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# CENTER OF POLICY RESEARCH AND GOVERNANCE

A newsletter for public policy and governance enthusiasts'



# JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS



Hoysalas Temple: Press Information Bureau

- The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala: The Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid, and Somananthpura in Karnataka have been finalized as India's nomination for consideration as UNESCO's World Heritage for 2022-23.
- According to the Minister of Petroleum, India will more than double the area that is under exploration and production of oil and gas by 2025, with a view to raise domestic output and be less dependent on imported fuels.
- SMILE or Support for Marginalized Individuals for livelihood and enterprise is a central sector scheme designed to provide welfare and rehabilitation to transgender and people engaged in the act of begging.
- National Ropeways Development Programme or 'Parvatmala' to improve the last mile connectivity in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, and other hill states in the North-East.

- Union Budget 2022-23 announced the 'Vibrant Village Programme' to improve social and financial infrastructure in remote habitations along the border of China.
- India appoints its first National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC), a part of the National Security Council Secretariat, which will report to the National Security Advisor.
- India-France to enhance bilateral exchanges on the blue economy, develops a common vision of ocean governance and cooperates on sustainable and resilient coastal and waterways infrastructure.
- PM GatiShakti: project for developing 'holistic infrastructure'. This will encompass the seven engines for multi-modal connectivity for the states with speedier implementation of development projects through technology to facilitate faster movement of people and goods.



- > 3.8cr households under Har Ghar, Nal Se Jal
- > 80 lakh houses under PM Awas Yojana
- > Develop lagging blocks under Aspirational Blocks Programme
- > Develop villages on Northern Border under Vibrant Villages Programme
- > Digital Banking by all Post Offices
- > 75 Digital Banking Units in 75 districts by Scheduled Commercial Banks

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source: Press Information Bureau



Home Minister visit the Statue of Equality, Source: PIB

- Indian Prime Minister inaugurated the Statue of Equality, a gigantic statue of Ramanujacharya on the outskirts of Hyderabad. Born in 1017 in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu, Ramanujacharya is revered as a Vedic philosopher and social reformer.
- Russian troops launched their anticipated attack on Ukraine, faces sanctions by major western countries. Ukraine is willing to fight but demands support from the US, UK, India to counter Russian aggression in its territory.
- SVAMITVA Scheme To provide the 'Record of Rights' to village household owners possessing houses in inhabited areas in villages
- International Women's Day: PM interacted with winners of the Nari Shakti Scheme
- PM GatiShakti: project for developing 'holistic infrastructure'. This will encompass the seven engines for multi-modal connectivity for the states with speedier implementation of development projects through technology to facilitate faster movement of people and goods.



Source: Republicworld.com

- For the 'Amrit Kaal', the government has comprehensively revamped the schemes of the Ministry of Women & Child Development. Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Anganwadi, and Poshan 2.0 have been announced to provide integrated benefits to women and children.

## RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT



Source: Wikipedia

# THE DEVELOPMENTS AND CONFLICTS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE IN THE YEARS THAT PRECEDED THE ONGOING CONFLICT: THE YEARS BEFORE

Russia and Ukraine both derive their heritage from the state of Kievan Rus which was home to the Slavic People back in the 9th Century. In the coming centuries, USSR was the nation that included both countries. Russia was the most powerful of the Soviet Republics and Ukraine was the second most powerful. Ukraine has been based on defence industries, agricultural land and even housed the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union during the cold war. The Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, and Ukraine and Russia became two independent nations. Even though Ukraine inherited the soviet's nuclear arsenal, it gave it up to Russia in 1994, in exchange for Russia's guarantee of Ukraine's safety.

In 2013, the president of Ukraine at the time, Viktor Yanukovich was openly pro-Moscow and rejected the EU trade deal that could have ensured greater integration with the European Union. The Ukrainian people protested strongly against the move, the government toppled and Yanukovich fled to Russia. There were minorities in Ukraine that supported Yanukovich and were not happy with the situation. Russia wanted to salvage the situation and annexe Crimea. Crimea is a peninsula in the south of Ukraine. During its independence in 1991, it joined Ukraine with a special autonomy status. Russia military bases seized government buildings in the peninsula. A referendum followed, and Crimeans voted to become a part of Russia. There have been questions and debates about the legitimacy of the vote.

## The Separatist Regime

Russia had success in Crimea, it then turned its focus to the Russian speaking eastern state of Donbas. It backed the rebels and aided them in seizing the government buildings in Donetsk and Luhansk. Then the region declared independence, but Moscow didn't accept the motion. But it did use the situation to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO. A battle followed between Ukraine and the separatist regions. There was destruction, death, and loss. A truce was signed in Minsk in

September 2014. The deal didn't hold as fighting resumed in early 2015. France and Germany helped create a peace agreement that was signed in Minsk in February 2015.

Russia has continued to strengthen its hold in the separatist regions so that it could leverage them against Ukraine, the way it did during the present-day conflict. It handed out Russian passports to roughly one-fifth of the population and provided economic and financial assistance. Putin's recent recognition of the independence of the rebel held territories in Donbas collapses the Minsk Agreement and was viewed in global politics as an indication of a crisis to come. It was confirmed when on 24th February, Russia attacked Ukraine.

## Why has Russia attacked?

One of the main ideas of Putin is that Ukrainians and Russians are the same. Since they share the same history, culture, and even to a certain extent, language. One in every six Ukrainians is an ethnic Russian. But claiming a country based on its colonial history is hardly justified. "Past imperialism cannot justify present-day expansion". Additionally, it claims that Ukraine's attempt to join NATO threatens Russia's security. But the major reason behind the attack is that Putin considers the formation of Ukraine as a mistake. Ukraine's independence is viewed as an anomaly by Moscow, and Putin believes his military view as a way of correcting this divergence.

Another reason could be that when Putin annexed Crimea, his approval ratings skyrocketed. The present move of moving against Ukraine could be viewed as an attempt to restore Russia's image of being a superpower. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the underlined support of China in this matter. China although abstained from voting in the resolution passed against Russia in the UNSC but it never condemned Russia's actions out rightly. Probably the tacit understanding between Russia and China adhering to similar expansionist principles gave Russia an opportunity for the attack on Ukraine.

## Ukrainian View

Ukrainians' view of Russia has worsened than what it was in the past. Survey data from February 2021 demonstrated that 56% of people in Ukraine want Ukraine to join NATO, as opposed to the 30% people in 2014, just following the Crimea annexation.

Nearly 88% of the population of Ukraine support their country's independence from Russia.

70% of Ukrainians reject the belief that Russian and Ukrainian is one people, the very belief that Putin claims to be the major reason. 72% consider Russia to be a hostile state. As Ukraine has invited



Source: Wikipedia



its public to join forces against Russia, 1 in every 3 people is ready to take up arms against Russia.

### The Attack

The attack was launched on the 24th of February when Russia advanced on Ukraine from three directions: North, South, and East. The attacks came not only from land but also via air and water. As per recent reports, more than 7000 civilians have been evacuated from the city of Sumy. There has been heavy shelling around the capital city of Kyiv. In the northwest of the city, Irpin, Russia has used the

“siege and starve” tactic. Civilian areas have been attacked, and access to electricity, food, and water was cut off. Russian troops initially advanced down from Belarus to the west side of river Dnieper. There was fighting near Hostomel airport as well. Several residential areas in Chernihiv have been reported to have been reduced to rubble. Towards the east, there are concerns about the civilians that are trapped in Mariupol, a port city encircled by Russian troops. Towards the west, the forces moved in the direction of Odesa. If captured, it would cut off Ukraine from its coast and provide Russian troops a path from Donetsk to the Moldovan border. The second largest city of Ukraine, Kharkiv has been under intense bombarding. The attacks on the residential areas of Kharkiv have been brought under investigation by the United Nations prosecutors for possible war crimes.

### Global Response

Russia’s move hasn’t been well received in geopolitics. American president Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have condemned the move. President Biden remarked, “Who in the Lord’s name does Putin think gives him the right to declare new so-called countries on territory that belonged to his neighbors? This is a flagrant violation of international law, and it demands a firm response from the international community.” Von der Leyen tweeted saying, “The recognition of the two separatist territories in Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law, the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the Minsk agreements.” Her tweet was liked more than 43,000 times.

Several countries have condemned the move and showed their side by imposing sanctions against Russia over its attack on Ukraine. Russia has already suffered in economic terms as its stock and currency tanked. Russia’s MOEX index closed down 33% and the Ruble sank to an all-time low.

EU has targeted Russian elites in ways that they cannot hold their money in safe havens anymore. EU is also issuing sanctions aimed to hit Russia’s financial, energy and transport sectors. Its sanctions include limitations on export and trade.

Japan is also to impose sanctions that target Russian financial institutions and even froze assets of Russian individuals and financial institutions. Australia's leader said on Friday that it would "begin imposing further sanctions on oligarchs, whose economic weight is of strategic significance to Moscow and over 300 members of the Russian Duma, their parliament."

New Zealand has also prohibited the export of goods to the Russian military. The US has imposed sanctions that include export blocks on technology. In a statement, the White House said "this includes Russia-wide restrictions on semiconductors, telecommunication, encryption security, lasers, sensors, navigation, avionics, and maritime technologies."

### **Conclusion**

The attacks still prevail and the exact motive of Russia is yet to be discovered. History has taught us, whatever the conflict war is never the answer. History taught mankind that every solution has come through the talks to avoid the war and none from the war itself. War causes destruction, loss, and tragedy. It pushes a country's development years back. The future is difficult to ascertain, the next couple of months are going to be pivotal for Russia's and Ukraine's future and global geopolitics as well.

## RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT



Source: Indian Express

# ENERGY EQUATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND EUROPE

Russia's invasion in Ukraine has made European countries take the steps for strategic restraint on energy sources it imports from Russia. With the tensions mounting in the geo-political situation, it deems fit to assess how the energy equation between Russia and Europe will be affected. Europe consists of 43 countries located in the temperate zone; thus, households require a steady supply of heat throughout the year. After the onset of pandemic there was a decline of maintenance of oil and gas fields in Europe leading to higher dependency on energy imports. According to Eurostat, EU energy import dependency had surpassed 60% in 2019 itself. Russia is the biggest supplier of oil, natural gas, and coal to Europe, thus an analysis on how deep this dependency goes and what alternative sources are available will be examined.

### **Europe's Reliance on Russia for Energy**

Europe's high demand of energy imports is due to drying out of North Sea gas deposits and recent closure of a prominent gas field Groningen in Netherlands with the rising risk of earthquakes. The 2019 reports of Eurostat indicate Russia was supplying 26.9% of crude oil, 46.7% of solid fuel, and 41.1% of natural gas needs of European countries.

According to International Energy Agency (IEA), the global demand for natural gas will steadily increase in coming years reaching a 7% rise by the year 2024.

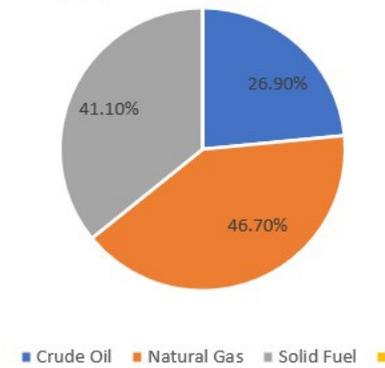
This excess demand was to be met by Russia's large conventional assets and pipelines like Nord Stream 2.

### Projects Halted with the Onset of War

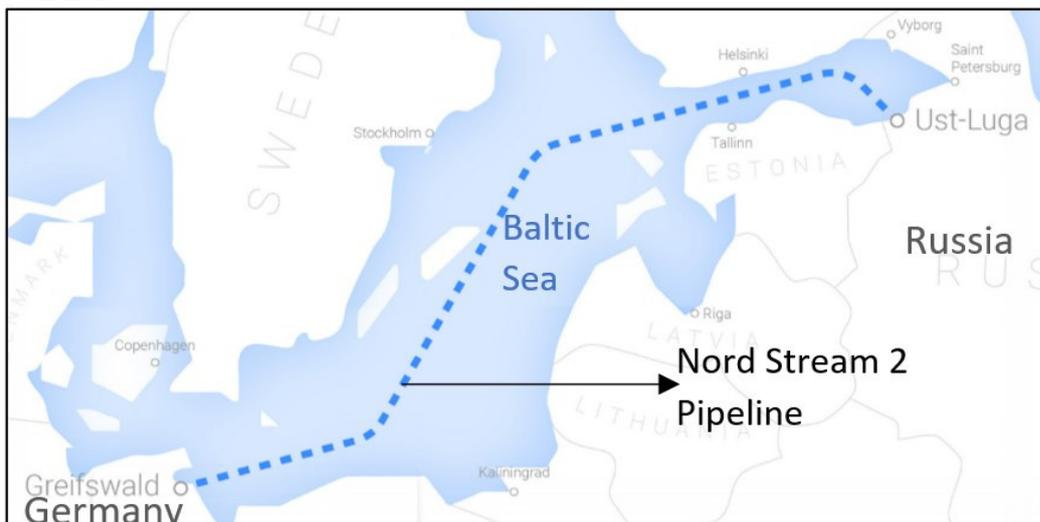
Gazprom, Russia's state-owned natural gas producing industry, is the main supplier of natural gas to Europe and Turkey. The latest gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 is set up from Russia to Germany across the Baltic Sea. Germany backed by the rest of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, has stated that Nord Stream 2, despite being on its last leg is put on halt. This halt comes with the cost of rising

inflation as Germany is the biggest foreign buyer of Russian gas. As per Energy Information Administration (EIA), Russia's main source of market for its oil and natural gas export is Europe with 48% exported to European countries, particularly Germany, Netherlands, and Poland; all NATO partners. Thus, this would have an impact on Russia's 43% of revenue that is generated from its crude oil and natural exports alone. Therefore, loss from both sides will be observed if energy supply remains on halt

2019 Supply of Energy: Russia to Europe



Source: Eurostat



Source: Gazprom

### Short-term Solution for Europe's Energy Needs

The proposal by some nations to step in to meet the energy deficit in Europe is to replace Russia's bulk of energy market and supplement the indigenous supply of Europe. Some alternatives for energy supply are Japan's LNG export, oil and gas reserves present in the Middle East, Norway's gas production, and USA's shale gas. Japan's agreement to export LNG to Europe presents only a short-term solution, as the country itself faces a high demand during winters, thus cannot meet the energy supply. The second biggest producer of gas remains in the Middle-East countries of Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE. Qatar has historically been the second biggest supplier of natural gas to Europe and could contribute to filling the vacuum of natural gas from Russia. However, the Ministry of Energy Affairs of Qatar stated that country's volumes are currently locked up in long-term contracts, thus only 10-15% can be supplied to Europe. Although Norway is the second largest gas supplier in Europe, it is working at maximum capacity, hence any expectation of increasing its supply has ceased.

The USA with its high shale gas reserves is moving to expand its exports to denounce the dependency on Russia while increasing the costs for its citizens gradually. These nations provide for a short-term solution, in the long run, however, the clean energy transition will be a more reliable solution to Europe's future energy needs.

### **Filling the Future Vacuum in Energy**

Europe can survive without the energy supply from Russia through their "Cushion gas" and imports from Qatar, the USA, Japan, Norway, and Denmark in the short run. However, the supply crunch is being faced by the Europeans as the prices escalate to six times higher than the same time last year. European nations need to increase investments in renewable energy resources to be self-reliant in the future. Countries moving to convert the usage of fossil fuels to a zero-carbon energy system are the step in the right direction. According to World Economic Forum (WEF), decarbonizing the power sector is the starting point for complete decarbonization. This requires integrated work between different sectors of power, industry, telecommunications, and energy to coordinate and cooperate in bringing an accelerated shift to low-carbon energy supply. Digital technology will play an increasing role in driving the cost-effective transition, thus building an inclusive network within the South European countries will lead to an inclusive transition to decarbonization systems. Increased usage of power generation from bio-energy and nuclear, according to IEA, will lead to reducing gas usage by 13 billion m<sup>3</sup> within a year.

In this energy transition, the resistance to change by some governments, companies, and markets slows down the decarbonization process. The Bank of England has noted that "\$20 trillion of assets are at risk from the energy transition" as they are dependent on the wealth generated by fossil fuels. But with most of the European countries relying on energy imports the transition should be encouraged. According to the Boston Consulting Group, "the costs of a transition are around 1% of GDP and the costs of no transition are at least 30% of the GDP". The shift to the use of renewable energy will create "17 million more jobs" in the world than what will be lost through fossil fuels. This generation of service and rise in employment will lead to further development in European countries. The key technologies to focus on for the renewables would be solar, wind, batteries, and electrolyzers with their "costs falling by 15-20% for every doubling incapacity". Furthermore, Ukraine is ready to join the European electricity grid ENTSO-E to no longer rely on Russia for its electricity needs. With Sweden, Norway, and Denmark topping the WEF's Energy Transition Index, their example can be followed by the rest of the European nations in adopting the policy change and resist investing capital in assets that will be stranded by the transition.

**RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT**



Source: Republic world

## **POLITICS OF SANCTIONS BY THE UNITED STATES: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS DOMESTIC POLICIES**

The world is currently witnessing a wave of uncertainty, fear and most important concerns of life and death as the brutal ambitions are getting unraveled from Moscow and blows are being executed on Ukrainian Lands as well as souls.

Whether this will sow the seeds for World War III is for the time to decide but till then what the other powers of the world are attempting to do to mitigate the Russian Aggression and to what extent those efforts become effective is a point of study.

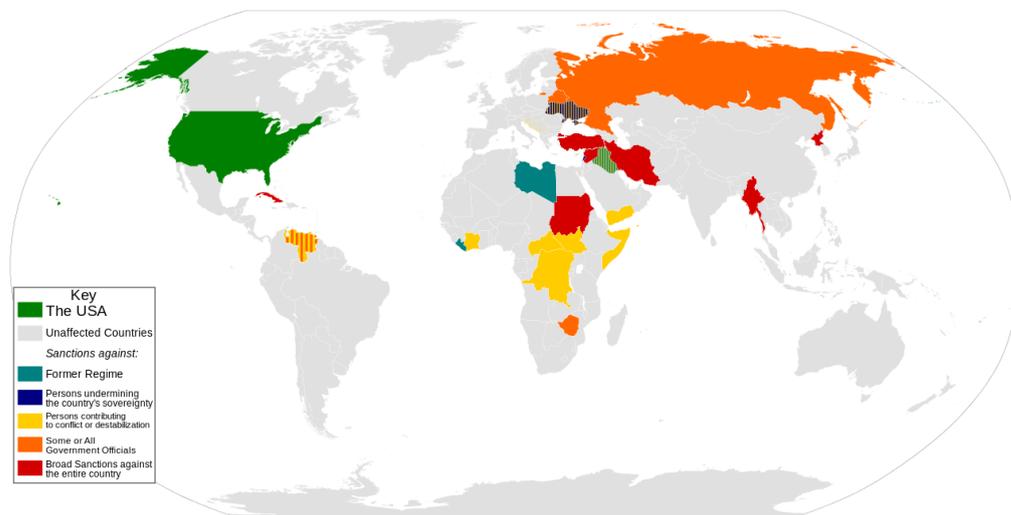
In a modern World, attempts of expansionism have always been strongly frowned upon by the West, however selective they may be. The first response from the West, more particularly from the United States as it is the subject matter of this article prefers is the route of sanctions as a way to pull back the belligerents. The question that remains, do these sanctions really work? Are they even effective enough to leash against the unleashed giants? Whether or not are they anachronistic to the power dynamics of the 21st Century? Is it indeed something that demands contemplation? And that can be understood by the types of sanctions used and the entity, individual, and even a country on which it is imposed.

The US has been instrumental in defining the landscapes of the sanction games for decades now. The first reason is they are very effective when they are in an economical nature and secondly the fear of the US sanctions alone acts as a deterrent to many small and underdeveloped countries having considered United States' huge economy and its mighty defense. This civil way of sanctions prevents genocides and aids in observing the UN objectives of 'no war'.

Joining the hands of the US in restraining the Russian aggression various countries and global organizations have imposed sanctions on Russia. The European Union, Japan, Britain, Italy are a few of them. The Britain imposed sanctions on five big state owned Russian Banks and several individuals. Whereas the European Union has added 160 Russian Oligarchs and lawmakers to the blacklist as these factors work as pressure tactics. The US, the UK, Canada, and the EU have banned all Russian flights from their airspace. Germany has also already put on hold one of the ambitious programs of gas pipeline- famed as The Nord Stream 2 Gas Pipeline. But these are not only the type of sanctions, there is much more to these sanction games which will be deliberated further through this article.

There are certain types of sanctions such as economic, military, and diplomatic sanctions. Economic and Diplomatic sanctions are the prominent ones. They act as a penalty for having gone against the US foreign policy and National Security Challenges or failing to observe the International laws of peace and cooperation.

US sanctions are administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of Treasury which controls and enforces Economic Sanctions Programs. Three important elements are engaged in this sanction imposition procedure- The Congress if it intends to sanction a target through legislation, The President through an executive order, and the OFAC which is an element responsible for the actual execution of those sanctions.



Source: Wikipedia

In a nutshell, there are five steps involved in this process:

- Occurrence of any event that may potentially go against the US Foreign Policy
- Initiation of discussion within US government's various departments
- If required, the sanctions are recommended to the President
- OFAC recommends potential targets and effective sanctions
- President is satisfied approves these sanctions by way of an executive order

## **The Role of the Congress**

The US Congress, an important feature of the United States democracy and responsible body for the drafting and passing of the legislation, has also been given the powers and authority to introduce new sanctions by way of legislation. This authority has also been extended to codify the existing sanctions imposed by the President of the United States as an executive order to give it more legislative backing.

Congress can draft legislation regarding sanctions but on whom they are to be imposed is an exclusive domain of the President to decide. Legislation can define what sanctions the executive branch is to apply, as well as the conditions that need to be met before these sanctions may be lifted. More often the legislative way of sanction imposition is taken in situations where the immediate actions are not warranted. This is because there can be situations where infringement in being a long lasting and continuous process and not a sudden outbreak like the present crisis of the Russia- Ukraine war. Congress has enacted laws such as The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, The Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act but the intended party to be affected was only confirmed by the President.

## **The Role of the President**

According to section 203 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the President is required to determine the party, imposition, and initiation of the sanctions. The sections prescribe this decision to be taken by taking into consideration factors such as unusual and extraordinary threat which has arisen outside of the territories of the United States but have a significant effect on US Foreign Policy, National Security, and the Economy of the United States.

The procedure for imposing sanctions is not a wholesome domain of either the Congress or the President. A reciprocal approval mechanism between the President and the Congress is provisioned. According to section 201 of the National Emergencies Act, if under international affairs the President declares National Emergency, the same is to be rectified by Congress by pursuing the declaration submitted by the President and the report published in the Federal Register.

## **Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)**

It begins by conducting thorough research as to the events and facilitating consultation between the Department of Treasury, Department of Commerce, Department of State, and Intelligence community. Once the consultation work is completed, the provisional sanction program is recommended to the President, Potential countries on which these sanctions should be imposed are also recommended. Thereafter, the presidential review and the President's approval, these recommendations are legitimized by the President through an executive order.

The OFAC administers and enforces the economic and financial sanctions determined by the President and/or Congress. OFAC acts as an administering wing in the whole process. Once the President's approval is taken, OFAC prepares Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Person List abbreviated as SDN List and Foreign Sanction Evaders (FSEs). These lists are regularly updated and are published on OFAC'S website.

The SDN or FSE list infers that whoever that has been featured in this list will not be hereinafter allowed to conduct any business in the United States and their existing assets in the country will also be frozen. No US citizen or entity will be allowed to engage in any business activities with the SDN entities. If any breach is observed i.e. if any US entity engages into SDN entity that US entity will also be included in the SDN list.

In the current situation, the OFAC has administered sanctions on 735 individuals, entities, vessels that are related to Russia. Some of these sanctions have also been maintained since 2014. The sanctions imposed on Russia also consists of sectoral sanctions where economic sanction on five major state owned banks, oil companies, and defense and hi-tech conglomerates have been imposed.

### **Conclusion**

The US sanctions are often considered a significant control measure that minimizes any anti-peace violent activities and still achieves its objectives effectively. But, skimming through the recent developments it can be said that existing sanctions have not deterred Russia so far but it would be interesting to know how far the sanctions would deter Russia if and when multilateral, organizational, and non-state actors combined sanctions are imposed, and whether they would carry the sufficient weight to control the monstrous havoc erupted in the region.

## RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT



Source: DW

### **RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT: THE ROLE OF NON-STATE ACTORS**

A little before the Russian invasion of Ukrainian cities, when Russia was contemplating to attack the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, the dominant western nation states like the United States and the UK came up with a set of warnings and ‘sanctions’ was the most important of them. These sanctions are perceived as restrictions made by one state actor towards another, irrespective of their size strength, and capability. The sovereign character of a nation has so far been considered as a prerequisite for any sort of sanctions on a nation state. The evolving role of non-state actors partially acting as sovereign nation states when it comes to imposing restrictions and sanctions of their unique nature is worth understanding. Non-State Actors in the 21st century play a crucial role in supporting and advancing the agenda of a preferred few state actors. Along with the sanctions imposed by the US and its allies, non-state actors like international organizations, Multi-National Corporations, Mass Media, Religious Groups and academics have worked for hand in hand to facilitate the sanctions imposed by the US on Russia. Few of the restrictions imposed by the non-state actors in this regard are as follows.

## **International Organizations**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine led many international organizations like United Nations, World Bank, IMF, etc., to punish Moscow by various means. In response to what Russia is calling 'Special military operation', World Bank announced that it would stop all its programs in Russia immediately. Also, the US, EU & other allies agreed to remove 'selected Russian Banks' from the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) messaging system. In UN General Assembly, 141 members voted in favor of the resolution demanding Russia to stop its offensive acts & withdraw all its troops. Although the resolution is not legally binding, it highly contributes to building pressure on Russia.

## **MNC & Transnational Corporations**

Many multinational corporations in the west have joined in protest of the Moscow invasion of Ukraine. MNCs which have stopped their operations in Russia include McDonald's, Levi's, IBM, Paypal, Mastercard, Microsoft, Ikea, American Express, Dell, Meta, Twitter, etc. This is not the final list of MNCs who have stopped operations in Russia. The list is growing by every single hour. Due to the retraction of numerous western companies, the rouble also plunged by more than 30% and has the risk of depreciating even more.

## **Media**

Pressure on Russia grows with the involvement of non-state actors and their continuous support to Ukraine in the ongoing war. Amid information warfare conducted by Russia, international news agencies play a significant role in keeping transparency intact about the Russia-Ukraine conflict. However, Moscow is highly acquainted with the power of social media and media channels. To counter its impact, Russian Duma recently came up with a law 'imposing a jail term of up to 15 years for spreading intentionally fake news.' With the announcement of the aforementioned law, numerous international news agencies stop airing in Russia, including CNN International, BBC, ABC News, CBS News, Bloomberg, etc.

Furthermore, Russia also blocked social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Apple & Google apps stores. To keep up with Russia's information warfare, numerous fact-checking outlets are still active in Ukraine to deal with the fake news that Moscow disseminates. These organizations include StopFakeNews, VoxUkraine, Ukrianefacts.org, Bellingcat, etc. Also, news broadcasting network like BBC is providing advisory to people in Russia to access BBC platforms using TOR networks. They are also sending App Downloading links to people in Russia because of its unavailability in App stores. Thus, non-state actors such as International Media are making it challenging for Moscow to minimize Russian population access only to Russian State-owned television networks like RT & Channel one. With the banning of Social media, Tech companies are looking for ways to provide access to the Russian masses. As Meta recently stated, 'we will do everything to restore our services to help people express themselves & organize for action.'

## **Religious Groups**

Christian orthodoxy is widely professed in both Russia & Ukraine. Within Orthodox Christians in

Ukraine, there is a split between members of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which was recognized in 2018 as self-governing by the Patriarch of Constantinople & the Ukraine Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, which works under the authority of Russia's patriarch Kirill. Thus, within the Church, too, the allegiance of Ukrainian masses are divided between these churches. Putin seems to capitalize the religious angle to justify its invasion of Ukraine. According to him, Kyiv was preparing for the destruction of the Ukraine Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate. However, this was not the first time when Putin resorted to a religious approach to justify Moscow's offensive actions. During the time of Crimea Annexation, Russian Church called Crimea 'the cradle of Russian Christianity'. Patriarch Kirill also justified the Russian annexation of Crimea back in 2014. Even though Russia is using the religious approach to call Ukraine a part of its territory, Moscow draws condemnation from Churches of all denominations across Europe in the current invasion. The council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE) & Commission of Bishop Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) also denounce the Russian attack. Two global churches that represent around a billion Christians, including the World Council of Church (WCC) & the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), have condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Additionally, one-fifty orthodox Clerics of Russia called for a stop to the war in Ukraine. It's a rare incident for Moscow to face criticism within its territory. Organizations such as the ACT alliance, a global alliance of more than 145 churches, are also providing humanitarian aid to Ukrainians in the current crises. The future of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is unclear. But Ukraine does enjoy the support of the Christian churches throughout Europe, which could be a major hurdle in Russia's plan to annex Ukraine. The Christian community throughout Europe & the world are joining together against the deeds of Moscow.

## **Academia**

Amid the sanctions against Russia, attention has been given to the areas of Academics and Scientific Cooperation between Russia & the West. In this globalizing world, every country is connected to conduct research in numerous fields, and Russia is no exception. Russia has the 4th largest scientific workforce in the world. In order to do academic & scientific research with smart people across the globe, Russia also collaborates like any other country with people & academic institutions worldwide. According to UNESCO, 27 % of the scientific papers published between the years 2017 to 2019 by Russian authors were co-authored with academicians from USA & Germany. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Global research community denounces Russia's actions. German Research Foundation, the largest research funder in Germany, freezes all scientific cooperation with Russia. In the USA, MIT also terminated its eleven years partnership with a Moscow based non-profit organization, Skolkovo foundation. Also, the Dutch & Slovenian government suspended their institutional ties with Moscow. To take firm action against Russia, around 130 people have signed an open letter to EU members calling for the urgent suspension of all kinds of an international collab with Russian organizations & Institutions. However, it's still debatable whether western academics should be cut off from Russian Academics. Many brave Russian scientists have signed anti-war petitions. The role of academia to counter Russia's actions is still in its initial stage, but a consensus is growing among western academia to punish Russian institutions but not individual academics, researchers & students.

## **Conclusion**

The cumulative effect of non-state actors associating and aligning with the state actors or major powers, which are already west back entities, is surely a challenge for Russia. With the non-state actors joining the state actors, the pressure on Russia is more than ever but it will be interesting to observe whether this alliance can bring Russia to its optimum point for stopping the military intervention in Ukraine. It cannot be ignored that Russia also has the capacity and the backing of a few non-state actors on its side but the role of non-state actors and their lobby to counter Russia on this issue has larger consequences.

## RUSSIA - UKRAINE CONFLICT



Source: Republic world

## INDIA'S DELICATE BALANCING ACT

The 21 February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has shaken the world to its core. The present but not the recent conflict has its roots in the Cold War period, a period that already witnessed a bipolar world. Even after the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union's disintegration, territorial, security, and ideological issues between the US and Russia were never resolved. The present Russian invasion into Ukraine's territory has brought the nation states back in time where aligning with either of the countries seems to be the only choice. Even at the peak of this conflict when Russia has invaded Ukraine and the US and its allies have moved resolutions at UNSC against Russia's actions, some nations have preferred not to sideline with either of the parties and maintain their position over the present conflict. For China, it could be an opportunity to extend background support to Russia by abstaining from UNSC, which in turn can serve China in its expansionist programs and shared goals. India considers the present crisis to be manufactured in the western world and

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is doing no good to the development of the Global South. In this context, India's position regarding the present crisis seems to be a delicate act.

### **India's Dilemma**

The current crisis has caused India a deep dilemma. India has so far been maintaining neutrality, without being too harsh or radical in its statements. Indian diplomacy is cognizant of the high stakes and potentially far-reaching consequences if it sides with one over the other. The task of maintaining a balanced approach has been made even more difficult in the face of growing international pressure and prominent leaders publicly condemning Russia's actions. The Indian dilemma extends beyond issues of sovereignty and imperialist tendencies. India currently has positive relations with both USA and the West as well as Russia.

### **Cost of jeopardizing relations with Russia**

India has historically shared close relations with Russia that have benefitted it in times of need. Russia has consistently supported India on the Kashmir issue at multilateral platforms. Russia has also extended support to India's bid for a permanent seat at the UNSC as well as membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group. In this situation, taking a stand against Russia might cost India one of its most loyal and valuable allies. India might need the support of a permanent-five member in the future to negotiate its position in the international community.

Further, Russia is one of India's biggest arms suppliers, with the most significant recent purchase being that of the s-400 Triumf missiles from Russia. India is also one of Russia's largest defence equipment purchasers. Given the importance India places on defence, antagonizing Russia would also effectively mean losing out on an important military and arms partner.

Further, India finds itself in a precarious position due to the perpetual Chinese threat. With the recent Chinese aggression in Galwan, India hopes that an allyship with Russia might prove useful in reining China since China and Russia share close ties. Russia can act as a bridge between India and China and help negotiate on India's behalf, in case of future Chinese aggression. Moreover, the threat of a military confrontation with China makes the role of Russia as India's defence supplier even more significant.

### **Cost of alienating the West**

Considering that several Western countries are a part of NATO and have taken clear stands against Russia, a neutral stand might hurt India in its diplomatic endeavours. India has been inching closer to the US recently. The two countries signed a Nuclear Civilian Deal in 2006 and another agreement in 2016 that makes India a major defence partner of the United States. The USA has established a virtual global hegemony and American support is invaluable to India if it hopes to maintain a respectable position in the global community.

India's attempts to gain membership of the United Nations Security Council and the Nuclear Suppliers Group may be thwarted if it does not have larger support from the USA and its allies. India also needs international support in its efforts against terrorism. India has carefully been building a strong narrative against terrorism in high-level meetings and talks.

India's geopolitical situation is delicate, with strained relations with two neighbours, Pakistan and China. India has to be vigilant against threats from both. Under the circumstances, the support of the USA and Western countries may prove to be valuable if India is ever in crisis. Thus, it is imperative that India does not lose the support of strategic allies that can counter its problematic neighbours. There is also a moral stance associated with the issue. India has already been accused of hypocrisy by Western journalists for not coming out more strongly in favour of Ukraine. Given the narrative India built against China for unprovoked aggression, threatening its sovereign integrity and imperial tendencies, India is now under a moral obligation to critique the same impulses displayed by Russia. India will lose moral high ground and leverage in building a conversation around Chinese aggressions if it does not stand against Russia.

### **India's Balancing Act**

The circumstances have forced India to take up a fine, balancing act today. India has, so far, avoided issuing any strongly worded statements or taking a radical stance on the issue, that could potentially antagonise either party. In the UNSC Meeting, India used soft vocabulary to address the issue, by calling for "diplomatic dialogue" and "de-escalation of tensions." Russia praised India's stance, calling it "balanced, principled and independent." At the recent Quad Ministers' meeting, India again refused to comment on the Ukraine crisis and insisted that the meeting be focussed on issues in the Indo Pacific. India also abstained from voting in the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution that strongly criticised the Russian military action and called for an immediate withdrawal of all Russian forces.

### **Way Forward**

Notably, on 3rd January 2022, the P-5 members (China, Russia, US, UK, France) issued a joint statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding an arms race. The statement acknowledges the "far reaching" consequences of nuclear war and the importance of addressing nuclear threats. It showed a commitment towards the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty obligations, to use nuclear weapons for defensive and not aggressive purposes, and to prevent war. The Ukraine conflict began a few days after the issue of this statement. If one was to take this statement at face value, it can be assumed that a nuclear war is not an imminent threat in the current crisis.

With tensions escalating to a full-fledged military conflict, it might become difficult for India to maintain neutrality. India will have to weigh the benefits and costs associated with joining each side and make an informed decision about the stance it is taking. As a country that has attained significant international accomplishments built on moral principles of non-violence and truth, Indian diplomacy should also factor in the moral costs of the conflict before arriving at a decision.

### **Contributors**

Team CPRG, New Delhi

Dr. Ramanand Nand, Director CPRG

Harshal Kshirsagar, Kashish Komal, Abheya Arora, Harjas Kaur, Aman Kumar, Deepti Kushwaha,

Rupal Kalebere, Robin Mukherjee