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Russia- Ukraine War (RUW): A Fading State of Rule-Based International Order

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Abstract

The global security landscape has shifted to war over diplomacy. After the completion of years of escalation, no organization, including the United Nations (UN), could de-escalate the two warring states (Russia and Ukraine). The war is not only affecting all of Europe and the transatlantic region but the global landscape as well. After dismantling the Warsaw Pact, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) became the leading player in ensuring security in the European region. However, the eastward expansion of NATO became the primary *raison d'être* of controversy for Russia and former communist countries. The primary cause of the RUW is the location of Ukraine. It shares a long border with Russia, which is vital for the Russian oil and gas trade, and it strategically connects to the European market. Post withdrawal of NATO from Afghanistan, extending support to Ukraine to contain the intervening Russia shows the changing dynamics of NATO. With this, NATO is reevaluating its place in the international security and defense system. The article tries to unfold the contemporary situation of the Russian and Ukrainian War (RUW) and its multidimensional impact on the globe. It also analyzes the historical, geographical, and political factors related to the Russian and Ukrainian Wars. The article traverses through the Russian energy set-up and the reason why NATO is interested in containing Russia in eastern Europe. In the global scenario, the article tries to advocate the failure of diplomatic values, and the establishment of a rule-based international world order (RBIOs).

Keywords: Russia and Ukraine War (RUW), NATO, Multidimensional Impact, Hybrid threat, Rule based International Orders

1. Introduction

The global security landscape has shifted to war over diplomacy. After the completion of years of escalation, no organization, including the United Nations (UN), could de-escalate the two warring states (Russia and Ukraine). The war is not only affecting all of Europe and the transatlantic region but the global landscape as well. As part of the shift to democracy and economic restructuring, Russia, as part of the Soviet Union, was less assertive in international affairs during the transition to democracy and a liberal market economy for the period of 1990-2010. Afterward, Russia tried to reassert its position in world politics and tried to reestablish itself in the 'near abroad' as 'NoVo Russia'(new Russia). After dismantling the Warsaw Pact, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) became the leading player in ensuring security in the European region. However, the eastward expansion of NATO became the primary *raison d'être* of controversy for Russia and former communist countries. The primary cause of the RUW is the location of Ukraine. It shares a long border with Russia, which is vital for the Russian oil and gas trade, and it strategically connects to the European market.

2. Statement of the Problem

Post withdrawal of NATO from Afghanistan, extending support to Ukraine to contain the intervening Russia shows the changing dynamics of NATO. With this, NATO is reevaluating its place in the international security and defense system. The article tries to unfold the contemporary situation of the Russian and Ukrainian War (RUW) and its multidimensional impact on the globe. It also analyzes the historical, geographical, and political factors related to the Russian and Ukrainian Wars. The article traverses through the Russian energy set-up and the reason why NATO is interested in containing Russia in eastern Europe. In the global scenario, the article tries to advocate the failure of diplomatic values, and the establishment of a rule-based international world order (RBIOS).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Changing Dynamics of NATO

Post withdrawal of NATO from Afghanistan, extending support to Ukraine to contain the intervening Russia shows the changing dynamics of NATO. With this, NATO is reevaluating its place in the international security and defense system. The article tries to unfold the contemporary situation of the Russian and Ukrainian War (RUW) and its multidimensional impact on the globe. However, NATO's gradual expansion was maintained through a series of enlargements that brought its military installations closer to Russia's borders. Russia's aggression was more frustrating after the Georgian war (2008). Including Finland and Sweden in NATO shows that small Nordic states are also very reluctant to aggressive Russia. The rising TINA (There is No Alternative) tendency leads them to join NATO.

Now, NATO has become the legitimate security provider to the small states of the Nordic region. This forced Russia to act aggressively as NATO's enlarged sphere is touching the doorstep of the Russian border and the sphere of influence. Thus, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was not an overnight event; instead, it was the direct outcome of Russia's resistance to Ukraine's years-long ambition to join NATO. The Ukrainian government sees the Russian stance as an assault on its sovereignty. In addition, Ukraine has received assistance from NATO in its battle with Russia. The protracted political conflict resulted in Russia's military invasion on 24th February 2022, instantly affecting the global financial markets.

3.2 Ethno-Lingual Identity: Post-Soviet Space

Let us discuss the most complex and critical aspect of RUW, the politicization of ethno-lingual identity in post-Soviet space. It was crystal clear that the Soviet Union had covered dozens of nationalities, ethnicities, and ideals of self-determination under the blanket of 'universal brotherhood' of communist countries. For many political analysts and thinkers, the idea of nationalism remains 'the most potent force in the breakup of the communist regime,' and for some writers, 'Truly, the East European revolutions of 1989 have been a rebirth of nations. Scholars like Smith described the changes in Central European countries as 'proliferation of nationalism' (2001: 121) and rebirth of ethnic nation-states. However, policies like *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the former Soviet Union had opened the floodgate of national cleavages and ethnic aspirations in European space. Thus, the territories of all these states either experienced divisions or unification. The 'proliferation of a nationalism' has extended itself to Georgia to east of Ukraine.

In the ongoing war, the pro-Russian demonstrations in the Donbas region of Ukraine were supported by the Russian government, and still, the conflict is unresolved. The situation on the part is becoming precarious. At the same time, rising nationalism in Russia under the leadership of Putin under the banner of *Russia Mir* has also fueled the Donbas separatists to see Russia as the savior of Slavic Russian Orthodox culture and spiritual beliefs. With the rise of the Euromaidan mindset, 'returning to the common European home,' the eastern region has provoked an ethnolinguistic identity among Russian speakers. These Russian speakers demanded that the Ukrainian government promote the local majority language of 'Russian.' As Russia didn't want Ukraine to join NATO, it fueled the separatist movement and intervened. Thus, strategically, Russia made Ukraine a state with an ethnic and democratic crisis, where it loses the basic eligibility to join NATO. However, the ongoing crisis undervalues the established international world order and structures like UN and other mediating agencies to facilitate the process of ending the war. RUW as a litmus test for the rule based international order's durability. The international order is not collapsing—but evolving under pressure.

3.3 Complex and Competitive World Order

The emerging world order is shifting from bipolar world orders to tripartite or ushering towards a multi-polar world order. Take the example of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa grouping of nations, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), etc. These alliances reminded us that in anarchic competitive relationships, most states are concerned about their self-centered national interest. Interests here are complex and intensified to a globalized 'complexly intertwined.' We live in a world of competitive state relations, in which states are primarily concerned with relative gains in a self-help system that does not stand up to scarcity.

With the interventions and counter-interventions, the UN-centric world peace is now undergoing a crisis. It can be said that there has never been UN Centric peace in the world. The rule-based international orders (RBIOS) are now in the hands of a powerful few who have been using the UN as a playground for political hegemony, these chosen few. However, the push and pull between the states intensifies the multi-polar world order where regional powers and former superpowers are dictating 'rules,' blocking financial services, closing supply chains, and destroying critical infrastructures of competitors, like hospitals, nuclear power plants, ports, roads, etc. The sanctions are harming economic growth, the isolation of Russia from the West, and the atmosphere of fear and insecurity has risen to heights. These actions led to the fragmentation of globalization-based trade and commerce. The wars also threaten the bedrock of a liberal, free market, competitive atmosphere (democratic peace). Sanctions and restrictions on trade and ports are considered fault lines in free market liberal regimes. The short-sighted leadership and communication gap at both ends is distorting and paralyzing the norms and values of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), derailing globalization as mere detection of powerful states.

Time has reached the point where powerful states along with emerging states require respect from all members of the international community. All the countries, along with the permanent five, should come together and talk candidly on the real issue of war and create a sustainable consensus to ban war as a non-humanitarian aspect of a civilized, modern world order. This period implies that strong nations unite and "reiterate" the "rules," which are predicated on peaceful coexistence and respect for each other's rights as well as the UN charter and its related ideals. But now time has ripened when the superpowers like the US, Russia, and China should not mimic each other's behaviors. Each should respect sovereignty and equality, which are the basic principles of the post-World War II consensus.

3.4 Destruction of Civilian and Military Infrastructure

The war has destroyed the civilian and military infrastructure and dwindled the global financial governance. The rise of oil prices and food grain is leading to inflation. There is a possibility that Russia forced different countries to pay for their trade in their currency. For example, India pays the price of oil in rupees, and China trades in yuan. We can conclude that, in this hybrid War. The economies of both countries are severely affected. With the sanctions, Russia became the most sanctioned country in the world. It also affects the European and Asian markets. This is leading towards global recession and stagflation. Post-COVID situation, when the global economy was on a path to revive and grow with an upward side, the Ukraine War changed its momentum backward. In this situation, the US-led West wanted the emerging Russia to suffer from multidimensional challenges. In the words of the Foreign Minister of Russia, 'we face the pressure of unprecedented sanctions. Using a carrot-and-stick approach, the Americans are attempting to dissuade our partners from engaging in economic and any other form of cooperation with Russia. Blatant sabotage is being employed, as seen in the case of the explosion that damaged the Nord Stream gas pipelines on the floor of the Baltic Sea. Despicable attempts are also being made to 'disengage our country from mechanisms of international collaboration on culture, education, science, and sports'(ibid). Thus, the prime issue of the RUW has not only challenged the territorial integrity of the Ukraine but challenged the foundational values of UN, EU and other collective bodies which advocate peace and cooperation among nations. This is the time we must revive the culture of diplomacy and cooperation over war and attrition.

As many says Russia's war in Ukraine is a global contrast between autocracy and democracy. With the gross violations of RBIOs, democracies across the globe came together in a realistic manner to preserve and reset the liberal world order set by USA in 1990s. The war is vastly impacted Ukraine which is one of the significant suppliers of strategic metals, fertilizers and grain to world market.

At the same time, Russia is also badly hurt by the war. The war has strained Russia's resources. Real incomes are falling, Russia has recorded its second-highest budget deficit since the breakup of the Soviet Union, and nearly a million highly educated citizens have fled the country. At the same time, war fueled federal spending, which rose by 58.7% over the year. Nearly one-third of federal government spending will be devoted to defense and domestic security (Gould-Davies, *Survival*: 25). Many analyses like this have emphasized peace over war. Some people from academic and civil societies suggest going back to a diplomatic solution to the problem. The war has increased the 'systemic vulnerability of the global financial system.' The sanctions caused a systemic spillover effect across Europe and all over the globe.

Like Russia, Ukraine also needs long-term, robust support from NATO. Thus, Ukraine wanted to be a permanent member of the alliance. Frustrated by the ongoing 'hybrid' war, it needs more arms and humanitarian aid. It is demanding effective help from across Europe, and major countries support the war. Alliance needs more unity, air deployment and drones, and defense. In the word of J. Mearsheimer, Ukraine is already in a grave situation. This may be prolonged if the USA-led alliances do not initiate talks and dialogues during the process. Ukraine, which has already suffered grievously, is going to experience even greater harm. Essentially, the United States and its allies are helping lead Ukraine down the primrose path.'(Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development: 13).

3.5 India upon Russia and Ukraine War (RUW)

India's relationship with Russia has been time-tested since 1970 when India signed a friendship, peace, and cooperation treaty. The treaty was renewed in the year 2000. Despite the friendship and strategic cooperation, India has always maintained its voice in international issues; basically, its voice is rooted in its struggle for independence from colonial power. During the primitive phase, Indian foreign policy appreciated a non-aligned attitude towards all issues. Grouping into Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) during the Cold War inevitably maximized Indian national interest. The objective of Indian foreign policy was to establish Indian stand on independent basis on every global issue.

India and Russia have had a strong defense relationship since that time. Major portion of India's weapons are imported from Russia and Russian origin companies. In Asia, India is the only country in which Russia has formal, long-term military and technical cooperation. India also has Russian technological know-how in building the Kudankulam nuclear reactor. During the India-Russia Annual Summit in December 2021, both countries tried to achieve the target in trade and commerce of 30 billion USD by 2025. In 2019, India joined the Eastern Economic Forum to advance India's trade with the Russian Far East and Commonwealth Independent States. During the war, India also took an independent stand on US sanctions on Russia. At the same time, India remained absent from the UN forum, taking legal action against Russia, and other sides purchased oil from Russia amid economic sanctions by the West. This shows India is becoming more realistic on its stand on foreign policy matters.

3.6 India-Russia-US: Triangulation

Standing with Russia, Prime Minister Modi acknowledged the difficulty of the war situation and allowed India to trade with Russia for energy. Very recently, both countries signed an agreement on nuclear cooperation. However, continuing with the Kudankulam project, Russia may build over a dozen more reactors in India over the next 20 years (Basur & Dave:

2022). However, for India, the war has posed a difficult choice between the US-led West and Russia. Looking at the historic relationship between the two, the choice for India is tough to make. In a mature way, India has maintained cordial and cooperative ties with both Russia and the US. It did the same during the Cold War as well, when the US was the largest investor and trading partner to India. The Indian economies, along with other Asian economies, were indirectly affected by the events. In a world where we are so tightly interdependent on the world economy, India and other Asian countries can't get away with the impact of war. Thus, the war between Ukraine and Russia has a global impact.

After 2010, the USA emerged as an indispensable strategic partner for geopolitical and military reasons. India has signed a nuclear deal with the US. India is also participating with the US in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to contain the presence of any state in the Indo Pacific region. Both the US and India supported the concept of Indo-Pacific. Openly state that they do not want to contain China. China remains a major trading partner to both India and the US. Through QUAD, the US is spreading democratic values as an important aspect of stability in the Indo-Pacific region. It is not a military alliance like North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but it creates a conducive opportunity to cooperate on economies, technology, climate, and security to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Amid the Ukraine and Russia War the strategic importance of the region is growing, and India is diversifying its partnership norms both with the US and Russia.

Russian President Putin attended the Winter Olympics in 2022 and announced a "no limit" partnership between the two countries. This signaled deepening cooperation between China and Russia against the West. China has refused to condemn Moscow's actions in Ukraine and declared in 2022 that it had a 'no-limits' friendship with Russia. The country has denounced Western sanctions against Moscow and accused NATO and USA of provoking Putin's invasion. China has also proposed a peace plan that was largely dismissed by Ukraine's allies, who insisted that Moscow withdraw its forces from neighboring countries as a condition for peace. In analyzing Western media and think tanks, the harmonious coexistence showcases the visions of an autocratic alliance that might threaten the so-called liberal rule-based world order. The bilateral and strategic relationship elevates their existing close economic, military, and strategic ties. Though Beijing has not provided any direct military support to Russia, it has given unprecedented economic and strategic partnerships to isolated Russia. It remained a neutral state in the Ukraine conflict. However, the present situation strengthens China and Russia's advocacy of a more active and multilayered international world order. The existence of competition between US and China in relation to trade, economy, space and other spheres is therefore leading towards a complex and competitive world order.

4. Conclusion

Looking at the changing scenario, the talk can be the primary negotiation weapon for Ukraine and Russia. Reestablishing diplomatic relationships is very crucial in this juncture. In a recent television conversation, the Ukrainian president declined to establish any diplomatic relationship with the Russian leadership. It shows immature leadership and lack of foresight. The war can come to a halt if NATO revokes the Bucharest formula, which was acclaimed in 2008 and states that Ukraine and Georgia will undoubtedly become members of NATO. First and foremost, both states required cautious deliberations on each war-related issue. Second, NATO should stop creating military bases on the territory of states that were previously part of the USSR, and third, NATO should stop using the infrastructure of alliances for conducting military activities. However, with Trump winning the US presidential election has completely changed the recent scenario on RUW. With his intervention both Russia and Ukraine may prepare a road map for ceasefire and ending of war. The time has reached where Ukraine should be delivered with peace and order. The deaths, destructions and sanctions should take back seat over peace, negotiations and growth.

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