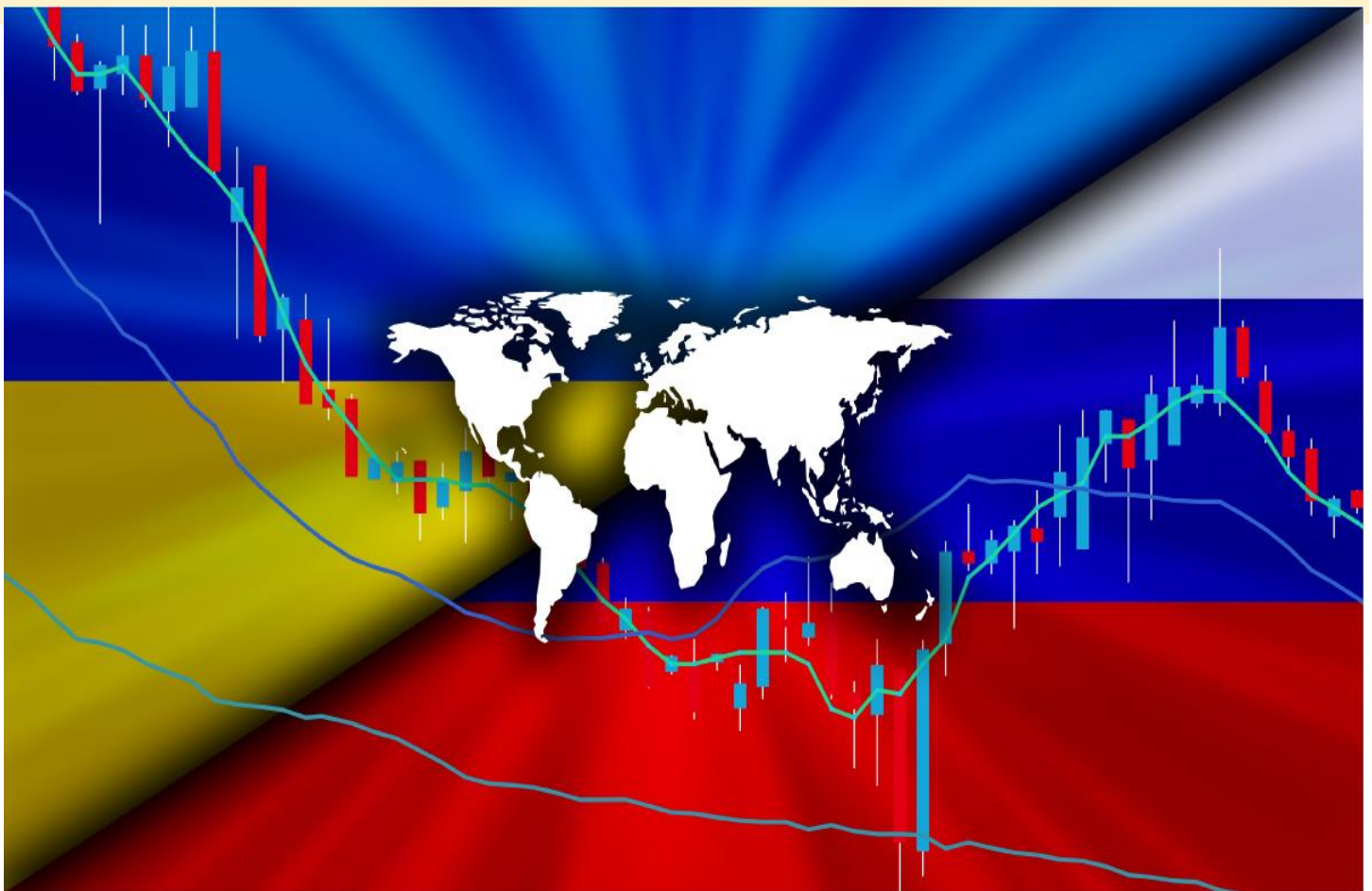
The US guarantees nuclear security under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. France would need to establish a distinct legal framework to legitimise its nuclear security commitments outside the NATO structure and to ensure compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). While Paris may seek to justify its position through reference to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, doing so could undermine its broader strategic

²² Kateryna Kuzmuk and Lorenzo Scarazzato, "The transformation of Ukraine's arms industry amid war with Russia," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, February 21, 2025, <The transformation of Ukraine's arms industry amid war with Russia | SIPRI>

²³ Debalina Ghoshal, "The Implications of President Macron's Nuclear Deterrence Policy for the EU and NATO," *Special Eurasia*, May 30, 2025, <Effects of Macron's Nuclear Deterrence Policy for the West>

objective of asserting greater autonomy and influence within the European Union's security architecture

These circumstances could lead Ukraine to make choices that contribute to decisive results in the long run. While the current government shows strong loyalty to Western Europe and actively seeks partnerships that bolster its position, there is no certainty that a decade from now, the government in power will continue to pursue similar measures or maintain the same level of commitment. Political landscapes can shift dramatically, influenced by changes in leadership, public sentiment, and external pressures. Consequently, the future of Ukraine's alignment may depend on evolving circumstances both within the country and in the international arena. Establishing a resilient political framework that supports these alliances will be essential, as it can enhance stability and sustainability regardless of who holds power in the years to come.



CONCLUSION

States will function according to their own vested interests. The quest for territorial integrity, the pursuit of economic growth, and the emphasis on sovereignty are primary agendas that significantly influence a state's decision-making processes. Within the framework of foreign policy, such decisions are predominantly guided by these vested interests. Therefore, before Europe decides to deploy its troops, potentially putting the lives of soldiers at risk, it is imperative to take into account the complex history of South Asia and the consequences that have followed similar conflicts in the past. Examining the outcomes of previous military engagements in the region can provide valuable lessons, highlighting the intricacies of local dynamics and the potential for long-lasting effects on stability and peace. This careful consideration is crucial to ensuring that any military intervention is both strategically sound and ethically justified, avoiding the mistakes of history and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the region's challenges.

Moreover, understanding the geopolitical landscape of South Asia is essential in addressing contemporary issues. The interplay of various national interests often complicates responses to emerging crises. Historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and territorial disputes contribute to a fragile environment that can be easily destabilised. Thus, it is vital to engage with local governments and communities to gauge their perspectives and needs. Collaborative approaches, rather than unilateral military actions, can pave the way for sustainable resolutions. By fostering dialogue and building partnerships, external powers can work towards creating conditions that promote long-term peace and prosperity in the region.

Furthermore, the implications of military interventions extend beyond immediate tactical objectives. They have the potential to reshape alliances, influence trade relationships, and alter the balance of power in the

international arena. Each decision made in this context carries weighty ramifications not only for the countries directly involved but also for broader global stability. Decision-makers must weigh the potential risks and benefits carefully, ensuring that the chosen course of action aligns with both immediate goals and long-term strategic visions. By doing so, states can navigate the intricate web of international relations with greater foresight and responsibility, ultimately contributing to a more stable and peaceful world.