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Tight rope diplomacy of India in the wake destabilized geopolitical scenario

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Abstract

The consequences of Ukraine conflict raised our awareness of the implications of globalization which we saw with LPG (Liberalization; Globalization; Privatization) reforms introduced by Narshima Rao administration. In post 1991 reforms we cannot remain indifferent to global developments. Foreign policy which seems to something foreign related and evokes distance and divergence has been downrightly proved myth, as foreign policy has now reached our very homes. The impact of the Ukraine conflict has been visible in sectors ranging from energy and metals to grain & fertilizers. The detrimental impact between world two biggest power the United States of America and People's Republic of China can hardly be ignored. This time calls for strong leadership for India to navigate its way through this turbulent times. This paper throws considerable light how India maintained its Tight rope diplomacy which has been largely praised all over world and shows how India is dealing with world which has become a Bazaar of less pretense and more assertion one's own interests.

Keywords: Destabilized geopolitical, tight rope diplomacy, scenario

1. Introduction

Geopolitics and Balance of power are underpinning of International Relations and today we are seeing rampant global developments in it. Post world war the world saw an era of Bipolarity, after fall of USSR we entered into world of Unipolarity and now we entered the world of multipolarity in which distribution of power broadens and alliance discipline dilutes. Amid this India emerged as 5th largest economy surpassing its former colonizer Britain, it is going to overtake China as world's most populous country in April 2023. India is toady in the midst of geopolitical repositioning as it pursues a hard headed national interests-based policy. The Russia and Ukraine war has produced much tragedy in which thousands of civilians, military personnel have died and millions of human beings have become refugees. Amid all this India abstained all resolutions of United Nations condemning reflecting Strategic autonomy?

2. Russo-Ukraine war a war of autocracy and democracy

2.1 Background

Ukraine has strived to carve out its own path as an independent nation throughout the course of its three decades of independence while also attempting to ally itself more closely with Western organizations like the EU and NATO. But Kiev struggled to strike a balance in its foreign policy and heal its severe internal conflicts. While the majority of the Russian - speaking people in the east preferred tighter connections with Russia, the more nationalist, Ukrainian-speaking population in the western regions of the country usually backed deeper integration with Europe.

Ukraine became a battleground in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and began arming and abetting separatists in the Donbas region in the country's southeast. Russia's seizure of Crimea was the first time since World War II that a European state annexed the territory of another. More than fourteen thousand people died in the fighting in the Donbas between 2014 and 2021, the bloodiest conflict in Europe since the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. The hostilities marked a clear shift in the global security environment from a unipolar period of U.S. dominance ^[1].

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On February 2022, Russia embarked on full scale invasion with an aim of toppling western allied government of Voldmyer Zelensky. United Nations General Antonio Guterres said in UN General Assembly on February 6, “The Prospects for peace keep diminishing and there are chances of further escalation and bloodshed keep growing ^[2].”

3. Reasons which provoked Russia to launch full scale war with Ukraine

Some Western analysts see Russia’s 2022 invasion as the culmination of the Kremlin’s growing resentment toward NATO’s post-Cold War expansion into the former Soviet sphere of influence. Russian leaders, including Putin, have alleged that the United States and NATO repeatedly violated pledges they made in the early 1990s to not expand the alliance into the former Soviet bloc. They view NATO’s enlargement during this tumultuous period for Russia as a humiliating imposition about which they could do little but to watch.

In the weeks leading up to NATO’s 2008 summit, President Vladimir warned US diplomats that steps to bring Ukraine into the alliance “would be a hostile act toward Russia. In the weeks leading up to its invasion, Russia made several major security of the United States and NATO, including that they cease expanding the alliance, seek Russian consent for certain NATO deployments, and remove U.S. nuclear weapons Europe. Alliance leaders responded that they were open to new diplomacy from but were unwilling to discuss shutting NATO’s doors to new members ^[3].

Experts have said that perhaps the most important motivating factor for Putin was his fear that Ukraine would continue to develop into a modern, Western-style democracy that would inevitably undermine his autocratic regime in Russia and dash his hopes of rebuilding a Russia-led sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Putin wants to destabilize Ukraine, frighten Ukraine. He wants the Ukrainian economy to collapse. He wants foreign investors to flee. He wants his neighbors in Belarus, Kazakhstan, even Poland and Hungary to doubt whether democracy will ever be viable in the long term, in their countries too ^[4].

3. War’s impact

The war’s impact has been felt from chilly homes in Europe to food markets in Africa. Before the war, the European Union nations imported almost half their natural gas and third of their oil from Russia in response, delivered an energy price shock on scale not seen since the 1970s. The war disrupted global trade that was still recovering from pandemic. Food prices have soared, since Russia and Ukraine are major suppliers of wheat and sunflower oil, and Russia is the world’s top fertilizer producer ^[5]. The office of the UN High Commissioner for human rights, which collates official civilian casualty said since February 24, 2022 10,675 civilians have died ^[6].

4. United States lead West support to Ukraine

The war has transformed the Trans-Atlantic partnership, with Europe accepting America’s leadership, it has also strengthened NATO. As US - led Western alliance, including Germany which was reluctant at first to breakout of its pacifist mold and reconsider its economic dependence on Russia. These countries have poured billions of dollar worth armaments into Ukraine ^[7].

The war has re-energized the Europe – US security alliance. Amidst this NATO has opened its door to the proposed inclusion of Sweden and Finland, who will form new military frontiers of the alliance against Russia and the trust deficit between Russia and west is at an all-time high ^[8].

The United States remains committed to the restoration of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. It does not recognize Russia’s claims to Crimea or the other regions unlawfully annexed by Russia Western powers and their partners have taken many steps to increase aid to Ukraine and punish Russia for its 2022 offensive. As of February 2023, the United States has provided Ukraine more than \$50 billion in military assistance ^[9]. NATO is feverishly rearming Ukraine with modern tanks, aircrafts, and long range missiles ^[10].

Meanwhile, the international sanctions on Russia have vastly expanded, covering much of its financial, energy, defense, and tech sectors and targeting the assets of wealthy oligarchs and other individuals. The U.S. and some European governments also banned some Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, a financial messaging system known as SWIFT; placed restrictions on Russia’s ability to access its vast foreign reserves; and blacklisted ^[11]. Now the West may be hoping that a long drawn-out war will bleed Russia economy to point of collapse. Puzzlingly though, the International Monetary Fund said in January that the Russian Economy would grow by 0.3% in 2023 but by 2024 it would grow on account of its oil exports ^[12].

The war in Ukraine has become contest of will between West and Russia, and it will be a test of the Credibility of US as global power. Neither side is prepared for mutual accommodation, unless they first gain upper hand on the battlefield. Russia suspension of the new start treaty takes this to new level. With attacks on Nord Stream 2 and Engels Strategic Air Base in Russia, the US is pushing limit like never before ^[13].

5. Sino-Russian alliance

Russia and China have unveiled a partnership, ‘without limits’ and with no “forbidden areas”. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping declared a “new era” in the global order. Xi Jinping see in Vladimir Putin an ally in the opposition to western liberal ideas and a US led global order. Just after days when International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of President Vladimir Putin for war crimes, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid three-day visit to Russia. Throughout the visit Vladimir Putin discussed the 12 pointer peace for descalation and promotion of peace plan introduced by China. The Russia laid its full support to this plan meanwhile it is no doubt that US led western world would vehemently oppose it ^[14].

The so-called peace proposal by China amidst its diplomatic victory on March 9 2023. In which China successfully brokered a peace accord between Saudi Arabia and Iran which were implacable adversaries in the region of west Asia. Saudi Arabia the long standing ally of US by accepting and acknowledging the mediatory role of China is a major Diplomatic setback of Washington. Therefore the 12 pointer peace plan introduced by China Makes its position as a peace maker. Thereby maintain fine balance of strategic diplomacy ^[15]. Russia and China also unveiled a comprehensive long term agreement that also challenges the United States as a global power, NATO as a cornerstone of

international security and liberal democracy as a model for the world.

Beijing is unlikely to want an end to Russo-Ukraine war. Because Russia being tied down to Ukraine it has an effect of weakening The Great Russia militarily; economically; politically. There by creating a power vacuum which China inevitably fill ^[16].

Xi Jinping see in Vladimir Putin an ally in the opposition to western liberal ideas and a US led global order. Sino-Russian alliance have added confidence in Moscow to risk confrontation with the west. Following the implementations of international sanctions during Russo - Ukraine war, overall China provided economic relief to Russia. China also refused to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, supported Russia special military operation. And it abstained or sided with Russia in UN votes on the war in Ukraine.

An agreement between China and Belarus earlier this year has sections on Industrial production, joint R&D and defense cooperation - which could well allow for potential weapons production and transshipment to Russia ^[17].

The Sino-Russia alliance has two global implications: One for west and one for India; for West it should henceforth become clear that China will loathe to see Russia to fail, after making so much investments it would be naïve that China will idly standby and not take sides. This may well affect the future trajectory of the Conflict in Ukraine; for India this diminishes the strategic space available to it and complicates the security environment in ways not imagined.

6. Tightrope diplomacy of India

In past year, the UN and its bodies have voted on resolutions on the war at least 39 times; 38 times since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24. India balancing between the US - led west and Russia, has abstained on most occasions. India's position evolved as it felt the impact of the rising prices of energy and commodities ^[18].

For India, the war has been a good opportunity to declare its Strategic autonomy, and adopted "Nuanced Neutrality". New Delhi has maintained its relationship with Moscow and worked around Western Sanctions to buy oil from Russia. As much as 25% of India's oil is now from, from less than 2% before the war. But longer the war continues, the more pressure on India from the western alliance to choose the "right side" ^[19].

If we analyze the India position so far we can see that there is growing frustration of Western Powers, who want India to condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin's actions. But India has evolved its position as the facts of the Conflict became clearer and the world felt the impact of war. India has articulated Six Fundamental points to show its Stance:

First, India said it was "Deeply Disturbed", but it does not name Russia at all. Second, it called "cessation of violence and hostilities", maintaining that "cessation of violence and hostilities" is more permanent term than "cease fire". Third it flagged its core concern about Indian Nationals living in Ukraine. Fourth, it called for respect for "Territorial integrity and Sovereignty" and respect for UN Charter. Fifth, it said "Dialogue and Diplomacy" was the path forward. Sixth Our Hon' Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a strong message to Vladimir Putin in Samarkand that it is not "an era of war". So far no serious diplomatic effort has been made to end the war. This will entail compromises on both sides, at this time neither side is ready to do it. India

has expressed the hope that it can use its G20 Presidency to bring peace ^[20].

Conclusion

India's diplomatic balancing act has received high accolades. India has maintained its position, and that position has improved India's global stature. As a result, India has gained practical advantages in the economy, energy, and defense sectors. Our long-standing relationships with Russia and our strategic balance with the West have raised the bar for diplomacy. India has maintained a delicate balance between national interests and international peace and cooperation under the strong leadership of our Foreign Minister, Dr. Jaishankar, and India's contribution to the global order has been highlighted. India has become known as the forerunner of a multipolar world because of its outspoken advocacy for the common good rather than the interests of any particular bloc. For India, the path to become a true Vishvaguru has been prepared.

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