

IMPACT OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR ON INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Abstract

The military invasion of Russia over Ukraine on February 24th, 2022 has created a severe crisis in the world not only in terms of security threats but it has also made a deep impact on the economy and trade relations between nations. Western countries have consolidated their support towards Ukraine and boycotted Russia regarding trade and economic relations. The Western Bloc expected India to do the same, but India took the path of an independent foreign policy without coming under any foreign country's influence. This paper analyzed how the Indian foreign policy reacted to the Russo-Ukrainian War and how the Indian foreign policymakers followed an independent foreign policy in the wake of Western pressure to support Ukraine and declare Russia as the aggressor.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, War, Impact, Non-alignment, Crisis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine took place right from 2014 onwards when Russia made a military invasion of the disputed territory of Crimea which was claimed by the Ukrainian Government as its territory. The present invasion of Russia on February 2022, was a reaction against the expansion of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in a bid to encircle Russia as claimed by Russia. (Mankoff, 2022) analyzed that Russia invaded Ukraine in an attempt to give a clear message to NATO that they should not extend their membership by including countries located in the Russian backyard. However, the Russian military officials never expected that Ukraine would be able to put up such a strong resistance and they would achieve only a minimal objective even after a year of the military operation. (Pifer, 2009) stressed the economic crisis that the Russia-Ukraine war has created mainly in Europe. The European countries mainly Germany and UK were mostly dependent on the Russian gas supply to fulfill their energy needs, but due to the boycott policy of Russian goods, these countries have been suffering from an energy resource crisis which is leading to huge inflation within their country. (Mahapatra, 2021) analyzed that the United States and the Western block wanted India to become a mediator in convincing Russian President Vladimir Putin to put an end to the war. These countries also believed that in the United Nations India would deeply condemn the Russian attack on Ukraine and will vote against Russia in the UN Security Council. But India did not act as per their will and went on to abstain from her vote citing that the Western-sponsored resolution is one-sided and politically motivated. In this arena, India has been in the same line with that of Pakistan and China who have also taken the same action in the United Nations. According to former army Chief Gen (retd) Shankar Roychoudhury, in an interview with the Times of India on 28th December 2022 “India has revitalized its policy of non-alignment by not following the Western lines in the United Nations and at the same time India is also asking both Russia and Ukraine to end a war without terming any of the party as the main villain for the war.

In this study, we sought to analyze the stance taken by Indian foreign policymakers in shaping Indian foreign policy amid the Russia-Ukraine war. The security, economic and diplomatic effects of Russia Ukraine War has created a far-reaching impact on the shaping of India's foreign policy to safeguard India's interest in every sphere of international relations.

II. OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The study highlights the crisis faced by the world due to the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian War. The impact of this war has been felt throughout the world and according to many scholars of International Relations, this war has resulted in the era of the New Cold War. The article has attempted to analyze India's foreign policy approach after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine War where world politics have been undergoing serious security and economic crisis and has gone back to the Realist paradigm. Contemporary Studies on International Relations reveal that the world is again getting divided into two opposing camps headed by USA and Russia and China. It has made the Indian foreign policymakers come under a lot of pressure in an attempt to formulate a foreign policy strategy where India's interests shall not be compromised. As per statistics given by the BBC News network India has imported 45% of its defense resources from Russia between 2017 to 2022. A lot of defence equipment like the S-400 Missile defense system is yet to be delivered to India by Russia and these things are coming to a halt because of the war. India cannot out rightly go

against Russia not only for this reason but also due to the historical friendship ties that are there between the two countries since 1971 (Indo-USSR, Treaty of Friendship). On the other hand India in the recent past has made close ties with the USA and the European Union over trade and technology sharing. These countries' market industries are investing deeply in the Indian market. India has also joined the QUAD, or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue comprising India, USA, Japan and Australia to counter the Chinese threat, especially in the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea. The USA has been deeply supporting India's resistance against the Chinese incursions into the Indian Territory in Ladakh. Till now Indian foreign policymakers have made a great effort to balance the foreign policy approach without coming into any conflict with the two opposing parties by neither making any close nexus with Ukraine nor with Russia over the issue of the Russian-Ukraine War. Right from the beginning India has continuously asked both parties to resolve their dispute through diplomatic means i.e. through dialogue and discussion and end the war at the earliest.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we analyzed the impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on India's Foreign policy. Before the beginning of the war, India had good relations with the Russians in terms of military cooperation and trade ties, especially in terms of defence equipment and energy. The West or the USA was not much disturbed by this tie between the two countries. With Ukraine, India had normal ties before the war. India was one of the earliest countries to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991. There was cooperation in terms of trade, tourism, science and technology and agriculture. Bilateral trade relations between the two countries grew to US\$ 2.8 Billion between the year 2018-2019.

When Russia invaded Crimea in 2014, India almost followed the same policy that it followed today. In the United Nations, India abstained from voting in favour of a resolution condemning Russia's aggression over Crimea and did not support the Western sanctions imposed against Russia. India called for a constructive discussion to solve the issue peacefully.

From the study, it has been observed that the Russia-Ukraine war has led to a severe impact on India's foreign policy. It has led to the revitalization of the policy of non-Alignment which had once become a symbol of India's foreign policy during the Nehruvian era, especially in the 1960s. To create a balance between the Western bloc and Russia Indian foreign policymakers have taken a very cautious approach to keeping proximity with both blocs. Till now India has had the support of the West in containing China and on the other side India without much restraint has made maintained trade relations with Russia concerning importing weapons and also in case of purchasing Russian oil. The Western attempt to prevent India from buying Russian oil has been quietly sidelined by India's Ministry of External Affairs sighting the fact that many Western countries have been purchasing more oil in proportion to India's purchase. This has proven once again the independent foreign policy approach even in the wake of insecurity and crisis in International Relations.

IV. CONCLUSION

Russia Ukraine war has proven that the Realist approach to international relations is still valid and there still exists the environment of insecurity and threat amongst nation-states of the world. It has no doubt led to a deep impact on India's foreign policy and posed a severe challenge for Indian foreign policymakers in taking a balancing approach without antagonizing the two opposing camps. The experts in international relations are struggling to find any conclusion about the war and it is difficult to make any prediction about whether NATO would involve itself in this conflict as the Russians are not ready to conclude the war and neither Ukraine is ready to compromise any of its lost territories to Russia. The Indian Foreign policy needs to be multidimensional and dynamic to safeguard India's security and economic interest. Shortly, India may have to come out with a policy of neutralization as many international experts are suggesting that with this approach India is only helping Russia and "sitting on a fence cannot be a sustainable foreign policy for India."

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