



Turkey's Stand in Russia- Ukraine Crisis

For Prelims: NATO, European Union, United Nations, Turkey, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Minsk peace process, location of black sea and countries surrounding it.

For Mains: Global Impact of Russia- Ukraine crisis and its impact on India, Role that India can play in such situations, US' role in Russia- Ukraine crisis.

Why in News

Recently, Turkey urged Russia to drop its one-sided demands regarding [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation \(NATO\)](#) and Ukraine.

- It also requested **Russia to take a moderate approach** in its demands with the western alliance (US and other western countries).
- Earlier, the US intelligence reports said the [tension on the Russia-Ukraine border represents a major security crisis](#) for the region, with the potential to snowball into a broader conflict.



Key Points

- **Background:**
 - **History:**

- Ukraine and Russia **share hundreds of years of cultural, linguistic and familial links.**
- For many in Russia and in the ethnically Russian parts of Ukraine, the shared heritage of the countries is an emotional issue that has been exploited for electoral and military purposes.
- As part of the Soviet Union, **Ukraine was the second-most powerful Soviet republic after Russia**, and was crucial strategically, economically and culturally.
- **The Conflict:**
 - Ever since Ukraine split from the Soviet Union, **both Russia and the West have vied for greater influence in the country** in order to keep the balance of power in the region in their favour.
 - Also the unique geography of the **Black Sea** region confers several geopolitical advantages to Russia.
 - The **Donbass region (the Donetsk and Luhansk regions) of eastern Ukraine** has been facing a **pro-Russian separatist movement since 2014.**
 - In 2014, **Russia seized Crimea from Ukraine** in what was the first time a European country annexed territory from another country since **World War-2 (1939 - 1945).**
 - In 2015, an open conflict was averted after the **'Minsk II' peace agreement** was signed by Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions, under the mediation of France and Germany.
 - Recently, **Ukraine urged NATO to speed up his country's membership** in the alliance.
 - Russia **declared such a move a "red line"**, and worried about the consequences of the US-led military alliances expanding right up to its doorstep.
- **Current Situation:**
 - Russia is seeking assurances from the US that **Ukraine will not be inducted into NATO.** However, the US is not prepared to give any such assurance.
 - This has left the countries in a stand-off, with tens of thousands of Russian troops ready to invade Ukraine.
 - Russia is keeping the **tensions high at the Ukraine border** in order to get sanctions relief and other concessions from the West.
 - **Any kind of military action by the US or European Union (EU) against Russia would precipitate a major crisis for the whole world**, and has so far not been mooted by any of the parties involved.
 - However, the US has **offered to re-open talks between the NATO alliance and Russia** to ease Russia's concerns.
 - A meeting of the NATO-Russia Council has been proposed for January 2022, though **Ukraine has not publicly agreed.**
- **Turkey's Stand:**
 - Turkey has **irritated Russia by supplying combat drones to Ukraine** that Russia fears could be used by Ukraine in its conflict with separatists in two eastern regions.
 - Turkey has also **upset the US and NATO by acquiring an advanced missile defence system from Russia** that resulted in sanctions from the United States.
 - It has **urged Russia and the Western defence alliance to remove their differences in direct negotiations** proposed by NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg.
- **India's Stand:**
 - India **did not join the Western powers' condemnation** of Russia's intervention in Crimea and kept a low profile on the issue.
 - In November 2020, **India voted against a Ukraine-sponsored resolution** in the **United Nations (UN)** that condemned alleged human rights violations in Crimea thereby backing old ally Russia on the issue.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

- It is a **military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty** (also called the **Washington Treaty**) of April, 1949, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.

- A key provision of the treaty, the so-called **Article 5**, states that if one member of the alliance is attacked in Europe or North America, it is to be considered an attack on all members. That **effectively put Western Europe under the "nuclear umbrella" of the US.**
 - NATO has only **once invoked Article 5, in September, 2001 following the 9/11 attacks** on the World Trade Centre in the US.
- As of 2019, there are **29 member states**, with Montenegro becoming the latest member to join the alliance in 2017.

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

- It is the **world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organisation.** Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and fair elections. Its **headquarters are in Vienna.**
 - It was **established in 1972**, and its first conference (1973–75) was attended by all 33 countries of Europe (with the exception of Albania) and by the United States and Canada.
- All 57 **participating States enjoy equal status**, and decisions are taken by consensus on a politically, but **not legally binding basis.**
 - **India is not a participating state.**
- The **Open Skies Consultative Commission regularly meets at the OSCE in Vienna.**
 - It is the **implementing body of the [Open Skies Treaty](#)**, which in 2002 established a regime of unarmed aerial observation flights over the territory of its 33 signatories.

Way Forward

- A practical solution for the situation is to **revive the Minsk peace process.** Therefore the West (US and Other western Countries) should push both sides to resume talks and live up to their commitments as per the Minsk agreement to restore relative peace on the border.
- The US should also **seek agreement from all parties to engage more directly in an OSCE-mediated process** to stem the ongoing damage to European security, the deepening human and economic costs, and the threat to Ukraine's sovereignty.

Source: TH