



रूस-यूक्रेन संघर्ष एवं वैश्विक परिदृश्य
में भारत की भूमिका

*Russia-Ukraine Conflict And Role of India in
Global Scenario*

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India's Foreign Policy

(Relevance of Non-Alignment Policy in the Context of Russia-Ukraine Conflict)

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During the Second World War, the whole world became bipolar and was divided into two major groups. One was virtually led by United States of America (USA) and the other one by erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Almost all the countries were aligned either with USA or with USSR. The major criterion which defined the division among the nations was nature of economic system prevalent in any country. The USA led group was majorly dominated by the countries having capitalistic form of economies whereas the other group led by USSR comprised of the countries having predominantly socialist form of economies.

Incidentally, India got independence from British rule in 1947, the time by which the Second World War ended. After independence, there was huge pressure on India for aligning itself with either of the groups formed during the world war. But the Indian leadership at that point of time decided not to be part of any of the groups and remained equidistant from either of the groups.

After independence, Indian economy was in doldrums and it was dependent on foreign countries even to fulfil its food requirements. India was economically weak and its social fabric was distorted. The need of hour was to position itself in such a manner that no country or group was seen as friend or foe. India needed the support of bigger developed countries to rebuild its economy and shape up its socio-political structure. Any kind of

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military conflict with any other country was beyond imagination had India wanted to rebuild the nation.

India adopted the democratic form of governance and parliamentary system of democracy. As far as economic system was concerned, the Government of the day chose to implement '**Mixed Economy**' system which was actually a blend of two forms viz. Capitalist and Socialist economies. Because of its peculiar economic situation, the Indian government decided to go by its own kind of foreign policy which was termed as '**Non-Alignment Policy**'. The policy envisaged not to be part of any political or military group and to have friendly ties with all the countries of world. The ethos of the '**Non-Alignment Policy**' was to respect the sovereignty and integrity of the nations and to support the co-existence of the countries in the ever changing and war stricken world post Second World War.

Later in 1961, India along with Egypt and the then Yugoslavia became the founder member of '**Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)**'. The three founder countries were able to garner support from large number of other developing countries and the ambit of NAM spread across the globe. There were around 120 members in the NAM initially. The basic premise of NAM was to partner with each other in the endeavour of economic and socio-cultural progress and to spread the message of global peace and prosperity. The countries of this block were termed as '**Third World Countries**'.

After second world war the members of non-aligned group tried to maintain their relations with both the groupings formed during the world war. Their ties with both the groups were purely along the economic and cultural relations. After disintegration of USSR in early 1990s, when the world became unipolar and so called '**Cold War**' between USA and USSR virtually ended, the need for economic interdependence forced the countries to shape up as '**One World**'. Various bilateral and multilateral political and economic blocks such as Group-8 (G-8), Group-20 (G-20), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association of Regional Countries (SAARC), Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), European Union (EU) etc. were formed. However, the whole geopolitics moved around USA and Europe itself.

With the advent of the era of LPG i.e. Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalization in Economic sector in the early nineties of twentieth century, majority of the countries including India opened up their economies for foreign investment and started partnering with each other in the path of economic development. Though, the ties among the nations were largely based on economic co-operation, the military tie-ups were also being made among the countries either bilaterally or in the form of some multilateral forum.

This was the time when foreign policies of the countries were predominantly driven by their own economic and security interests. However, multilateral fora viz-United Nations Organisation (UNO), World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Court of Justice (ICJ) etc. used to play crucial role in reconciling any conflict and maintaining co-operative relationships among the nations worldwide.

In spite of multipolar world, the western powers like USA, European Union and Russia continued to dominate global politics. After Second World War, an organisation namely '**North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**' was formed with the initiatives of USA and European countries based upon the military co-operation among the member countries. This organisation was apparently formed to counter any military aggression by any rogue country against another country in any part of the world, but the latent intention of the member countries especially USA was to counterbalance the military might of Russia.

Ever since the disintegration of USSR, the countries of erstwhile Soviet Republic were lured by the western countries to join NATO. Relations between Ukraine and the NATO also started in 1991. Ukraine applied to integrate with a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) in 2008. However, plans for NATO membership were shelved by Ukraine in 2010 with no plans to join NATO. But following the Russian military action against Ukraine in October 2014, the new government again made joining NATO a priority. In 2021 NATO leaders reiterated that Ukraine would become a member of the Alliance with the MAP as an integral part of the process and Ukraine's right to determine its future and foreign policy, of course without outside interference. Before further actions on NATO membership were taken, Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine on 24 February, 2022.

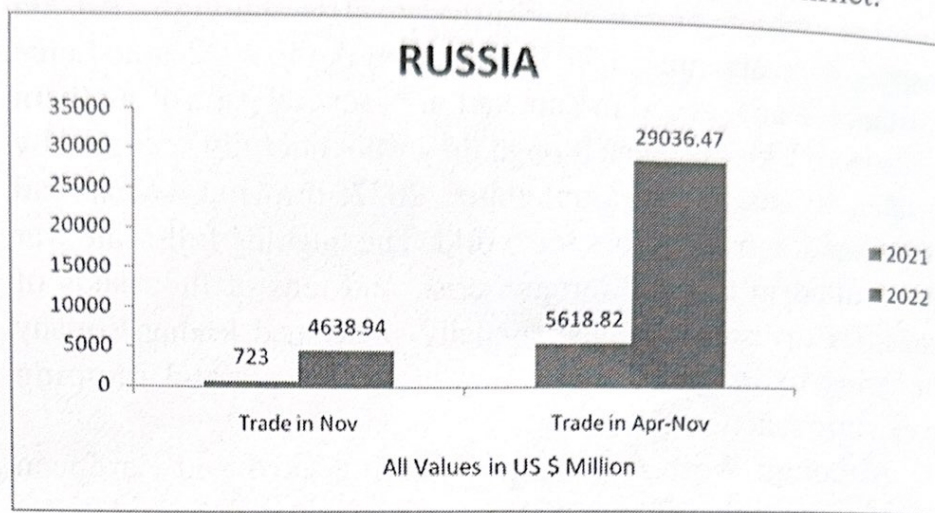
The **Russo-Ukrainian War** is an ongoing international conflict between Russia and Russian-controlled separatists against Ukraine, which began in February, 2014. Though, Russia abandoned an attempt to take Kyiv in early April, 2022 amid fierce resistance, it announced its annexation of several parts of southern and eastern Ukraine, even though they were not fully occupied by Russian forces, in late September, 2022, drawing widespread condemnation from across the world. The ongoing full-scale war has resulted in a major refugee crisis and tens of thousands of deaths. The invasion was internationally condemned, leading to many countries to impose sanctions against Russia and ramping up existing sanctions.

Although Western Powers including USA and European countries through different platforms like United Nations, QUAD and bilateral talks, tried to convince India to criticize the Russian military action in Ukraine, India did not openly criticize the Russian action yet. The relationship between India and Russia has a good imprints earlier. In previous century, erstwhile USSR always supported India in United Nations as well as during 1971 war. Russia is major defence partner of India which helps India to stand strongly among the global politics.

India always advocated that war should be stopped immediately and both the countries should respect their autonomy and try to resolve the conflict by holding peaceful talks because the war not only created economic crises in their respective countries, but also resulted in a big human crisis in the region. Even if India did not openly condemn the Russian military action in Ukraine, it has been maintaining its neutrality since the war started. In other words, India virtually stood by its age old '**Non-Alignment Foreign Policy**' during the whole Russo-Ukrainian crisis.

The manifestation of India's '**Non-Alignment Policy**' can be understood by the fact that it has been able to successfully strike a balance between both the power groups, on one side having USA and European Union and on the other side being Russia. Though, not in exact terms but in a guised manner '**Non-Alignment Policy**' has been the underlining factor for India's successful ties with USA, European Union, QUAD and other multilateral blocs.

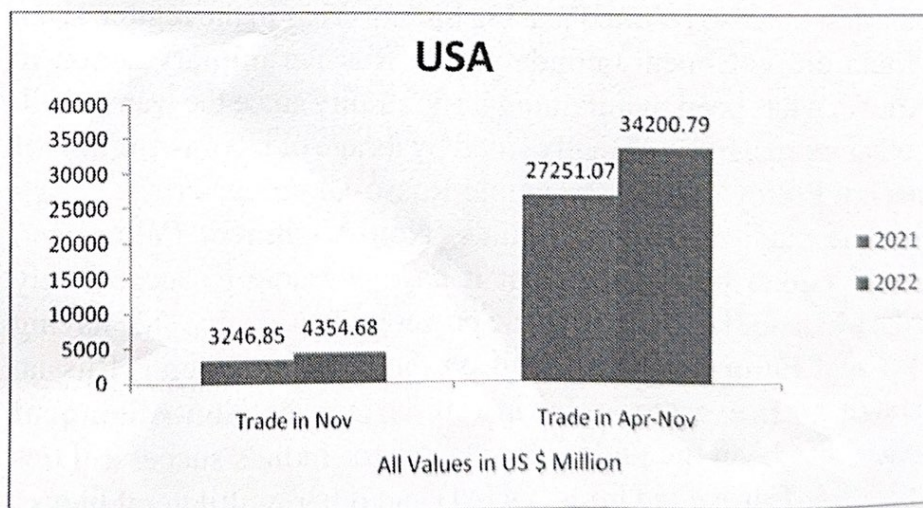
From the below chart, it can be seen that the trade between India and Russia has increased after the Russia-Ukraine Conflict.



Source: Department of Commerce

Currently India and Russia are coordinating with each-other in different areas from different platforms and especially in defence sector. Russia is now the largest supplier of defence equipment and technologies for India. India is also investing in Russian eastern part Vladivostok region and working on to make trade in Rupee-Rubel mechanism.

On the other side, the trade of India with USA has also been increasing and India is maintaining its cordial relationship with USA. It can be seen from the below chart that the trade with USA is also increasing year on year basis.



Source: Department of Commerce

Amidst the whole Russo-Ukrainian crisis, India, on one hand, is having a dialogue with QUAD partners and doing military exercise with USA i.e. Malabar exercise in defence field, it is participating in the military drill INDRA exercise conducted by Russia on the other hand. In spite of not criticising Russia for its military action in Ukraine on any open forum, India has been able to avoid the ire of western countries. So many countries are looking towards India to take a lead to stop the war and be a bridge for communication between Russia and Ukraine considering the friendly relations of India with Russia.

In the current global scenario, India has emerged as a global leader. The '**Non-alignment Policy**' adopted by India in 1960s was based on the principle of excluding itself from any grouping. However, the same policy has taken a modified form with the India's intent of engaging with all the stakeholders instead of keeping itself aloof from the crisis. **This is also a kind of 'Non-Alignment Policy'**.

In the ongoing transforming politico-economic situations when the world is becoming multipolar, no country can remain isolated, be it economic sector or political set up. India has always adopted an independent foreign policy keeping in view its own economic and security interests without compromising its neutral and unbiased position in the fast and everchanging geopolitics. **Undoubtedly, 'Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)' might have lost its original name and constitution during last few years, its basic tenet of 'Non-Alignment Policy' has again started taking relevance in today's multipolar and multi-foci world.**

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