

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

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Abstract

The war between Russia and Ukraine that started in February 2022 has drawn global attention and condemnation. While most of the Western countries and the U.S. have supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and imposed the sanctions on Russia. India has adopted a more nuanced and restrained position on this conflict. This Research paper examines Russia Ukraine conflict and its implications on India's relations with Russia and the west. However, India's strategic partnership with the European Union (EU) and its growing security ties with the United States (US) have increased its stakes in the stability and security of Europe. It argues that India's trade relations with Moscow are relatively good and pose a significant threat for India's interests. India also faces a dilemma between maintaining its traditional friendship with Russia and balancing its rising rivalry with China. This research paper suggests that India should adopt a more proactive and constructive role in resolving the crisis.

Keywords: - India, Russia, Conflict, Implications, Sanctions, Trade

Introduction

In the February 2022 Russia's invasion in Ukraine and annexation of the parts of eastern and southern Ukraine, including the strategic Crimean Peninsula, the war has been described as the worst security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War. Russian invasion in Ukraine violated the international law and change the post-Cold War order in Europe. The conflict has also triggered a humanitarian crisis, with hundreds and thousands of people killed, injured, or displaced (Roy, 2023). The international community has responded to the crisis with various measures, including diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, military assistance, and humanitarian aid (Sherman, 2022). However, the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict remain uncertain and depend on the actions and interests of the key actors involved. One of the actors that has attracted attention and scrutinized for its role in the crisis is India. India is a rising power with a population of over 1.3 billion people and an economy of over \$3 trillion. India is also a nuclear-armed state with a large and modern military. India's relations with Russia and Ukraine are rooted in history and culture, and it also has important economic and strategic stakes in Eastern Europe. India's position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict is therefore important for understanding the dynamics and implications of the crisis (Patro, 2022).

The ongoing war has had far-reaching consequences for India's interest and influence in this region. New Delhi enjoys strong economic and strategic ties with both Russia and Ukraine, as well as with other Western European countries. India also relies on Russia for imports of oil, gas, weapons, technology, and other goods that are vital for its development and security. At the same time, India

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

exports engineering goods, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, gems and jewelry, agricultural products, petroleum products, and services to Western Countries, that create jobs and income for its people (Patro, 2022). The war has jeopardized India's trade and investment opportunities in the region by raising trading costs and reducing market access. The war has also heightened the security risks and instability in the region that could undermine India's interests in energy security, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, and regional connectivity. The war poses a complex challenge for India's foreign policy, which requires maintaining a delicate equilibrium among various regional players with divergent goals and aspirations. India has taken a neutral stance in the war by avoiding voting on U.N. measures that censured Russian belligerence and recommending dialogue and diplomacy to solve the crisis. India has also avoided joining the Western sanctions on Russia or endorsing Ukraine's NATO membership aspirations (Price, 2022).

India's neutrality Stance is motivated by its aspiration to sustain its conventional rapport with Russia, which is a key strategic associate and a predominant purveyor of defence apparatus to India. India also does not want to provoke China which is Russia's close ally and India's main rival in Asian continent. However, India's neutrality has also disappointed its Western partners especially the United States which is India's strategic partner and a major source of investment and technology for India (Kronstadt, 2022, p. 3). The U.S. hopes that India will back its actions to maintain the global order and prevent Russian hostility. India has also similar values and goals with E.U. and Ukraine on democratic principles, human rights, legal system, and regional peace. The war has therefore posed a challenge for India's interest and influence in this region. It has disrupted India's economic ties with Eastern Europe and increased its security costs. It has also compelled India to balance its relations with various actors in the region without compromising its own interests and values India needs to adopt a more proactive and constructive role in resolving the crisis by engaging with all parties and supporting diplomatic efforts to restore peace and stability in the region (Kronstadt, 2022, p. 4).

This research examines three questions:

- How has India's historical and strategic partnership with Russia influenced its stance on the ongoing war in Ukraine?
- How does India balance its interests and values in the face of the challenges to the rules-based order posed by the war in Ukraine?
- What are the opportunities and risks for India's energy security, trade, and connectivity in the region due to the war in Ukraine?

Research Methodology

This paper employs content analysis as the research methodology to examine the relational equations between India and Russia. Content analysis is a suitable method for this topic because it allows the researcher to systematically and objectively identify the characteristics and meanings of communication content, such as texts, images, speeches, and documents. By using content analysis, the paper aims to reveal the patterns, themes, and trends in the bilateral relations between the two countries. The paper is based on secondary data, which is data that has been collected, processed, and published by someone else for a different purpose. Secondary data is useful for this paper because it provides a wide range of information and perspectives from various sources, such as books, journals, newspapers, and other print and online media.

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

India's Russia Bilateral relations

India and Russia have a relationship that traces back to the cold war era. In the early stages of the Cold War, Pandit Nehru adopted a policy of non-alignment between the two superpowers. Joseph Stalin, however, regarded India as a capitalist nation and had a hostile attitude towards India. In the 1953 after Stalin died the Soviet Union changed its rigid ideological stance, but India remained in opposition to join any alliances. The U.S. Cold War strategy was to form alliances to contain the Soviet expansion. Pakistan, India's main rival, joined the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, also known as the Baghdad Pact) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). On the other hand, India criticized the U.S. containment policy and stayed out of any alliances. The inaugural visit of Soviet leaders to India occurred in November 1955, when the Communist Party leader Nikita Khrushchev and the Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin arrived. This visit established the three components of the Soviet-India nexus: political, economic, and military cooperation. These pillars lasted throughout the Cold War, strengthened by the international political situation from the mid-1950s to the late 1980 (Menon & Rumer, 2022). In the 1971 Indo-Pak war was a historic event that changed the fate of millions of people in South Asia. It was triggered by the brutal suppression of the Bengali people in East Pakistan by the West Pakistani regime, which denied them their linguistic, cultural, political, and economic rights. India, as a neighboring country and historical connection with the Bengalis, supported their struggle for freedom and independence, known as the Mukti Bahini movement (Pant, 2016, p. 95). India not only provided them with training, arms, and shelter, but also formally recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign nation on 6th December 1971.

Pakistan, however, was backed by some of the major powers in the world, such as the U.S, the U.K, and China, who viewed India as a rival and a threat to their interests in the region. They tried to intimidate and pressurize India by deploying their naval forces in the Bay of Bengal, hoping to prevent a decisive victory for Bangladesh. But India had a strong ally with Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, which had forged a friendship and cooperation pact with India in August 1971, backed India and challenged the U.S. and U.K. naval might by unleashing its own warships and submarines loaded with nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union, also used its veto power in the United Nation Security Council to block any resolutions that would have called for a ceasefire or intervention in the conflict. And also helped India in the aftermath of the war by providing economic and diplomatic assistance and facilitating the repatriation of prisoners of war. The Indo-Pak war of 1971 and Russia's role in it; shaped the Indo-Soviet relations for decades to come, as it demonstrated the mutual trust and strategic partnership between the two countries. It also influenced the regional and global politics, as it marked the emergence of India as a major power and the decline of Pakistan as a U.S. ally (pant, 2016, pp. 51-54).

India and Russia enjoy a special and privileged strategic alliance that surpasses the changes in the global order. Despite the soviet Union's disintegration in 1991, India and Russia maintained their collaboration in various domains, such as defence, energy, trade, science, and culture. Some of the main features of India-Russia relations. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation: Signed in January 1993, this treaty replaced the previous one of 1971. It reaffirmed the principles of mutual respect, sovereignty, non-interference, and peaceful coexistence between the two countries. Both the nation state India and Russia established a mechanism of annual summits, alternating between the two countries, to review and guide the bilateral relations at the highest level. The first summit was held in 2000, and the most recent one was in 2019. Both the nations coordinate on regional and global

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

issues. India and Russia share a common vision of a multipolar and democratic world order that respects the sovereignty and diversity of nations. The two countries coordinate their positions on regional and global issues, such as terrorism, Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, and the Indo-Pacific. India and Russia are members of several multilateral forums, such as the UN, BRICS, SCO, G20, and RIC (Nandy, 2020, pp. 119-128). India and Russia have a strong defense partnership that covers military-technical cooperation, joint exercises, and strategic consultations. Russia is one of the major suppliers of defense equipment and technology to India, accounting for about 60% of India's arms imports. Some of the key defense deals between India and Russia include the S-400 air defense system, the Akula-class nuclear submarine, the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, and the Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets. India and Russia also conduct regular joint military exercises, such as INDRA, AVIAINDRA, and INDRA-NAVY, to enhance interoperability and mutual trust. India and Russia also have a dialogue mechanism on defense and security issues, such as the Defense Minister's Meeting, the Military-Technical Cooperation Working Group, and the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. The collaboration between India and Russia can grow stronger and better in different areas and benefit the world with more harmony and security. Their special and privileged strategic partnership is based on mutual trust, respect, and interests (Pasricha, 2022).

Indo-Russia Defence Partnership

India and Russia share a deep and enduring defence cooperation that goes back to the Soviet era, when India depended largely on the USSR for its defence needs. Russia has provided India with various vital defence platforms, such as nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, tanks, artillery, fighter jets, and missiles. Some of the prominent examples are the INS Vikramaditya, the BrahMos missile, the S-400 air defence system, and the Sukhoi and MiG jets (Embassy of India, Moscow Russia, 2023). Moscow remains the largest arms supplier to New Delhi, accounting for 49% of India's arms imports in 2018-22, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). However, this share has dropped from 76% in 2008-12, as India has sought to diversify its defence sources and increase its imports from the U.S., France, Israel, and others (The Economic Times, 2023).

India and Russia have also collaborated in joint defence production, research and development, and military exercises. The BrahMos missile is a joint venture between India and Russia, and is regarded as one of the world's fastest supersonic cruise missiles. India and Russia also conduct the tri-services exercise 'INDRA' regularly to boost interoperability and coordination. However, the defence partnership between India and Russia is not without challenges and issues. These include delays and cost overruns in defence projects, quality and maintenance problems, technology transfer and intellectual property rights disputes, and diverging strategic interests and alignments.

One of the most urgent challenges for India and Russia is the impact of the U.S. sanctions on Russia under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which aims to discourage countries from buying Russian defence equipment (Krishana, 2021). India's purchase of the S-400 system from Russia has been a contentious issue, as it could invite U.S. sanctions and affect India's defence cooperation with the U.S. and other Western countries. India has adopted a neutral stance on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, and has avoided criticizing Russia's actions. India's position is influenced by its strategic autonomy, historical ties, and energy and defence interests with Russia, as well as its desire to balance its relations with the U.S. and other countries.

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

Energy corporation

India and Russia have forged a strong energy partnership across various domains, including nuclear, hydrocarbon, and renewable energy. Russia is India's major source and investor of oil and gas, as well as a partner in developing butyl rubber, an essential component for tyre manufacturing (The Hindu, 2023). India and Russia are also keen to cooperate in new technologies, such as hydrogen and solar energy, and to tap into the opportunities of the Arctic region, where Russia has abundant natural resources. In 2016, Russia and India signed numerous deals in the hydrocarbon sector, such as Oil India Limited securing a 23.9 percent share in Vankorneft, OVL increasing its stake in Vankor oilfield by 11 percent, and Rosneft acquiring a 49 percent stake in Essar Oil. The Rosneft-Essar Oil deal was the biggest FDI in this sector, valued at US\$12.9 billion (The Economic Times, 2023). India is the largest destination for Russia's oil and gas investments, with a total of US\$15 billion. In 2018, India received its first cargo of LNG from Russia at Dahej, Gujarat. India has become one of the main markets for Russia's LNG exports. In 2019, India imported 2.59 million tonnes of LNG from Russia, which constituted 8.7 percent of India's total LNG imports.

In 2020, India and Russia agreed to expand their energy cooperation and explore new areas of collaboration, such as coking coal, hydrogen, and renewable energy. India expressed its desire to participate in the Arctic region, where Russia has a large amount of oil and gas resources. In 2021, India and Russia signed an agreement to build a nuclear power plant in Sri Lanka, which was their first joint project in a third country. After the invasion, India has boosted its oil imports from Russia, benefiting from the lower prices offered by Moscow. India's share of Russian oil in its total imports jumped from 2% in 2021 to 23% in 2022. India has overtaken China as the largest buyer of Russian crude by sea (BBC News, 2023). After the war Indian government has faced pressure from the U.S. to cut down its energy reliance on Russia, which faces sanctions from the EU and the U.S. for its aggression against Ukraine. The U.S. has voiced its displeasure over India's oil deals with Russia, though it has recognized India's right to procure crude from Russia. India has also suffered from the spike in global oil prices triggered by the Ukraine crisis, which has raised its import bill and inflation. India, which depends on imports for 80% of its crude oil and 45% of its natural gas, has to bear a high cost for its energy security. India has sustained its cooperation with Russia in the nuclear and renewable energy sectors, despite the Ukraine crisis. India and Russia have agreed to construct more nuclear reactors in India and third countries, and have also examined the potential of collaboration in solar, wind, hydrogen, and other emerging technologies. On this current situation New Delhi need to diversify his energy resources and want to reduce its dependency on Russia energy source (Nikkei Asia, 2022).

India's Dilemma on Russia-Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine war is a serious security crisis that has implications for India's interest and influence in Eastern European region. India as a rising power and a responsible democracy, cannot afford to ignore the consequences of the war for its own security and the international order. However, India also faces a dilemma in balancing its relations with multiple actors in the region who have conflicting interests and agendas, while pursuing its own economic and strategic goals (Chaudhuri, 2023). India can navigate these complex and dynamic situations with skill and wisdom, and find a way to enhance its role and influence in the region and the world. New Delhi has adopted a position of neutrality on the war to maintain its friendship with Russia and avoid provoking China.

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

Russia is a long-standing strategic partner of India, which is a major supplier of defence equipment, energy, and technology to India. China is both a rival and a partner of India in trade, investment, and multilateral forums. India does not want to antagonize either of these countries by taking sides in the war. However, this position has also disappointed India's Western partners, especially the US and the EU who expect India to support their view point. They have been urging India to join them in imposing sanctions on Russia and supporting Ukraine's sovereignty. By staying neutral, India has also lost the goodwill and trust of its Western partners, who are important for India's security and development. India faces a number of challenges and opportunities in the context of the war. India has to weigh the costs and benefits of its choices, and find a way to protect its interests without compromising its values and principles (Tellis, 2022).

India's need to retain its relationship with its old friend Russia and the necessity to strengthen its security cooperation with the United States and other Western countries because due to the threat from China. Its desire to expand its trade and investment opportunities in Eastern Europe with the risk of losing access to the Russian market and energy resources. Indian commitment to uphold the United Nation Charter and international law with the reality of power politics and geopolitics in the region. Its aspiration to be a global leader and a voice for the developing world with the expectation of being a responsible stakeholder and a constructive mediator in the war. India has to find a way to enhance its role and influence the region and the world. India needs to engage with all the parties involved in the war and use its diplomatic skills and goodwill to facilitate dialogue and de-escalation, and support the efforts of the U.N. and other international organizations to resolve the conflict peacefully and uphold the norms of sovereignty and territorial integrity (Ganguly, 2022).

U.S. Factor

The Russia-Ukraine war has had far-reaching implications for the world order and the balance of power in various regions. India, as a rising power and a key player in Asia, has faced a delicate and complex situation in managing its relations with both Russia and the U.S. during the war. India has a long and strong strategic partnership with Russia, dating back to the Cold War era, which covers various domains such as defense, energy, nuclear, space, and cultural cooperation. Russia has been a major source of military equipment and technology for India, accounting for 45 percent of India's total arms imports in 2018-22, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Russia has also supported India's position on issues such as Kashmir, terrorism, and multilateralism (SIPRI, 2023). However, the war in Ukraine has put India's relations with Russia under strain, as Russia's actions have violated international law and norms, and provoked a strong response from the West, led by the U.S. Indian Government, which adheres to the principles of non-interference, sovereignty, and peaceful resolution of disputes, has adopted a cautious and balanced approach, neither openly condemning nor fully endorsing Russia's actions in Ukraine. New Delhi, has consistently called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, while reaffirming its support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. India's approach is influenced by its historical and strategic ties with Russia, its interests in the region, and its desire to avoid antagonizing either side.

On the other hand, India's relations with the U.S. have witnessed significant progress and transformation during the war in Ukraine. Over the past decade, India and the United States have developed a comprehensive global strategic partnership, encompassing areas such as defense, trade,

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

technology, education, and health. The U.S. has emerged as one of India's key partners, especially in the defense sector, where it has surpassed Russia as the largest arms supplier to India, providing advanced weapons and platforms such as Apache and Chinook helicopters, C-17 and C-130J transport aircraft, P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, and M777 howitzers.

The U.S. has also supported India's role in the Indo-Pacific and its aspirations for a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council. India's approach is influenced by its growing convergence with the U.S. on global issues such as democracy, human rights, climate change, and counter terrorism, its need to diversify its partnerships, and its desire to counter China's rise and assertiveness. The war in Ukraine has thus posed both challenges and opportunities for India's relations with Russia and the U.S. India has to balance its traditional friendship with Russia and its emerging partnership with the U.S., while also pursuing its own interests and values (Kronstadt, 2022 p. 23). India has to navigate the complex web of international relations and alliances that the war has created, and avoid being drawn into any military confrontation or sanctions regime. India has to leverage its unique position and influence to urge both Russia and the U.S. to resolve the conflict peacefully and diplomatically, and to promote stability and security in the region and the world. India also has to engage with other stakeholders such as the European Union, Japan, Australia, and ASEAN, to foster a multipolar and inclusive order that respects the interests and aspirations of all countries. India's response to the war in Ukraine reflects its vision of being an independent and responsible actor in the international arena, and its commitment to upholding the principles and values of democracy, rule of law, and multilateralism (Grossman, 2023).

China Factor

The Russian-Ukrainian war, has put China's and India's relations with Russia to the test. Both countries have adopted a cautious and pragmatic approach, balancing their strategic interests and avoiding direct confrontation with Moscow. China and Russia have a strategic partnership that is based on mutual support and cooperation against the Untied State's led international order (Fidler & Gordon, 2023). China has benefited from Russia's energy exports, military technology transfers, and diplomatic backing on issues such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the South China Sea. China has also supported Russia's position on Ukraine, abstaining from U.N. resolutions that condemned Russian aggression and opposing Western sanctions. India and Russia share a lasting bond that goes back to the time of the cold war. India has relied on Russia for the most of its military hardware, energy imports, and nuclear cooperation. India has also expressed solidarity with Russia on issues such as Syria, Afghanistan, and counter-terrorism. India has refrained from criticizing Russia's actions in Ukraine, but has also maintained its strategic autonomy and diversified its partnerships with other countries, especially the U.S. and France (Drishti IAS, 2023). The war in Ukraine has posed challenges and opportunities for China's and India's relations with Russia.

On the one hand, the war has increased the strategic convergence and coordination between China and Russia, as they face a common adversary in the West. On the other hand, the war has exposed the potential risks and limitations of their partnership, such as Moscow growing dependence on Beijing, China's vulnerability to energy disruptions, and their divergent interests in Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific. For India, the war has created a dilemma between supporting its traditional ally and aligning with its democratic partners. Russia's increasing reliance on China may also pose significant risks to India's future security, as China may use its influence over Russia to gain more leverage in

Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

the region, especially in the disputed areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Himalayas, where India and China have been engaged in a standoff since 2020. China may also exploit Russia's energy resources and infrastructure to strengthen its own economic and military capabilities, which could challenge India's interests and aspirations in the Indo-Pacific region. India's defense ties with Russia may be threatened by the war, as Russia may become more dependent on China for economic and political support, and may also sell more advanced weapons to China which may transfer to India's rival Pakistan, India's rivals. New Delhi, may also face pressure from the U.S. and its allies to reduce its cooperation with Russia, which could affect its access to military equipment and technology from Russia. The war has also highlighted the need for India to modernize its defense capabilities, reduce its energy dependence, and enhance its regional connectivity and influence (Chivvis & Geaghan, 2023).

Conclusion

The Russia-Ukraine war is a serious security crisis that has implications for India's interest and influence in Eastern Europe. India, as a rising power and a responsible democracy, cannot afford to ignore the consequences of the war for its own security and the international order. India has adopted a position of neutrality on the war to maintain its friendship with Russia and avoid provoking China, but this has also disappointed its Western partners who expect India to support the international order. India does not want to antagonize either of these countries by taking sides in the war, but this has also cost India the goodwill of its Western partners, especially the U.S. and the EU, who have been urging India to join them in imposing sanctions on Russia and supporting Ukraine's sovereignty. India faces a dilemma in balancing its relations with multiple actors in the region who have conflicting interests and agendas, while pursuing its own economic and strategic goals. India has to weigh the costs and benefits of its choices in the war, and find a way to protect its interests without compromising its values and principles. India must maintain its bond with its long-time friend Russia while safeguarding its increasing security collaboration with the US and other western countries because of China's menace. These are some of the challenges and opportunities that India faces in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. India has to navigate these complex and dynamic situations with skill and wisdom, and find a way to enhance its role and influence in the region and the world.

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Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

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Russia Ukraine War; Implications for India's Interest: An Analysis

Dr. Bhawna Sharma & Vikas Bhola

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