



EXPLAINER

**Russia-Ukraine
Crisis: India's foreign
policy implications**

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Table of Contents

Background and Context	4
Russia-Ukraine Crisis: Global Response	10
Russia-Ukraine Crisis: UNSC 8979TH MEETING	15
Russia-Ukraine Crisis: Indian Response	17
Foreign Policy Implications for India	18
Concluding Observations	21
References	22

Background and Context

In a speech on February 23, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a "special military operation" in Ukraine. Russia has long opposed Ukraine joining the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the West's defensive military alliance. He accused NATO of threatening Russia's "historic future as a nation" and announced Russia's military operation in Ukraine. "The purpose of this operation is to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime," Putin added speaking about the people of Donetsk and Luhansk. Subsequently, several media outlets reported explosions in numerous locations and large-scale Russian military operations throughout Ukraine.¹

Ever since Ukraine's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich, was overthrown in 2014 after months of protests against his government, Russian President Vladimir Putin has regularly flagged Ukraine of being taken over by extremists. Russia responded by seizing Crimea's southern region and sparking a revolution in the east, backing hardliners against Ukrainian soldiers in a war that has claimed 14,000 lives.²

However, the current issue has its roots in the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, had the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal when the Soviet Union disintegrated in the early 1990s. The US and Russia collaborated with Ukraine to de-nuclearise the country, and in a series of diplomatic deals, Kyiv returned hundreds of nuclear warheads to Russia in exchange for security assurances against a possible Russian assault.³ However, the assurances did not stand; therefore in the explainer, we examine the 2022 Russia-Ukraine Crisis and discuss India's foreign policy implications in that context.

Timeline of Events

Date	Details
July 16, 1990	Ukraine's Declaration of Sovereignty
July 31, 1991	START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) is signed by the United States and the Soviet Union.
Dec 26, 1991	The Soviet Union officially disintegrates, postponing the implementation of START.
Dec 30, 1991	Strategic Forces Agreement at Minsk The Commonwealth of Independent States agrees that the former Soviet Union states' strategic forces will be under combined command.
May 23, 1992	The Lisbon Protocol is signed by Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the United States. The protocol demands for the return of nuclear weapons to Russia in three former Soviet states, as well as the inclusion of all states in the START accord and the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NPT).

¹ Associated Press, 'Russia'S Putin Announces Military Operation In Ukraine - KVIA' (KVIA, 2022) <<https://kvia.com/top-stories/2022/02/23/russias-putin-announces-military-operation-in-ukraine/>> accessed 25 February 2022.

² 'What's The Reason For Ukraine-Russia Conflict?' (WION, 2022) <<https://www.wionews.com/world/whats-the-reason-for-ukraine-russia-conflict-heres-what-you-should-know-456095>> accessed 24 February 2022.

³ 'Why Russia-Ukraine Tensions Have Again Reached A Boiling Point' (Npr.org, 2021) <<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/07/1062092373/why-russia-ukraine-tensions-have-again-reached-a-boiling-point>> accessed 23 February 2022.

Jan 14, 1994	Trilateral Statement is signed by Ukraine, Russia, and the United States. In exchange for economic assistance and security assurances from the US and Russia, Ukraine agrees to complete disarmament, including strategic offensive weapons.
Sept 04, 1993	Massandra Accords between the Russian-Ukraine government's summit was a failure.
Dec 05, 1994	The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances is signed by Russia, Ukraine, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Assurances of security against the threat or use of force against Ukraine's territory or political independence are included.
Dec 05, 1994	As a non-nuclear weapon state, Ukraine submits its instrument of accession to the NPT. The five START parties exchange ratification instruments for START, which went into force.
June 01, 1996	Ukraine handovers its final nuclear weapon to Russia.
Oct 30, 2001	Ukraine decommissioned its final strategic nuclear-weapons delivery vehicle.
Dec 04, 2009	Russia and the United States Issue a Joint Statement wherein the two countries reaffirm the security guarantees made in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.
March 18, 2014	Russia annexes Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and backs opposition forces in Ukraine's eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions.
May 11, 2014	Both the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics declared independence at the same time, having previously been united under the Novorossiia confederation from 2014-15.
Sept 05, 2014	Representatives of the Trilateral Contact Group and, without recognising their status, the presidents of Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) signed the Minsk Protocol (Minsk I). This agreement came after several earlier attempts to bring the hostilities in the region to a halt, with the goal of implementing an immediate ceasefire.
Feb 12, 2015	Representatives from Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the presidents of Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) signed a 13-point agreement, a new package of peacemaking measures, called the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements or Minsk II.
Late 2021 to early 2022	On the northern, eastern, and southern borders of Ukraine, Russia conducts "military exercises" with a force of over 150,000 military men involving land, sea, and air-based weaponry, heightening fears of a Russian invasion.
Feb 21, 2022	Two Ukrainian states i.e. Luhansk and Donetsk (Non-Government Controlled Areas), were recognised as independent regions by the Russian Federation. This recognition for "Luhansk Peoples Republic" and "Donetsk Peoples Republic" by the Russian Federation drew ire and criticism for allegedly violating the Minsk agreements.
Feb 23, 2022	Russian President Vladimir Putin announces a "special military operation" in Ukraine.
Feb 24, 2022	Russia began a large-scale military attack and invasion of Ukraine, with planes and missile launcher attacks on Ukrainian cities, airports, and military infrastructure across much of the country.

4 5

⁴ Paul Kubicek, 'How Ukraine Became A Market Economy And Democracy. By Anders Åslund. Washington D.C.: The Peterson Institute For International Economics, 2009. Xxv, 345 Pp. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$26.95, Paper.' (2010) 69 Slavic Review.

⁵ 'Conflict In Ukraine | Global Conflict Tracker' (*Global Conflict Tracker*) <<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>> accessed 26 February 2022.



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The Minsk impasse

Over the past decade, the Russian-backed 'Donetsk People's Republic' (DNR) and 'Luhansk People's Republic' (LNR) are arrayed against Ukraine's central government, and there is no end in sight. Ukraine presently has about 1.5 million registered internally displaced persons (IDPs), making it the world's ninth-largest country. The economic cost is probably certainly in the tens of billions of dollars, as measured by lost output and commerce, as well as destroyed or damaged assets. Predictably, the situation has brought political relations between Ukraine and Russia to an all-time low. Meanwhile, Russia's relations with the major Western powers have deteriorated to their lowest point since the early 1980s.

Following the annexation of Crimea in March 2014⁶, Russia launched a subversion campaign in eastern and southern Ukraine. Russia attempted to 'federalise' Ukraine's political system by using teams of rebels (local activists and provocateurs from Russia). The goal was to install pro-Moscow governments in these areas so that, if reintegrated into Ukraine, Russia could exert influence over its neighbour from within. The Novorossiia project quickly proved to be a mistake — or as one observer described it, "a conceit of Russian geopolitical culture." Only a small number of locals supported Russia. Many more people were prepared to fight in self-defence, forcing Russia to increasingly open military action to defend its proxies. Although Russia defeated Ukrainian forces in September 2014 and February 2015, it was unwilling to pay the price of a new high-intensity conflict. The Minsk agreements⁷⁸ arose from these contradicting circumstances.

During the 2013–14 crisis, the Kremlin sought two goals. Its first priority was to prevent Ukraine from signing an Association Agreement with the EU. It failed in this: Ukraine and the EU signed the AA in 2014, and it went into effect in 2017.⁹ Russia's second and more ambitious goal was to force Ukraine to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The concept of a Russia-dominated regional bloc with Ukraine at its heart was a fundamental plank of Putin's foreign policy when he was re-elected in 2012.¹⁰

On the other hand, Russia sees the Minsk agreements as a means to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. It insists that elections be held in the occupied Donbas before Ukraine regains border control, knowing well that its proxies will win. The constitution of Ukraine would be amended to include an extreme form of special status, crippling the central government and turning the DNR and LNR into Russian-controlled mini-states. Ukraine would be unable to successfully govern itself or align its foreign policy with the West.

Whereas, the current day Ukraine argues that as a signatory to the Minsk agreements, Russia carries a clear and direct obligation to work toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict based on Minsk principles. Russia is technically breaking the Minsk agreements by recognising the non-government held region of eastern Ukraine as "autonomous states."¹¹ The Minsk agreements stipulate the total return of these areas to Ukrainian government control. As a result, Russia is violating its commitment to working within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group to find a peaceful resolution to this dispute, a promise it has made multiple times. Moreover, Russia appears also to be going against UN Security Council Resolution 2202¹², which demands that the Minsk Agreements be fully implemented.

⁶ 'Минобороны России Учредило Медаль «За Возвращение Крыма» - Газета.Ru | Новости' (*Газета.Ru*, 2014) <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2014/03/25/n_6037281.shtml> accessed 24 February 2022.

⁷ 'Chairperson-In-Office Welcomes Minsk Agreement, Assures President Poroshenko Of OSCE Support' (*Osce.org*, 2014) <<https://www.osce.org/cio/123245>> accessed 25 February 2022.

⁸ 'Minsk Protocol' (*Osce.org*, 2014) <<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/a/123258.pdf>> accessed 24 February 2022.

⁹ 'Ukraine Crisis: EU Signs Association Deal' (*BBC News*, 2014) <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26680250>> accessed 26 February 2022.

¹⁰ Lapenko, Marina. "The Ukrainian Crisis and Its Effect on the Project to Establish a Eurasian Economic Union." *Connections* 14, no. 1 (2014): 121–36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26326389>.

¹¹ 'Putin Has Broken The Minsk Agreement In Donbas - A Move That Shuts Down The Best Path To Peace' (*inews.co.uk*, 2022) <<https://inews.co.uk/news/world/has-putin-broken-the-minsk-agreement-what-the-recognition-of-donbas-region-means-for-russia-ukraine-peace-1474857>> accessed 22 February 2022.

¹² 'UNSC Resolution 2202 (2015)' (*Securitycouncilreport.org*, 2015) <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2202.pdf> accessed 24 February 2022.

Therefore, the Minsk agreements are based on two conflicting views of Ukraine's sovereignty: is it sovereign, as Ukrainians claim, or should it be constrained, as Russia demands? Rather than attempting to reconcile an unsolvable conflict, global leaders should recognise the gravity of the Minsk impasse.¹³

Ukraine and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

In 2008, Ukraine applied to start a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP). However, following the 2010 presidential election, in which Viktor Yanukovich, who desired to keep Ukraine non-aligned, was elected President, Ukraine's plans for NATO membership were abandoned. Yanukovich departed Ukraine in February 2014 amid the Euromaidan upheaval.¹⁴ Concerning the country's non-aligned position, the temporary Yatseniuk Government first said it had no aspirations to join NATO. However, following the Russian military intervention in Ukraine and the October 2014 parliamentary elections, the new government prioritised NATO membership. As a result, the Constitution of Ukraine was revised on February 21, 2019, with the preamble of the Basic Law, three articles, and transitional clauses enshrining the principles on Ukraine's strategic course for membership



The Economist

Source: The Economist

¹³ 'The Minsk Conundrum: Western Policy And Russia'S War In Eastern Ukraine' (Chatham House, 2020) <<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine-0/conclusions>> accessed 26 February 2022.

¹⁴ "'Ukraine Makes It Official: Nation Will Abandon Plans To Join NATO'" (kyivpost, 2010) <<http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/67901/>> accessed 25 February 2022.

in the European Union and NATO.¹⁵ At the June 2021 Brussels Summit, NATO leaders reaffirmed their decision from the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Ukraine would join the Alliance, with the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a critical component of the process, as well as Ukraine's right to determine its future and foreign policy, free of outside interference. According to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Russia will not be able to veto Ukraine's NATO membership, since "as we will not return to the era of spheres of interest, when large countries decide what smaller ones should do."¹⁶

Russia is adamantly opposed to NATO's eastward expansion keeping in mind the Russian Federation's long term national security aspects. On February 12, 2008, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that if Ukraine joins NATO and approves the construction of a US missile defence shield, Russia may target its missiles at Ukraine. Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko has emphasised repeatedly that his country will not allow foreign military bases on its soil; NATO had no plans to deploy military sites in Ukraine as of December 2009.¹⁷

NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Regional, Economic, and Multilateral Affairs, Aurelia Bouchez, said during a conference in the Hungarian parliament on November 20, 2008: "We should not choose between NATO enlargement and Russia because we need both," NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said twelve days later at a conference in Spain, "The emergence of independent states within the former Soviet space is a reality. The ability of these states to determine their own future is a litmus test for the new Europe. Do we have to choose between good relations with Russia and further enlargement? My answer is no – we will not choose, will not sacrifice one for the other. It would bring new dividing lines."¹⁸

Subsequently, at a NATO-Russia summit in 2008, Vladimir Putin reportedly stated that if Ukraine joined NATO, his country would be able to seize the Ukrainian east and Crimea. China, like Russia, is heavily focused opposing NATO's eastward expansion.¹⁹

¹⁵ 'Закон Про Зміни До Конституції Щодо Курсу На Вступ В ЄС І НАТО Набув Чинності | Євроінтеграційний Портал' (*Eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua*) <<https://eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua/novyny/zakon-pro-zminy-do-konstytuciyi-shchodo-kursu-na-vstup-v-yes-i-nato-nabuv-chynnosti>> accessed 26 February 2022.

¹⁶ 'Brussels Summit Communiqué Issued By The Heads Of State And Government Participating In The Meeting Of The North Atlantic Council In Brussels 14 June 2021' (*NATO*, 2021) <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm> accessed 26 February 2022.

¹⁷ J.L. Black, 'Russia And NATO Expansion Eastward' (1999) 54 *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*.

¹⁸ Tony Kiev, 'Don'T Turn Deaf Ear To Ukraine Nato Bid, Viktor Yushchenko Begs Allies' (*TheTimes.co.uk*, 2008) <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/dont-turn-deaf-ear-to-ukraine-nato-bid-viktor-yushchenko-begs-allies-0dpsjc78f9q>> accessed 27 February 2022.

¹⁹ 'China Joins Russia In Opposing Nato Expansion' (*BBC News*, 2009) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-60257080>> accessed 27 February 2022.

Russia-Ukraine Crisis: **Global** Response

Several countries have promptly condemned Russian President Vladimir Putin's "special military operation" in eastern Ukraine. Putin's authorisation came as the United Nations Security Council held its second emergency meeting this week late on Wednesday, February 23, 2022, to urge de-escalation and a return to diplomatic dialogue.

NATO has alerted its fighter planes, but the Western alliance has stated that no military personnel will be sent to Ukraine. Field hospitals, weaponry, and consultants have been offered instead. NATO has dispatched 5,000 troops to the Baltic republics and Poland in the meanwhile. Another 4,000 soldiers could be sent to Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia.²⁰

Concurrently, the West targets Russia's economy, financial institutions, and individuals. Ukraine has requested that its allies stop purchasing Russian oil and gas. The three Baltic countries have urged the rest of the world to cut Russia's financial system off the international Swift payment system.²¹ As this might harm the US and European economies, Germany has expressed reservations about agreeing.²²

More so;

- Personal sanctions against President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov have been imposed by the US, EU and the United Kingdom (UK).²³
- The EU is seeking to limit Russian access to capital markets and deny its sector access to cutting-edge technology and defence. It has also targeted 351 members of parliament who favoured Russia's recognition of rebel-held areas.²⁴
- The US is targeting ten of Russia's largest financial institutions, which account for around 80% of the country's banking assets, making it difficult for them to do transactions in dollars or euros.²⁵

²⁰ 'Press Briefing By NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Following An Extraordinary Meeting Of The North Atlantic Council' (NATO, 2022) <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_192408.htm> accessed 26 February 2022.

²¹ 'World Leaders Divided On Whether To Eject Russia From Swift Payments System' (Ft.com, 2022) <<https://www.ft.com/content/69f72de5-d727-496d-9f9d-316db7bdaf03>> accessed 27 February 2022.

²² 'Germany'S Olaf Scholz Opposes Inclusion Of SWIFT In Russia Sanctions For Now' (POLITICO, 2022) <<https://www.politico.eu/article/germanys-scholz-opposes-inclusion-of-swift-in-russia-sanctions/>> accessed 24 February 2022.

²³ 'U.S. Treasury Imposes Sanctions On Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin And Minister Of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov' (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2022) <<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0610>> accessed 27 February 2022.

²⁴ 'Ukraine News From February 23: Ukraine Urges Citizens To Leave Russia, US Warns Invasion May Be Imminent, Kremlin Says Separatists Asked Putin To 'Repel' Ukraine' (Ft.com, 2022) <<https://www.ft.com/content/e1b56151-1dbb-460d-90eb-2f55e9e44214>> accessed 24 February 2022.

²⁵ 'FACT SHEET: Joined By Allies And Partners, The United States Imposes Devastating Costs On Russia | The White House' (The White House, 2022) <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/02/24/fact-sheet-joined-by-allies-and-partners-the-united-states-imposes-devastating-costs-on-russia/>> accessed 27 February 2022.

- The UK is targeting and blocking all major Russian bank assets, with over 100 Russian individuals and organisations targeted, Russia's national carrier Aeroflot will also be barred from landing in the UK.²⁶
- Germany has put a hold to the approval of Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which is a major investment for both Russia and select European companies.²⁷
- To aid Ukraine in its fight against Russia's attacks, Germany's army plans to send 1,000 anti-tank weapons and 500 "Stinger" class surface-to-air missiles. According to a government statement, the weapons "will be delivered as quickly as possible to Ukraine" and will come from the Bundeswehr's own stocks.²⁸

Russia's attack in Ukraine has upset major nations, who accuse it of bringing war back to Europe. Select responses from various countries are elaborated below.

Key Global Responses

Government/ Entity/Individual	Response
United Nations (UN)	<p>UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres responded to Russia's actions, telling Russian President Vladimir Putin to "bring your troops back to Russia" and "give peace a chance."</p> <p><i>"In the name of humanity, do not allow a war to start in Europe which could be worst war since the beginning of the century with consequences not only devastating for Ukraine, not only tragic for the Russian Federation but with an impact cannot even foresee."</i></p>
UN Agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF)	<p>Many nations bordering Russia and Ukraine have been affected by the situation unravelling in Ukraine. Over five nations are experiencing a refugee inflow, with the United Nations Children's Fund estimating that up to five million people will be displaced. Poland, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary are all preparing for the influx of refugees.</p>
World Health Organization (WHO)	<p>The United Nations' health agency has raised concerns about a potential health emergency in Ukraine. In an official statement the WHO Stated</p> <p><i>"Amid the conflict rapidly unfolding in Ukraine, the WHO Regional Office for Europe reiterates its deepest concern for the safety, health and wellbeing of all civilians impacted by the crisis in the country and possibly beyond,"</i></p>

²⁶ 'Ukraine Conflict: UK Sanctions Target Russian Banks And Oligarchs' (BBC News, 2022) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60515626>> accessed 27 February 2022.

²⁷ 'Germany Freezes Nord Stream 2 Gas Project As Ukraine Crisis Deepens' (www.reuters.com, 2022) <<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/germanys-scholz-halts-nord-stream-2-certification-2022-02-22/>> accessed 25 February 2022.

²⁸ ABC News, 'In A Major Shift, Germany Will Send Weapons To Ukraine' (ABC News, 2022) <<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/major-shift-germany-send-weapons-ukraine-83131834>> accessed 27 February 2022.

<p>The Group of Seven (G7)</p>	<p>The Group of Seven industrialised nations condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and announced that they would impose tough and coordinated economic and financial sanctions on Russia.</p> <p><i>"This crisis is a serious threat to the rules-based international order, with ramifications well beyond Europe,"</i> the G7 leaders said in a joint statement.</p> <p>Adding that Russian President Vladimir Putin has reintroduced war to the European continent Germany's leaders said in a statement that;</p> <p><i>"He has put himself on the wrong side of history"</i></p> <p>The leaders also stated that they encourage consistent and constructive engagement and coordination amongst major energy consumers and producers in order to ensure stable global energy supply, and that they were prepared to act if a disruption occurred.</p>
<p>European Union (EU)</p>	<p>According to EU Executive Commission Chief Ursula Von Der Leyen, the EU would hold Moscow accountable for the "unjustified" attack on Ukraine.</p> <p>In her tweet she further stated <i>"In these dark hours, our thoughts are with Ukraine and the innocent women, men and children as they face this unprovoked attack and fear for their lives"</i></p> <p>Furthermore, the EU is scheduled to debate more sanctions against Russia. Von Der Leyen said EU sanctions will "significantly impair" Russia's economy at a press conference alongside European Council President Charles Michel.</p>
<p>North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)</p>	<p>Russia has <i>"chosen the path of aggression against a sovereign and independent country,"</i> according to Jens Stoltenberg, the secretary general of the Atlantic Alliance.</p> <p>In his statement, he further stated that the strike</p> <p><i>"endangers countless civilian lives" and is a "grave breach of international law and a major threat to Euro-Atlantic security."</i></p>
<p>International Olympic Committee</p>	<p>According to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Russia has violated the current Olympic Truce, which attempts to use sport to promote peace and communication.</p>
<p>United States of America</p>	<p>President Joe Biden has condemned Russia for a <i>"unprovoked and unjustified attack"</i> on Ukraine, saying that the United States and its allies</p> <p><i>"will hold Russia accountable." "President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering. Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable,"</i> he stated.</p>
<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p><i>"President Putin has chosen a path of bloodshed and destruction by launching this unprovoked attack on Ukraine,"</i> UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson tweeted.</p> <p>He warned Western powers would implement enormous penalties to cripple the Russian economy in a televised address to the country. <i>"Today, in concert with our allies, we will agree a massive package of economic sanctions designed in time to hobble the Russian economy,"</i> he stated.</p>

Turkey	<p>Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish president, has denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a "heavy blow" to regional peace. In a televised statement, Erdogan stated, "We reject Russia's military operation," calling it a "heavy blow to regional peace and stability."</p>
China	<p>China condemned the term "invasion" to describe Russia's actions in Ukraine and encouraged all sides to exercise restraint.</p> <p><i>"You are using a typical Western media question method of using the word invasion,"</i> Hua Chunying, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry, told reporters.</p> <p><i>"China is closely monitoring the latest situation. We call on all sides to exercise restraint to prevent the situation from getting out of control."</i></p> <p>Following the bombings across several Ukrainian cities, the Chinese embassy in Ukraine advised its residents to remain at home as a precaution.</p>
Canada	<p>Russia's attacks, according to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, were "unprovoked" and "a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity."</p> <p>Trudeau said he would meet with partners from the Group of Seven to shape a collective response,</p> <p><i>"including by imposing sanctions additional to those announced earlier this week." "These reckless and dangerous acts will not go unpunished."</i></p>
Germany	<p>Russia and the United States Issue a Joint Statement wherein the two countries reaffirm the security guarantees made in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.</p>
Qatar	<p>Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, issued a statement calling all parties to exhibit moderation and resolve all disputes through "constructive dialogue and diplomatic means." The statement added, "Sheikh Tamim also called the protection of civilians and the prioritisation of the humanitarian situation."</p>
Iran	<p>Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency claimed that Iran had advised its people in Ukraine to leave the country. Given that Ukraine's airspace is currently closed, Iran's embassy in Ukraine is currently working on getting flight permits for the evacuation flights, according to ISNA.</p>
Sweden	<p>Magdalena Andersson, Sweden's Prime Minister, said the defence ministry would look at methods to bolster Ukraine's ability to withstand a Russian invasion. During a press conference, Andersson told reporters,</p> <p><i>"I have ... today given the Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist the task of immediately preparing a decision so that we, from the Swedish side, can support Ukraine with further ways to... to strengthen their resilience."</i></p>
Japan	<p>Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has condemned Russia's military activities and stated that Japan, together with the US and other allies, will respond swiftly. Kishida went on to say that</p> <p><i>"This Russian invasion stands to put at risk the basic principle of international order that forbids one-sided action of force in an attempt to change the status quo. We strongly condemn Russia, and we will respond speedily in cooperation with the US and other Western nations,"</i></p>

South Korea	<p>At a National Security Council meeting, President Moon Jae-in stated that Ukraine's sovereignty, territory, and independence must be protected.</p> <p>In reaction to Russia's military activities in Ukraine, South Korea will join certain global economic sanctions against Russia but not unilateral action.</p>
France	<p>French President Emmanuel Macron has pledged France's support for Ukraine, warning that Russia's invasion of its neighbour will have durable and "deep" consequences for Europe.</p> <p>In a speech to the French people, Macron stated: <i>"We will respond without weakness to this act of war, with calm, determination and unity,"</i></p>
Spain	<p>Pedro Sanchez, the Spanish Prime Minister, denounced Russia's military operation in Ukraine and stated he is in communication with NATO allies to coordinate a response.</p>
Italy	<p>According to Prime Minister Mario Draghi, the attack on Ukraine by Russia was <i>"unjustified and unjustifiable."</i> <i>"Italy stands by the Ukrainian people and institutions in this dramatic moment,"</i> and <i>"We are working with our European and NATO allies to respond immediately, with unity and determination"</i>, added his statement.</p>
Greece	<p><i>"We strongly condemn the Russian aggression against an independent country,"</i> stated Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou.</p> <p><i>"While other countries withdrew their diplomats, we increased our personnel"</i>, stated Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Katsaniotis.</p>
Finland	<p>Finland's President, Sauli Niinistö, strongly condemned Russia's military actions, calling them an assault "on the entire European security order."</p>

29

²⁹ 'World Reaction To The Invasion Of Ukraine' (*Wilson Center*, 2022) <<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/world-reaction-invasion-ukraine>> accessed 24 February 2022.

Russia-Ukraine Crisis: **UNSC** 8979TH MEETING

On February 25, 2022, amidst the ongoing military operations in Ukraine, a draft Security Council resolution on ending the Ukraine crisis and holding Russia accountable was proposed by the United States and Albania. The council members could vote "yes" if they favour the resolution text and "no" or abstain if they didn't.

The draft resolution condemned the Russian Federation's action as a violation of Article 2, paragraph 4 of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against a state's territorial integrity or political independence. The draft also calls for the Council to compel the Russian Federation to stop using force against Ukraine and withdraw all of its military forces from its territory immediately, completely, and unconditionally. In addition, the draft would have the Council condemn the Russian Federation's decision on the status of some regions of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions on February 21 and decide that Moscow must reverse that decision immediately and unconditionally because it undermines Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Other provisions of the draft would have urged the parties to uphold the Minsk agreements and cooperate constructively in international forums such as the Normandy Format (France, Germany, Russian Federation) and the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russian Federation, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)). Furthermore, the Council would have urged all parties to allow and facilitate the timely, safe, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need and protect civilians, including humanitarian workers and people in vulnerable situations, including children. The Council would have also urged the Secretary-General, Member States, the OSCE, and other international and regional organisations to continue their efforts to support de-escalation in the current situation and UN efforts to respond to the humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Subsequently, the draft submitted by Albania and the United States was endorsed by 11 members but vetoed by the Russian Federation. China, India and the United Arab Emirates abstained from the vote.³⁰

UNSC Vote on “Russia-Ukraine Situation”

S.No.	Member	Yes	No	Abstained
1	United States	✓		
2	Albania	✓		
3	United Kingdom	✓		
5	India			○
6	Gabon	✓		
7	Mexico	✓		

³⁰ 'Security Council Fails To Adopt Draft Resolution On Ending Ukraine Crisis, As Russian Federation Wields Veto | Meetings Coverage And Press Releases' (*Un.org*, 2022) <<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14808.doc.htm>> accessed 27 February 2022.

S.No.	Member	Yes	No	Abstained
8	Norway	✓		
9	Ireland	✓		
10	France	✓		
11	Ghana	✓		
12	Brazil	✓		
13	Kenya	✓		
14	United Arab Emirates			○
15	Russian Federation		✗ (Veto)	
16	China			○

Thanking those who backed the draft resolution, Ukraine's representative blasted the Russian envoy by stating, "*Your words have less worth than a hole in a New York pretzel,*" recalling several instances when his Russian colleague denied any intention of invasion. Furthermore, he contended that the Russian Federation's chairmanship of the Council violates Rule 20 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure since the delegation cannot preside over a matter directly related to its own country. He continued, "Nothing justifies today's shelling of a kindergarten and an orphanage," he said. He also stated that war crimes and violations of the Rome Statute would be taken before the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The meeting began at 5:10 P.M. and ended at 6:59 P.M on February 25, 2022, in New York, USA.³¹

³¹ n 30

Russia-Ukraine Crisis: **Indian** Response

Since the beginning of February 2022, India has been encouraging patience from all parties and advocating for "constructive diplomacy" to settle the increasing tensions, which have suddenly transformed with Putin's declaration. However, on February 24 2022, India's External Affairs Minister, Dr S. Jaishankar, tweeted that he had received a call from EU foreign policy leader Josep Borrell. They addressed "the alarming situation in Ukraine" and "how India could assist de-escalation efforts."³² Moreover, as part of its contingency plans to remove Indian nationals from Ukraine, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has called for a series of high-level discussions.³³

Partha Satpathy, India's ambassador to Ukraine, released a letter asking Indian citizens not to panic but stating that the situation in Ukraine is "highly tense and very uncertain." In addition, "Airspace is closed, train schedules are in flux, and roads are congested." Therefore, I would request everyone stay calm and face the situation with fortitude. According to the letter, the Indian Embassy in Kyiv remains open and operational. So far, there has been no formal response from the Indian government on Putin's announcement declaring a "special military operation" in Ukraine.³⁴

However, on February 25, 2022, the UNSC Voted on a draft Security Council resolution to end the Ukraine crisis and hold Russia accountable. India abstained with a reason from the Vote. At the same 8979TH UNSC meeting, India, through T. S. Tirumurti, the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, expressed its displeasure with recent events in Ukraine and demanded that all efforts be made to ensure an immediate end of hostilities. India maintained that it is especially concerned about the welfare and security of the Indian minority in Ukraine. India noted that the current global order is based on the United Nations Charter, international law, and respect for states' sovereignty and territorial integrity and that as a result, all Member States must adhere to those principles in pursuing a solution. India highlighted that dialogue is the only way to resolve conflicts, expressing sadness that diplomacy had been abandoned and called for a return to that path. India decided to abstain from today's Vote for these reasons.³⁵

At the time of writing this explainer, India is desperately trying to get its citizens, especially Indian students in Ukraine out of the country.³⁶

³² 'EU Foreign Policy Chief, Jaishankar Discuss How India Can Contribute To De-Escalation Efforts In Ukraine' (*Indiandefensenews.in*, 2022) <<http://www.indiandefensenews.in/2022/02/eu-foreign-policy-chief-jaishankar.html>> accessed 27 February 2022.

³³ 'Closely Monitoring Ukraine Situation, Focus On Safety Of Indians: External Affairs Ministry' (*India Today*, 2022) <<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/russia-ukraine-war/story/monitoring-ukraine-situation-focus-safety-indians-ministry-external-affairs-1917210-2022-02-24>> accessed 27 February 2022.

³⁴ Press India, 'Indian Envoy Urges Indians In Ukraine To Face Situation With Calm' (*Business-standard.com*, 2022) <https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/indian-envoy-urges-indians-in-ukraine-to-face-situation-with-calm-122022500077_1.html> accessed 27 February 2022.

³⁵ n 30

³⁶ 'Moe Appeals To Indian Students Stranded In Ukraine To Follow Guidelines Issued By MEA, Embassy' (*The New Indian Express*, 2022) <<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2022/feb/26/moe-appeals-to-indian-students-stranded-in-ukraine-to-follow-guidelines-issued-by-mea-embassy-2424050.html>> accessed 27 February 2022.

Foreign Policy Implications for India

Non-alignment began for India as a policy of non-involvement in the military affairs of a bipolar world and the context of colonialism to maximise involvement through multi-polar participation in the pursuit of peace and security. It meant that a country should maintain a certain level of international action independence. However, because there was no universally accepted definition of non-alignment, it was perceived differently by different leaders and governments and applied differently in different settings. Thus, the non-aligned countries' primary objectives were to support self-determination, national independence, and state sovereignty and territorial integrity; opposition to apartheid; non-adherence to multilateral military pacts and non-aligned countries' independence from great power or block influences and rivalries; the struggle against imperialism in all its forms and manifestations; the struggle against colonialism, neocolonialism, and racial discrimination; and the struggle against colonialism, as well as international cooperation on an equal footing.³⁷ Therefore, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has often played a critical role in maintaining world peace and security throughout its history. With that as a context we examine India's bilateral relations independently with Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Ukraine

India has an extensive bilateral connection with **Ukraine**, embracing all fields of interaction. One of the first countries to recognise Ukraine was India. Government of India recognised the Republic of Ukraine as a sovereign country in December 1991 and established diplomatic ties in January 1992. The India-Ukraine trade relationship and economic cooperation have grown out of the two nation's long-standing friendship. The Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between India and Ukraine was signed in March 1992, offering a major boost to India-Ukraine trade relations. In 1998, When India's government, led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, surprised the world by conducting five nuclear tests. Ukraine, along with 25 other countries, vehemently criticised India's nuclear tests at the time, and voted in favour of China backed UN Resolution 1172³⁸. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted a resolution demanding that India cease its nuclear tests and sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The resolution further demanded that India cease its nuclear weapons development and manufacturing, as well as the development and production of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Ukraine backed the UN throughout. In addition, Ukraine has had a casual stand on the matter pertaining to the Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir and in the past made non-serious and misinformed statements at the UN and other multilateral forums in this regard. In terms of economy, bilateral commerce between the two countries has increased dramatically over the last 25 years, reaching about US\$ 2.8 billion in 2018-19. India is Ukraine's second-largest export market in Asia-Pacific and fifth-largest export destination globally. Agricultural products, metallurgical products, plastics and polymers, and other things are among the main exports from Ukraine to India, while pharmaceuticals, machinery, chemicals, and food products are among the vital Indian exports to Ukraine. In Ukraine, several Indian enterprises, including Ranbaxy, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Sun Group, and others, operate representative offices.

³⁷ Priyankar Upadhyaya, 'Nonaligned States And Indias International Conflicts' (*School of International Studies, JNU, 1987*) <<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/16265>> accessed 25 February 2022.

³⁸ 'Security Council Resolution 1172 - UNSCR' (*Unscr.com, 2022*) <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1172>> accessed 27 February 2022.

Representatives from major pharmaceutical businesses have also established an association in Ukraine called the "Indian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association." Ukraine solely provides for 70 percent of India's sunflower oil imports. As, India imports over 60% of its edible oil, and sunflower oil accounts for 14% of India's edible oil imports, any supply disruption will raise the price of sunflower oil in India. At the public level in Ukraine, there is a strong interest in Indian culture, including dances, yoga, philosophy, Ayurveda, and spirituality. More than 30 Ukrainian cultural associations/groups promote Indian art forms, mainly Indian dances, around the country. Most organisations have self-taught themselves Indian dances and promote them through festivals and dance classes. In Ukraine, there is a tiny but thriving Indian population, largely made up of business professionals and students. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, there are currently 18,095 Indian students in Ukraine.³⁹

Russian Federation

On the other hand, after the fall of the Soviet Union, **Russia** inherited its close ties with India which resulted in both nations sharing a special friendship. Russia and India both characterise this connection as a "special and privileged strategic cooperation". India regards Russia as a long-standing and well-tested ally who has aided the country's economic growth and security. Since 2014, increased levels of collaboration in nearly every aspect of the bilateral relationship, including politics, security, defence, trade and economy, science and technology, culture, and people-to-people relationships, India-Russia relations have taken on a qualitatively new character. Several formalised communication mechanisms operate at both the political and official levels under the Strategic Partnership to enable regular interaction and follow-up on partnership efforts. Moreover, despite the hurdles posed by Covid-19, India-Russia relations have deepened, with increased cooperation in all aspects of the bilateral relationship, including political engagements, security, defence, trade and economics, science and technology, and culture. India-Russia Cooperation in the realm of peaceful uses of space has been going on for almost four decades. A number of astronauts have been trained in Russia as part of the MoU between ISRO and Russia's Federal Space Agency 'ROSCOSMOS' on Joint Activities in the Field of Human Spaceflight Programme (HSP). In terms of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Russia exemplifies itself as a key partner for India. It acknowledges India as a country with advanced nuclear technology and a flawless non-proliferation record. In 2021, Russia's exports to India totalled \$6.9 billion, primarily mineral oils, fertilisers, and rough diamonds, while India's exports to Russia totalled \$3.33 billion⁴⁰, primarily pharmaceutical items, tea, and coffee. Nearly a third of India's total potash imports come from Russia and Belarus. Between the two countries, there is a long history of cultural cooperation. The Embassy of India in Moscow's Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center (JNCC) maintains close ties with Russian institutions such as the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow, which has a Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Indian Philosophy; the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow; the Moscow State University's Institute of Asian and African Studies; the School of International Relations at St. Petersburg University; Kazan State University; and Far Eastern National University in Vladivostok. Over 1500 Russian students are taught Hindi in about 20 Russian institutions, including renowned universities and schools. Besides Hindi, Russian experts in Indian languages such as

³⁹ 'India- Ukraine Relations' (*Mea.gov.in*, 2020) <http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Ukraine_July_2020.pdf> accessed 27 February 2022.

⁴⁰ 'India Explores Setting Up Rupee Trade Accounts With Russia To Soften Sanctions Blow - Times Of India' (*The Times of India*, 2022) <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/india-explores-setting-up-rupee-trade-accounts-with-russia-to-soften-sanctions-blow/articleshow/89826929.cms>> accessed 25 February 2022.

Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Pali, Sanskrit, Tamil, and Urdu are also offered. In addition, yoga is quite popular in Russia, and there is much interest in Indian dance and music. The JNCC hosts classes in yoga, dance, music, and Hindi for around 800 students every month. Other cultural efforts to boost people-to-people relations between the two countries are also undertaken.⁴¹

Moscow's status as a key ally in South Asia has not diminished over the years. It is no secret that during the Cold War, the former Soviet Union rejected several UNSC resolutions on Kashmir, preventing internationalisation of what is fundamentally a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. Russia was the only country to block resolutions demanding UN intervention in Kashmir in the UN Security Council in 1957, 1962, and 1971.⁴² Subsequently, in August 1971, India signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union as a guarantee against probable American and Chinese role in the war on behalf of West Pakistan.⁴³

In August 2019, Russia became the first P-5 country to define India's move on Kashmir (the amendment of Article 370 and the state's bifurcation) as strictly an internal affair, calling for a resolution under the 1972 Shimla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore Declaration. Since then, the Russian foreign minister and other officials have reaffirmed their position on numerous occasions. As Russia articulates its Eurasian vision from Lisbon to Vladivostok, Russia recognises the significance of India in its geo-strategic calculations. India is an integral part of this goal. Russia has highlighted the principles of "sovereignty and non-interference in domestic matters" vis a vis India in all multilateral and plurilateral fora, including the SCO and the BRICS. It is also observed that Russia wants a robust Indian presence in Central Asia and Eurasia.⁴⁴

Needless to say that India upholds an impeccable International relations record and, as a vibrant and pluralistic democracy, recognises the importance of preserving a free, open, and inclusive world. She remains committed to upholding humanity through a rules-based international order based on the rule of law, transparency, people's freedom, territorial integrity and sovereignty, and believes in peaceful dispute resolution. The same had been exemplified in the recent UNSC vote on the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

⁴¹ 'India-Russia Relations' (*Mea.gov.in*, 2020) <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Russia_Jun_2020.pdf> accessed 27 February 2022.

⁴² Dipanjan Chaudhury, 'View: Russian Support To India On Kashmir Is Rooted In History' (*The Economic Times*, 2022) <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/view-russian-support-to-india-on-kashmir-is-rooted-in-history/articleshow/89403521.cms?from=mdr>> accessed 27 February 2022.

⁴³ 'Opinion: Russia's Defining Moment In The Ind-Pak War 1971 - ET Government' (*ETGovernment.com*, 2021) <<https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/governance/opinion-russias-defining-moment-in-the-ind-pak-war-1971/88160555>> accessed 27 February 2022.

⁴⁴ n 42

Concluding Observations

Reflecting on the explainer above, It is pretty evident that India's foreign policy is well pointed and holistic and in the interest of humanity. India has upheld values of human life and dignity and is expected to continue to advocate for a peaceful resolution in the Ukraine-Russia crisis. As a result of the above explainer, key takeaways are;

- Putin's claims that Ukraine is committing genocide are not entirely baseless. Various reports and independent observers have spoken of crimes committed by the Ukrainian government on the people of Donetsk and Luhansk appear to have some objective grounding.
- The Minsk agreements are based on two conflicting views, the Russian and the Ukrainian; two weeks after the Minsk Protocol was signed, there stood frequent violations of the ceasefire by both Ukraine and Russia. Therefore, it warrants a severe need for re-reflection into the text of the protocol itself.
- NATO's eastward expansion has unnerved both Russia and China. If history is to be recalled, it is expected of Russia to be cautious of western boots on the ground near its land borders. This idea appears to be a part of Russia's national security ambitions, and as witnessed in the current scenario, it would protect its national security interests at any cost.
- Most of the western world appears to be against Russia in context of the Ukraine military operation. However, more or less, all have spoken and acted as a part of pack, grouping, alliance or alignment.
- India's stand at the United Nations Security Council Vote with reasoning has showcased some silver lining that "dialogue is the only way to resolve conflicts" and "peace" through dialogue must be given a chance.
- Traditionally non-aligned, India has also showcased that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has often played a critical role in maintaining world peace and security throughout history.
- To Indian interests, both Ukraine and Russia are essential partners. However, Russia has over decades proved itself as a credible, long-standing ally vis-à-vis Ukraine. Nevertheless, India has spoken powerfully to uphold the respect for all states (including Ukraine) and advocated for a peaceful resolution between the two parties.
- So far, India's stand on the issue is balanced and based on the United Nations Charter, international law, and respect for state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, there is scope for more focussed and concerted diplomatic efforts for enhanced peacemaking and showcasing India's leadership at the International level.

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