

Russia Ukraine War

[UPSC Notes]

Background of Russia Ukraine War

Ukraine became an independent state in 1991 after the disintegration of the USSR. Ukraine is the largest country in Europe and has a large border with Russia. Russia has always been apprehensive of its security as major attacks on Russia have occurred from the western border like in World War 1 and World War 2.

Ukraine's desire to join NATO made Russia apprehensive of its security, and it captured Crimea in 2014. Russia also supported insurgents of the Donetsk and Luhansk region in Eastern Ukraine. The war between Russia and Ukraine has increased the trade ambiguity and significantly influenced oil prices and other commodities. Despite having little trade with Russia, India suffers economically due to supply disruptions by Western nations.

Reasons for Russia Ukraine War

The main reason behind the Ukraine-Russia War or Why Russia and Ukraine are Fighting is because Ukraine accedes to NATO, which would go against Russia's wishes and continue to endanger its security. The west, according to Russia, should guarantee that Ukraine will never get permission to be part of NATO.

Other reasons include:

- **Economic Factor:** Ukraine has a large population, and it has substantial natural minerals and resources which also produce wheat, and vegetable oil, which are supposed to play an important role. Ukraine's membership in the Eurasian Economic Community(EAEC), a free trade agreement that came into being in 2015, but Ukraine refused to join the agreement.
- **Geo-Political and Strategic Factors:** Russia opposes the eastward expansion of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), which it considers a threat to the interest of Russia, and asked for written security guarantees from NATO as NATO is a military alliance of 28 European countries which works on the system of collective security.
- **Joining NATO of Ukraine** will result in installing missiles, a missile defense system at the mouth of Moscow.

Russia Ukraine War- Latest Developments

Russia launched a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and currently, according to Russia, it has launched a "special military operation" to de-militarise Ukraine. Russia stated that the eastward expansion of NATO and Ukraine's desire to join NATO is a reason for the deployment of the troops on the border to protect its security considerations.

- Russia, on its border with Ukraine, has mobilized around 1,00,000 troops.

- Russia is seeking assurance that Ukraine shall not be inducted into NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) from the US.
- The war between Russia and Ukraine resulted in tensions between the west, the supportive nation of Ukraine, and Russia.

Russia Ukraine War- Present Day

Although there were centuries-old cultural ties between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine is a buffer state between Russia and the West by the US and European Union.

Not just Russia only but the US and European Union also have stakes in Ukraine. It is directly linked to all the antecedent issues in the latest episode of the Russian troop display near the border of Ukraine.

Russia wants the assurance that Ukraine would not be made part of NATO (which has Anti-Russian ambitions) in the future from the west. But the United States has not agreed to the demands of Russia.

The following factors can be attributed to a sudden rise in tension-

- Volodymyr Zelensky, the newly elected president of Ukraine, has been going against the interest of Moscow and austere against Russia's supporters.
- Under the new President Joe Biden, the indecisive administration in the United States and the exit of the United States military from Afghanistan.
- The immense interest of Putin in Ukraine and, according to Putin, the west must not cross Ukraine, as he considered it a red line.

Ukraine-Russia Crisis: Russia's Stand

In the war between Russia vs. Ukraine, Russia does not want the eastward expansion of NATO, including Finland. Russia desires Ukraine to be neutral and under its influence. Russia wants written security guarantees not only in Ukraine but also in pulling NATO forces from Poland, and Baltic countries- Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The President of Russia justified the Ukraine crisis on the ground of security interests and the rights of ethnic Russians.

Presently, Russia wants an assurance that in the future, Ukraine will never be allowed to join NATO from the west. Ukraine is refused as part of NATO by the United States and its Western allies by claiming that Ukraine is free to choose its security alliances as a sovereign nation.

Russia Ukraine War Impact on India

India has adopted the strategic autonomy approach to maximize its policy space like- priority to National Interest over the block politics held India in getting discounted Oil, Fertilizer, and other commodities from Russia. Through diplomatic activism, India has evacuated over 22,500 Indian and foreign nationals from 18 countries under a mission named Operation Ganga.

- As the war looms large, its effect is seen in the financial sector as due to the rise in the price of crude oil, inflation, and monetary policy of USAs Federal Bank, India's Forex Reserve has declined to 570 billion dollars is about 10%, the prices of natural gas have increased over 50%, there are crises of fertilizer availability. Russia accounts for 15% of the global nitrogenous fertilizer trade and 17% of the global Potash fertilizer trade.

- India's total import of sunflower oil is 1.9 mt, and Ukraine accounts for 1.4 million tons; Russia is a significant producer of Titanium, Palladium, etc. War and sanctions on Russia will hurt India's diamond industry and supply chain issues in the semiconductor industry.

India's stand on Russia Ukraine War

Russia is a major arms supplier and is India's time-tested and reliable friend. By maintaining a long silence on the issue of the Russia-Ukraine conflict recently, India has spoken and called for a peaceful resolution through diplomatic ways. In a United Nations resolution upholding Ukraine's territorial integrity following the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, India abstained from voting. It hoped the situation would be handled peacefully and maintain a patient approach.

The US may impose sanctions on India for buying the S-400 defense missile system under the CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act). To balance its strategic calculus, India also needs the support of the United States and the European Union.

Ukraine Russia War: Way Forward

The immediate ceasefire is the need of the hour as the world is still suffering from the post-Covid 19 effects, mainly in the poorest countries, and this conflict may further induce a slowdown.

According to the Minsk Agreement, the United States and Western countries should push both sides to resume talks and live up to their commitments. It is a practical solution to restore relative peace to the Russia-Ukraine border conflict.

India's Specific on Ukraine Russia War

India has to balance the pressure from strategic partners like the USA, France, and Japan to condemn Russia for violating international law. Still, it has to convey its historical ties and legitimate concern. India faced the same issue during the Crimea crisis in 2014, which it managed well. The same can be seen throughout this period and will carry forward the same.

As India is a developing nation, it has to manage its economic vows. A government that has been conservative in revenue assumption has to pre-emptively cut fuel taxes to nip inflationary trends and flatter consumption levels and to sustain India's fragile economy Post-Covid recovery throughout this global churn.

With a balanced approach, India-Russia ties ensure that Delhi has not been left out of the issue of Central Asia, talks on Afghanistan, and provides the same leverage with the USA.