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**MEXICO AND THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT: THOUGHTS
ON DIPLOMACY, NEUTRALITY AND INTERNATIONAL LAW**

The article analyzes Mexico's position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, emphasizing its legal, diplomatic, and humanitarian dimensions. The starting point is the breach of international law by Russia, citing violations of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law. The article outlines the global response, highlighting the condemnation and sanctions led by Western nations. In contrast, it notes the nuanced positions of the Global South, including Mexico's approach, characterized by strategic neutrality. Despite condemning Russia's actions, Mexico abstains from imposing sanctions, maintaining a policy of non-intervention and emphasizing humanitarian aid. Mexico's historical precedents, economic considerations, and domestic political relations influence this stance. The article also explores potential shifts in Mexico's stance on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict under the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, who will take office on October 1, 2024. It concludes that while Mexico's response is complex and multi-dimensional, it continues to balance its international obligations with domestic priorities, highlighting the challenges of contemporary international relations.

Key words: Russia-Ukraine conflict, International Law, Mexican foreign policy, diplomatic neutrality; humanitarian aid.

Introduction. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has had profound implications for global politics, challenging key tenets of international law and exposing vulnerabilities in the global order. According to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state is strictly prohibited. Russia's actions, from the annexation of Crimea in 2014 to the full-scale invasion in 2022, represent clear violations of these principles, shaking the foundations of international stability and justice.

In this challenging international environment, Mexico's response has been particularly noteworthy. Historically committed to non-intervention and international law, Mexico has taken a position of strategic neutrality. While unequivocally condemning the Russian aggression, Mexico has also refrained from imposing economic sanctions, opting instead for a diplomatic and humanitarian approach. This nuanced stance is informed by Mexico's rich diplomatic history, economic considerations, and complex political dynamics at both domestic and international levels.

This article examines the intricacies of Mexico's position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, exploring some factors that have shaped its response and the broader

implications for its foreign policy. The aim is to offer a more human perspective on how Mexico, a country with a strong tradition of peaceful diplomacy, navigates the pressures and ethical challenges posed by a world in crisis. By examining Mexico's choices, I also seek to shed light on the varied reactions of the international community and the role of global institutions in seeking resolutions. This study highlights the difficult balance nations must strike between principles, interests, and the realities of global politics in times of crisis.

Conflict Under International Law: A Challenge to the Global Order. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 represents a serious breach of international principles. According to established norms, the threat or use of force against a state's territorial integrity or political independence are strictly forbidden. Russia's actions, from Crimea's annexation in 2014 to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, were open violations of this most fundamental principle.

Apart from an infringement on the territorial integrity of a country, Russia has also made too many breaches of international humanitarian law. The Geneva Conventions, designed to protect civilians and combatants during armed conflict, have been seriously and systematically violated. Reports on indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations, including attacks against hospitals, schools, and residential areas, are rampant. Targeting of civilian infrastructure, such as power plants and water supplies, has also been documented, further exacerbating the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

Russian forces have conducted widespread attacks using cluster munitions, which are banned by international law through the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, killing hundreds of civilians, and causing a lasting ecological contamination in the environment. Evidence is also mounting on war crimes, such as torture, rape, and the forced deportation of civilians. All these are well-documented by human rights organizations and international investigative bodies (Amnesty International, 2024; Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2024).

The fact that Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council has been the greatest detriment to the effectiveness of the international legal order. The crises were rendered beyond the Security Council by the veto power Russia holds, as was the case with the resolutions of February 25, 2022, and September 30 of the same year aimed at maintaining peace and security in Ukraine, which were vetoed by the aggressor country. As it has been criticized countless times, the veto power held by only the 5 permanent members makes the Security Council powerless to address this crisis.

On the other hand, the ICC has issued arrest warrants against Russian President Vladimir Putin and other high-ranking officials for war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation (International Criminal Court, 2023). While these warrants are far-reaching in terms of accountability, the challenges in their execution still stand in the face of Russia's non-cooperation with the ICC. It is then that the inability to bring criminals to book instills no confidence in the international rule of law.

The aggression by Russia also had legal ramifications to which the International Court of Justice worked. On 16 March 2022, in a ruling on provisional measures, the ICJ ordered that Russia “[...] shall immediately suspend the military

operations commenced on 24 February 2022 [...]” (International Court of Justice, 2022) in the territory of Ukraine, as indicated in the application filed by Ukraine.

While the orders of the ICJ are binding, there is no enforcement mechanism, and Russia has refused to abide by the Court’s order.

On the more positive side, while symbolic, the decision of the ICJ served to give the stamp of condemnation of Russia’s actions to the international community and once again underlined the importance of international law in regulating state conduct. At the same time, the inability of the Court to enforce its judgments has been highlighted by Russia’s continued aggression.

Similarly, ICJ has also been asked to determine whether Russia has violated the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Ukraine insisted that the actions of Russia are genocide against the Ukrainian people (Hathaway, 2024). Although this judgment from the Court could set an important precedent in law, it will not be a decisive fact in the conflict.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is yet another wake-up call to the fragility of the existing legal international order and its urgent need of reform. Developing international institutions and mechanisms to prevent and deal with aggression is more pressing than ever, given the exiting impunity. Accountability measures, therefore, are crucial to make sure that such a breach of international law shall never happen again.

Clarifications Regarding the Conflict. The section debunks some common myths about the war between Russia and Ukraine.

One of the most widespread ideas is that the conflict began in February 2022; however, it can be traced back to 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and launched military actions in eastern Ukraine. The immediate causes can be found in the post-Soviet period due to various kinds of Russian interference in Ukraine. For instance, in 1992, Russia advanced claims on Crimea, and a decade later, in 2003, an incident related to Tuzla Island in the Kerch Strait again sparked off a dispute (Shelest, 2023).

In 2004, Russia interfered in Ukraine’s presidential election, openly favoring the pro-Russian candidate, Viktor Yanukovich. Barring such incidents, Russia has also used economic tools—that is, manipulation of energy supplies—to influence Ukrainian policy (Sushko, 2008, p. 7). The concept of Ukraine as “Little Russia” has been further promoted by the Russians in a denial of Ukrainian statehood and culture.

The objectives of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia have been misconceived. That is, it was never intended to “denazify” Ukraine or protect a supposedly maltreated pro-Russian population. In fact, everything indicates that the objective of this invasion was always of a strategic nature: occupying southern Ukraine and opening a land route to Crimea, annexed by Russia since 2014, and, as Thomas Graham recognizes, “[...] weakening or disrupting Ukraine’s ties with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), stymieing Ukrainian nationalism, and expanding territorial gains (2024). There was no genocide in Donetsk Oblast; hence, geopolitics had the last word in Russia’s actions.

It is often said that Russia’s claims of the security threat from NATO’s eastward expansion were what prompted the aggression. At the same time, though, Ukrainian public support for NATO membership and formal renunciation of neutrality spread to a great extent as responses to Russian aggression, not the main cause. And in the same light, the European Union’s enlargement has not been seen to be a direct threat

to Russia, as stated by President Putin himself (Reuters, 2022). These expansions pose more of a challenge to Russia's strategic ambitions rather than threaten its security directly.

On the legality of the sanctions that have been imposed on Russia, there has been a misplaced notion that such measures violate international law. The truth, however, is that the sanctions are meant to undermine Russia's capability of sustaining its war effort by targeting its financial and technological sectors (S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2024). For example, the European Union itself did not consider food supplies and fertilizers as part of the sanctions (Glauber & Laborde, 2022) to prevent humanitarian catastrophes. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that such sanctions are unlawful coercive measures which violate the fundamental human rights of the Russian people.

International Responses to the Invasion. Beginning with the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia, there was an increasing trend toward division within the world community. At that time, there had begun to emerge a complex interplay of geopolitical interests, economic dependencies, and ideological alignments.

First, the West, led by the United States and the European Union, has managed to unite in its condemnation of Russian aggression and support for Ukraine to an extent not seen before. This unified action took the form of a complex package against Russia: finance, energy, and technology. The United States has already imposed more than 1,000 sanctions against Russia, its allies, and key individuals since the beginning of the invasion.

Aside from the economic indicators, Western nations have poured huge military and financial aid into Ukraine. The United States topped these donors, having pledged billions of dollars in security assistance. NATO allies contributed substantially to Ukraine's defense capabilities with arms transfers, training, and intelligence sharing.

According to Ukraine Support Tracker Data of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, "The majority of committed support by country has come from the United States, whose total aid commitment is valued at about \$75 billion. The U.S. is followed by Germany and the United Kingdom for highest commitments overall. The European Union has committed approximately \$93 billion in aid to Ukraine" (Wolf & Davis, 2024).

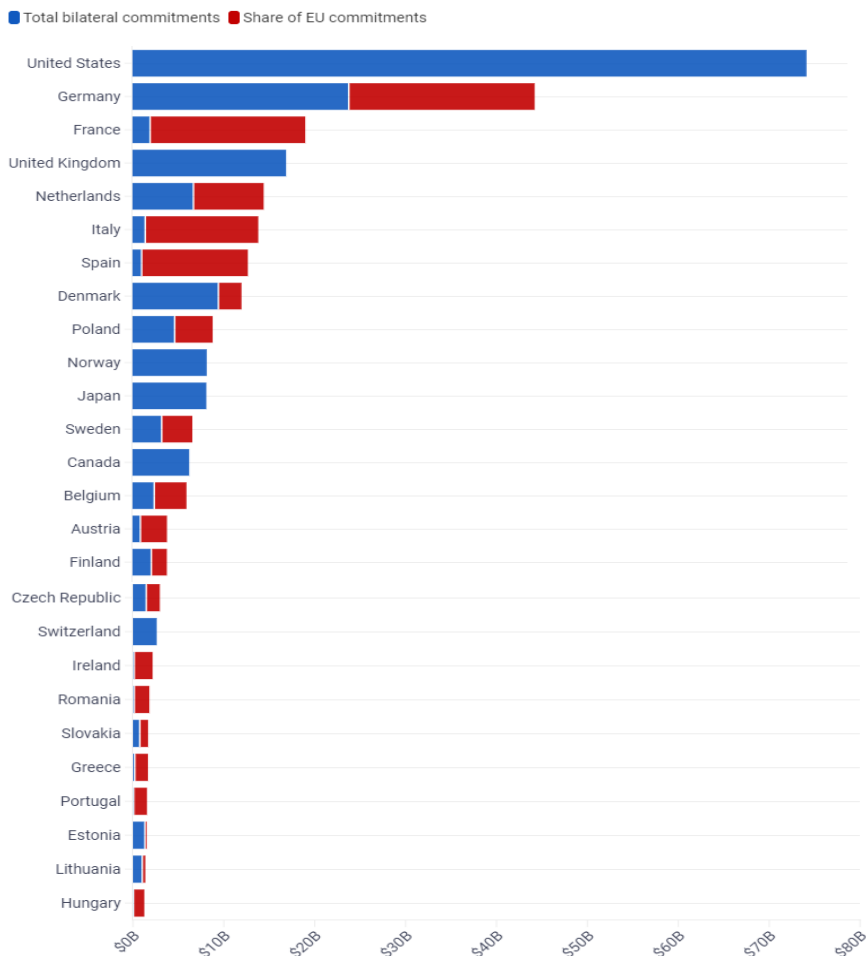
To be more precise, the following chart shows government-to-government transfers to Ukraine from January 24, 2022, to January 15, 2024 (Wolf & Davis, 2024).

The case of the European Union must be underlined, especially because it has imposed a full set of strong restrictive measures against Russia due to events in Ukraine (Council of the European Union, 2024). These are expected to inflict powerful pressure on the financial system so that further acts of aggression are prevented. Those sanctions hit such spheres as the financial sector, energy, trade, and technologies. They are bound to paralyze Russia's economic capabilities, as well as its ability to sustain the war, by freezing an estimated €60 billion of assets of Russian oligarchs and government officials, restricting access to the SWIFT financial messaging system for several major Russian banks, and imposing export controls on crucial technologies.

Parallel to the sanctions, massive financial support for Ukraine has also been pledged by the EU. According to the European Commission, since the beginning of

Aid to Ukraine by Country

Twenty-six countries have committed \$1 billion or more.



Source: *Ukraine Support Tracker* - Chart: Julia Haines/U.S. News & World Report
 Government-to-government transfers from Jan. 24, 2022 to Jan. 15, 2024. EU commitments include MFA, EPF, and EIB. Countries that have committed less than \$1B are not included above.



the war of aggression, the European Union has provided nearly €108 billion in support to Ukraine. This substantial package encompasses approximately €52 billion allocated by Team Europe to bolster Ukraine's economic, social, and financial stability. Additionally, the EU has committed nearly €39 billion in military assistance and up to €17 billion to aid Member States in addressing the needs of Ukrainians who have sought refuge within the bloc. (European Commission, 2024a). Also, the European Union has already begun negotiations for the eventual accession of Ukraine to the regional bloc (European Commission, 2024b).

Much of the Global South has shifted to an increasingly nuanced stance regarding the conflict in hand. Many of these countries genuinely condemned the invasion but proved reluctant to impose sanctions on Russia for political and economic reasons. Take, for instance, India: a large importer of Russian energy who is trying to pre-

serve a nuanced neutrality by abstaining from UN resolutions condemning Russia while increasing its oil imports from the country.

On the other hand, countries like Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia for mediation in the conflict and to seek diplomatic solutions (Isilow, 2023). Many of these countries, especially those within the BRICS group, have pointed out that a political solution to this crisis can only be gained through dialogue, which essentially asks for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the commencement of negotiations. However, these efforts were undermined by profound divisions at the international level and hardened positions taken up by all parties.

Specifically, the Latin American countries react differently to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, compared to more pronounced stances taken by major powers around the world. While many countries have condemned the aggression, such condemnation spans different depths and consistencies.

One of the key tendencies is the siding of several Latin American countries on the position of the Western bloc. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru have voted for all UN resolutions condemning Russia's actions (Burni, 2023). These countries expressed their sympathy toward Ukraine and adopted sanctions or restrictive measures against Russia. They always base their positions on democratic values, respect for territorial integrity, and coincidence of Western geopolitical interests.

In contrast, only a few countries – those having historical ties with the Soviet Union or other political conflicts brewing within them – have been able to accept ambiguous or pro-Russian attitudes.

These countries—the group includes Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela—have either abstained from UN votes (Burni, 2023), criticized Western interference in the crisis, or directly come out to publicly endorse Russia's narrative. Such positions are often underpinned by ideological affinities, economic dependence on Russia, or a simple political will to challenge the hemispheric hegemony of the United States. It is worth noting that the replies of Latin American countries to this situation are complex and have multiple drivers: historical experiences, domestic politics, economic and regional relations. Although most countries' condemnation of Russia's aggression is uniform, there are differences in commitment levels to that stance and willingness to take concrete actions.

As for international and regional organizations, the United Nations has been the lead forum for addressing the crisis, but it has been weakened by Russia's ability to block measures in the Security Council. Nevertheless, the General Assembly has voted on several resolutions that denounce the aggression of Russia and call for the withdrawal of troops. In both cases, the resolutions are nonbinding, but they also helped to isolate Russia on a political level and provided moral support to Ukraine.

And it is precisely this lack of effectiveness in the actions of the United Nations, especially of its Security Council that has led more and more States, individuals and organizations to demand a substantial reform of this body.

To a growing proportion of the world's governments and citizens, the council today is both feckless and unjust, dominated by irresponsible and unrepresentative powers inclined to abuse their position rather than safeguard the peace. Restoring the council's effectiveness and legitimacy, critics contend, requires updating its anachronistic composition and unfair decisionmaking rules to better reflect ongoing shifts in global power and emerging centers of moral authority. Unfortunately, UN members are

divided over the shape of any reform, not least whether it should focus on enhancing the council's capability or its representativeness. Thanks to this diplomatic deadlock, the Security Council is trapped in amber (Patrick, 2023).

Regional organizations have also attempted to deal with the conflict. These include some African Union's leaders (Trevelyan & Liffey, 2023), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (De Silva, 2023), and the Latin American and Caribbean States (Arciniegas, 2023). While there was generally condemnation of the invasion, the reactions were varied because of different interests and priorities among countries in these organizations.

Mexico's Strategic Neutrality: A Complex Response to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict. The case of Mexico's foreign policy on the Russia-Ukraine war is a tightrope walk being undertaken by so many developing nations squeezed by the vicissitudes of contemporary international relations. Although it explicitly condemned Russian aggression and called for respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity in the light of the United Nations Charter, Mexico had assumed a studied neutrality (Garza, 2022). This is inspired by historical precedents, economic considerations, and political relations.

On the other hand, the decision not to enforce economic sanctions, which form part of the arsenal used by Western powers against Russia, is in line with a nation that has strong traditions of non-interventionism. Mexico's foreign policy has insisted throughout history on dialogue, diplomacy, and the peaceful resolution of controversies (2022). For Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the Mexican President, sanctioning Russia represents some kind of coercive action that may increase tension and harm diplomatic efforts. In addition, Mexico's relationship with Russia in the economic sphere, particularly related to energy, should also represent a reason behind this decision.

The humanitarian concerns, however, have driven the core of Mexico's response to the crisis. For example, the support has essentially involved providing medicine, food, and shelter to Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons (El Financiero, 2022), further entrenching the country as a humanitarian actor in the international community. These actions are in line with Mexico's long history of upholding human rights and international cooperation. It is worth mentioning that the scope of Mexico's humanitarian participation looks minor compared to the main Western powers, showing the limitation by its economic possibilities.

Internally, the conflict has generated a spectrum of opinions, from some demanding a more forceful attitude against Russia to others supporting the government's attitude of neutrality. The announcement of a Mexico-Russia Friendship Group in the Chamber of Deputies (United World International, 2022) has further blurred the already complicated domestic political scene, putting at stake before the world the commitment to uphold democratic principles and international law. Although such a grouping does not itself imply official government policy, it is one as to domestic view on foreign policy matters.

The strategic neutrality of Mexico in its approach toward a crisis that unfolded at an international scale is complicated and multi-dimensional. If on the one hand, a humanitarian concern has reached its peak, then staying away from direct confrontation with Russia has attracted criticism from various quarters on the other hand.

The conflict will not stop but will just keep on readjusting Mexico's strategy in the balancing act between international obligations and domestic priorities. Long-term

effects of the stance on Mexican foreign policy and its standing in the international community are yet to be determined.

The political outlook of Mexico is, however, in the process of change. On one hand, it is important to highlight that Foreign Minister Alicia Bárcena Ibarra led the Mexican delegation at the Peace Summit on Ukraine, held in Nidwalden, Switzerland, on June 15-16, 2024. The summit, hosted by Swiss President Viola Amherd and Federal Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, was the first high-level global conference aimed at finding a comprehensive, lasting, and peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

During the summit, Bárcena reiterated Mexico's commitment to peace, dialogue, and diplomacy, emphasizing that the solution to such conflicts lies in promoting peace rather than war. She affirmed Mexico's adherence to the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, international law, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, condemning any form of invasion or violence, including attacks on diplomatic missions (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, 2024).

In the closing plenary session, Bárcena highlighted the security threat posed by the conflict, not just to Europe but globally, particularly due to the escalation and increased military deployments, which have exacerbated civilian suffering, especially among women and children. She expressed Mexico's concern for nuclear security, referencing the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and stressed the need to safeguard Ukraine's nuclear facilities (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, 2024).

Alicia Bárcena outlined four key points: the importance of involving both parties in negotiations, legitimizing efforts under the United Nations, pursuing gradual confidence-building measures, and monitoring the International Criminal Court's investigation into attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure. She also called for a review of international law and the UN Charter in addressing humanitarian crises, including the situation in Gaza (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, 2024).

On the other hand, it is important to review what Héctor Vasconcelos, who replaced Juan Ramón de la Fuente as Mexico's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said. During an interview with the newspaper *La Jornada* in February 2024, Héctor Vasconcelos stated that “[...] it is time for the UN to refocus on issues that have been overshadowed by crises such as the war in Ukraine, and he emphasizes that efforts to reduce inequality should be a priority” (Sánchez Jiménez, 2024).

And on much more specific issues, such as the security of nuclear power plants in Ukraine, Mexico has also expressed a clear position, as demonstrated by the following transcript from a July 2024 video in which Ambassador Héctor Vasconcelos, during the General Assembly, stated the following:

[...] Mexico's position will be consistent with the resolutions adopted during the emergency special sessions of the General Assembly. Since the beginning of this conflict, both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, Mexico has expressed its condemnation of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine solely because it is contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law. [Mexico] makes an urgent call for the preservation of the integrity of nuclear facilities in Ukraine. Military activities at nuclear sites in Ukraine are unjustifiable; these are clearly identifiable facilities and attacking them is expressly prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. The physical security of nuclear facilities must be always safeguarded [...]. Mexico supports all efforts [...] to ensure that parties adhere to their security commitments

regarding these facilities [...]. Mexico has repeatedly called for the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict through negotiation, mediation, dialogue, and diplomacy. Pronouncements by the General Assembly, as well as other United Nations system bodies, must maintain a just distinction between the political, humanitarian, and nuclear aspects. Only in this way can we contribute to the cause of a peaceful resolution of the conflict (Vasconcelos, 2024).

Additionally, the election of Claudia Sheinbaum as president and the appointment of Juan Ramón de la Fuente as Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Associated Press, 2024) are being seen as a probable change in Mexico's foreign policy.

On the day of her election as Mexico's future president, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo stated her commitment to pursuing peace in Ukraine. In response to congratulations from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Sheinbaum also expressed Mexico's intention to play a significant role in global peace efforts and in upholding the United Nations Charter (Navarro, 2024).

When Ukrainian President Zelenskyy congratulated Claudia Sheinbaum on her victory in Mexico's, he conveyed hope that her presidency will strengthen bilateral relations and emphasized his desire for fruitful cooperation and strengthening the relationship between both countries. He also expressed confidence that Mexico could play a significant role in global efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and uphold the United Nations Charter (EFE, 2024).

But also, the same press statement said that, despite Ukraine's diplomatic efforts to build stronger ties with Latin America and the Global South, the response has been limited, with no prominent Latin American leaders visiting Ukraine during the war. Likewise, it is noted that outgoing Mexican President López Obrador, who supported Claudia Sheinbaum's candidacy, had criticized U.S. aid to Ukraine and called for negotiations with Russia—positions that Ukrainian President opposes if Russian forces remain in Ukraine (EFE, 2024).

Zelenskyy's comments highlight the existing tensions between his government and Mexico, so a change in administration could ease these relations, especially with the election of Juan Ramón de la Fuente as the next Secretary of Foreign Affairs. De la Fuente's good record in multilateralism and critical view regarding Russia's actions could encourage a much more critical and forceful stance against the war of aggression.

For example, on April 26, 2022, de la Fuente appeared before the Mexican Senate's Foreign Relations and International Organizations Committee to discuss Mexico's experience in the UN Security Council. He described Russia's invasion of Ukraine as "horrific", impacting nations globally, and reaffirmed Mexico's commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, rejecting claims of a weak government response. De la Fuente highlighted global challenges such as food shortages and rising prices due to the conflict and he also assured that Mexico's delegation has consistently conveyed legislative concerns to international bodies, aligning with instructions from the Mexican Presidency (Lidón, 2022).

More specifically, the following table presents some positions of the Mexican government that Juan Ramón de la Fuente presented in various Security Council meetings.

Date of the Security Council meeting	Position of Mexico presented by then Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente
February 17, 2022	Mexico's Ambassador to the UN, Juan Ramón de la Fuente, emphasized that a diplomatic solution is the only viable way to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. He urged the parties involved to return to diplomacy and dialogue to ease tensions. Mexico also supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The Mexican government welcomed Russia's announcement of a troop withdrawal from the Ukrainian border.
February 25, 2022	Mexico's ambassador, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez, announced Mexico's support for the resolution against Russia, citing the country's pacifist foreign policy. He stated that the invasion violates the UN Charter and is considered aggression under UN Resolution 33-14. Reflecting on Mexico's own historical invasions, including those by the US and France, de la Fuente Ramírez emphasized Mexico's long-standing opposition to aggression and its commitment to diplomatic solutions to prevent further civilian suffering.
February 27, 2022	Mexico's Ambassador, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez, called for an urgent General Assembly session under Resolution 377 (V) due to the Security Council's inaction. He criticized the veto power of permanent members, asserting it should be a serious responsibility, not a privilege. De la Fuente supported holding an emergency General Assembly session to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and ensure that aid reaches those in need, highlighting the Council's failure to act because of the veto on February 25.
March 17, 2022	Mexico's Representative to the UN, Juan Ramón de la Fuente, highlighted the devastating humanitarian impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He emphasized the need for safe access for medical personnel and the protection of medical facilities. De la Fuente condemned attacks on healthcare workers and infrastructure, urging respect for international humanitarian law. He called for a ceasefire and a diplomatic solution to the conflict.
July 29, 2022	Mexico called on UN Secretary-General António Guterres to continue with the July 22 Istanbul agreements between Ukraine and Russia. Mexico's UN representative, Juan Ramón de la Fuente, emphasized that these agreements show that dialogue is possible even amid war. He criticized the Security Council's failure to support the agreements, which are crucial for the global food crisis. De la Fuente highlighted the worsening humanitarian situation, with over 5,000 civilian deaths and 16 million affected. He stressed the need for civilian protection, humanitarian aid, and a diplomatic solution, and supported Guterres' efforts to advance peace.

Juan Ramón de la Fuente has been a vocal advocate for resolving Ukraine crisis through diplomacy and dialogue. He has highlighted the devastating impact of the conflict on civilians, stressing the urgent need for protection and humanitarian aid. He has condemned the invasion as a serious breach of international law and called out the failures of the Security Council to act decisively due to the misuse of veto power. His calls for a ceasefire and a return to diplomatic solutions reflect a deep commitment to alleviating human suffering and finding a peaceful resolution to this ongoing crisis.

However, even though the future Minister of Foreign Affairs might favor a stronger statement against an act of aggression that violates international law and international humanitarian law in many ways, it would be overly optimistic to expect a radical shift in the current foreign policy. In fact, the most recent news is that the team of President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum has extended an invitation to President Vladimir Putin to attend the inauguration ceremony of Mexico's next president, scheduled for October 1 (Calderón, 2024). While it is virtually impossible for Putin to accept this invitation, given Mexico's status as a signatory to the Rome Statute and its obligation to comply with the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant against the Russian leader, this gesture sets a troubling precedent. It potentially undermines the prospects for a firm stance against the aggression of Russia in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, it is also important to remember what President Zelensky has stated, or, even more forcefully, what Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has said in February 2023:

If a country does not condemn the Russian aggression against Ukraine, that country paves the way for other aggressors and for those who want to resolve problems through force and do not respect international law [...]. This is not just an attack on Ukraine; it was an attack on very basic rules upon which our world is built. If a country does not openly condemn this at the very least, then that country wants to live in a ruthless world where force resolves all problems (Mejía, 2023).

In this sense, the new administration must think carefully about the economic and political implications of any change in attitude towards Russia. Mexico maintains commercial relations with Russia and Ukraine, and a sudden break with Russia could mean dangerous consequences for the Mexican economy.

Also, several internal and external factors exert influence on the Mexican foreign policy. The impact of public opinion, bilateral relations with the United States, and regional relations are among the rest that exert a key role in foreign policy and will, as such, betray any radical change in the Mexican stance toward Russia.

In such a context, the new administration is likely to look for a balance between continuity and change. Part of the foreign policies set by the current government—above all, commitment to multilateralism and a drive toward human rights—can be maintained. All the same, an increase in stress on democratic principles and the projection of a more proactive vision of foreign policy is to be expected.

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**МЕКСИКА ТА РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ КОНФЛІКТ: ДУМКИ
ПРО ДИПЛОМАТІЮ, НЕЙТРАЛІТЕТ ТА МІЖНАРОДНЕ ПРАВО**

Резюме

У статті аналізується позиція Мексики щодо російсько-українського конфлікту, наголошується на його правовому, дипломатичному та гуманітарному вимірах. Вихідним пунктом є порушення Росією міжнародного права, посиляючись на порушення Статуту ООН і міжнародного гуманітарного права. Окреслюється глобальна реакція, підкреслюється засудження та санкції з боку західних країн. Разом із тим відзначаються нюанси позицій Глобального Півдня, включаючи підхід Мексики, що характеризується стратегічним нейтралітетом. Незважаючи на засудження дій Росії, Мексика утримується від запровадження санкцій, зберігаючи політику невтручання та наголошуючи на гуманітарній допомозі. На цю позицію впливають історичні прецеденти, економічні міркування та внутрішньополітичні відносини Мексики. У статті також досліджуються потенційні зміни в позиції Мексики щодо російсько-українського конфлікту під час адміністрації Клаудії Шейнбаум, яка вступить на посаду 1 жовтня 2024 р. У статті робиться висновок, що, хоча відповідь Мексики є складною та багатовимірною, держава продовжує балансувати свої міжнародні зобов'язання із внутрішніми пріоритетами, висвітлюючи виклики сучасних міжнародних відносин.

Ключові слова: російсько-український конфлікт, міжнародне право, зовнішня політика Мексики, дипломатичний нейтралітет, гуманітарна допомога.