

International Relations This Week: Episode 65

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1. Ukraine Crisis and Europe

Ukraine Crisis and Implications on Europe:

- The conflict in Ukraine could be a turning point in European security.
- There has been much discussion about how divided European governments are over the conflict, but European citizens appear to be remarkably united around three key ideas.
- **Firstly**, they believe that another Russian invasion of Ukraine is likely.
- **Secondly**, they see this as a problem that affects not only Ukraine but European security as a whole.
- **Thirdly**, they want Europe to respond to the crisis, with large majorities favouring [NATO](#) and the EU in particular.
- The crisis will almost certainly put Europeans' ability to defend the European security order to the test.

Ukraine Crisis and Germany

- **Sanctions on Russia**
 - Germany has put a stop to a key Russian gas pipeline (Nord Stream 2 pipeline) following [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#).
- **Germany's Dependence on Russia**
 - Russia accounts for 27% of Germany's energy supply and two-thirds of its natural gas consumption.
 - Russia provides about 55 percent of Germany's gas imports, as well as about 50 percent of hard coal and 30 percent of oil.
- **Nord 2 Stream Pipeline**
 - The contentious Nord Stream 2 pipeline is meant to bring natural gas from Russia to Germany. It is a system of underwater natural gas pipelines.
 - The energy pipeline will facilitate an uninterrupted supply of natural gas under the Baltic Sea from Ust-Luga city of Russia to Lubmin city in Germany, bypassing transit through Ukraine and other countries.
 - **Know more about [Nord Stream 2 and its Geopolitical Aspects](#).**

Nord Stream pipelines from Russia



Source: Gazprom

BBC

Source: BBC

India's stand on the Russia-Ukraine conflict

- India appears to be pursuing a non-alignment strategy and promoting dialogue as a means of resolving differences. India has been pleading for peace for a long time.
- India, along with 34 other countries, voted no on a United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's military actions in Ukraine.
- India had also voted against calling a General Assembly session on the Ukraine crisis in a procedural vote at the UN Security Council.
- **Know more about [India's stand on the Russia- Ukraine conflict](#).**

Why is India not criticising Russia over invasion?

- India appears to be following its famed strategy of non-alignment and promoting dialogue to resolve the Ukraine crisis.
- There are several reasons for India's quest to find a diplomatic balance over Ukraine.
- **Diplomatic Ties:**
 - It's hard for India to overlook decades of history of diplomatic cooperation with Russia on several issues.
 - Russia has vetoed [UNSC](#) resolutions over disputed Kashmir in the past to help India keep it a bilateral issue.
- **Defence Ties:**
 - The most important are India's time-tested defence ties with Russia.
 - Russia continues to be India's largest arms supplier.
 - Russia is supplying equipment like the S-400 missile defence system which gives India crucial strategic deterrence against China and Pakistan.
- India hasn't criticised Russia directly but it has talked strongly about territorial integrity at the UNSC and it was clearly meant to highlight Ukraine's plight.

2. India-Japan

Context:

- Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited India in March 2022.
 - This visit assumes great significance due to the factors such as:
 - Japan's partnership with India under the Indo-Pacific strategic construct
 - the Quadrilateral security dialogue, or Quad,
 - a raging war between Russia and Ukraine.
 - **Know more about [India-Japan relations](#)**

India-Japan Summit

- The 14th India-Japan Annual Summit concluded at a time when both countries celebrated the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.
- The Special Strategic and Global Partnership has been emphasised by the leaders of both the countries with an objective to expand the purview of the India-Japan Vision Statement of 2018.

- Know more about **India-Japan Summit**.

Significant Aspects of India-Japan Ties

- **Japan's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to India**
 - Japan began providing ODA to India in the form of Yen Loans in 1958.
 - Since 2003, India has surpassed China as the top recipient of yen loans from Japan.
 - Japan has pledged a total of JPY 3.1 trillion in infrastructure projects in India between 2010 and 2020, including connectivity projects in India's northeastern region.
 - Through ODA, Japan is supporting India's Dhubri-Phulbhari Bridge, which spans the Brahmaputra River and connects Dhubri, Assam, and Phulbhari, Meghalaya.
- **QUAD, Japan and Indo-Pacific**
 - Japan is a firm believer in the **Quad's** ability to keep the Indo-Pacific "free and open."
 - Japan's trade with the rest of the world is heavily reliant on open sea lanes.
 - Concerns about China's role in the region and Beijing's challenges to the rule of law are shared by Japan and its Quad partners.
 - Japan is concerned that China imposes economic conditions on Indo-Pacific countries.
 - To counter China's growing influence, it wants to provide Southeast Asian countries with alternative sources of assistance and trade.
- **AUKUS, Japan and the Indo-Pacific**
 - AUKUS is the new security partnership of the U.S., the U.K. and Australia.
 - Though Japan welcomes the launch of **AUKUS** in the sense of strengthening engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, it shared its concern with respect to the nuclear submarine deal in the region.
- **India, Japan and Ukraine Crisis**
 - The international community is confronted with a situation that threatens the global order's very foundation.
 - Russia's invasion of Ukraine is both a clear violation of international law and an attempt to change the status quo unilaterally through force.
 - From the standpoint of diplomacy and security in the Indo-Pacific, upholding the core principles of the international order is essential.
 - Japan will band together with the rest of the world and take decisive action.
 - Such actions must not be tolerated in the Indo-Pacific, and it is critical to continue to promote efforts to achieve a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."
- Know more about the **Significance of Japanese PM Fumio Kishida's India visit in AIR Spotlight**.

3. Developments in Pakistan

- **Recent Developments:**
 - Pakistan's Prime Minister faces the prospect of being booted out if he fails a no-confidence vote.

- The opposition is attempting to depose Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, accusing him of economic mismanagement and poor foreign policy.
- More worrying for him is that the 'opposition' includes members of his own party.
- **Pakistan and Ukraine Crisis**
 - Pakistan has taken a neutral stance on the issue, abstaining from voting in favour of a resolution at the [United Nations General Assembly](#).
 - Concerns about "spill-over effects of unilateral sanctions" on Russia were expressed by Pakistan.
 - Pakistan has argued that it needs to take a step back from global bloc politics in order to improve relations with all countries, including Russia, as well as address domestic economic challenges.
- **Pakistan and Afghanistan:**
 - Given that the Taliban regime in Kabul shares a strategic multi-dimensional relationship with Pakistan, the changes in Pakistani foreign policy relations will also affect the Afghan Taliban.
- **Economic Problems**
 - The balance of payments may hit a record and the Pakistani rupee has lost about half its value.
 - Pakistan has never been able to solve its dependence on imports.
 - Pakistan faces concerns of high inflation after Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused spikes in commodity prices.

4. Developments in Sri Lanka

- **Economic crisis:**
 - The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has led to a steep rise in the prices of essential commodities and frequent blackouts.
 - The economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened the economic state of Sri Lanka which has been under pressure from high debt levels.
 - **Know more in detail about the [Sri Lankan Economic Crisis](#) in IRTW episode 58.**
- **Challenges for Sri Lanka:**
 - Sri Lanka's external debt is dominated by market borrowings and international sovereign bonds constituting half of the country's total foreign debt.
 - The American credit rating agency "Fitch" downgraded the nation to a 'CC' rating, which is the lowest rating.
 - Know more about [Challenges for Sri Lanka](#)
- **Implications for India:**
 - Sri Lanka is in the midst of an economic crisis that is causing widespread human suffering which would have implications on India in terms of socio-economic aspects.
 - **Know about the [Implications for India](#).**