**Different Angles to Russia-Ukraine Conflict**

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When a war breaks out, it divides perspectives in international capitals and leads to a clash of interests, even sometimes among friendly states of the world, one way or the other. Each state sees a conflict from a different angle. This is an old yet normal feature of international politics. Whatever way a country views a conflict, reflects its interests. The case with the Russian-Ukraine conflict is no different because different nation-states see it from different angles. Before going into further details, the brief history of the Russia-Ukraine crisis is worth mentioning here to have a sense of how things came to such a pass? In 1989, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) disintegrated and gave birth to 15 independent countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Over the past three decades, Ukraine has been led by seven presidents. The country has also witnessed two revolutions: first in 2005 and then, in 2014. Both times, protesters have declined Russia’s supremacy and wished to join the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Similarly, Russia has been led by three presidents with Vladimir Putin having been in office for around 17 years now. Putin has repeatedly claimed that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people,” and part of the historical “Russian civilization” that also includes neighbouring Belarus. However, Ukrainians do not accept his claims. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, which is considered a region of Ukraine by most of the world. In contrast to this, Russia considers it her rightful and historical region. The latest conflict, which saw the light of the day on February 24, 2022, is happening after several years of Russia’s annexation of Crimea. But this time around, things are heading towards a dangerous, however preventable, war. There are different angles to this novel episode of the Russian-Ukraine crisis.

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Ukraine: There is no denying the fact that Ukraine is a sovereign country and that it is not bound to accept dictation about her choice of interacting with the world. Ukraine has long had the desire of becoming part of NATO, a 30-member military alliance. This has not been going down well with Russia. To Ukraine, it is the question of survival as a sovereign nation-state. President Volodymyr Zelensky has stood firm and has been repeatedly calling for the world’s support. He also has demanded a no-fly zone to be imposed over Ukraine. As matter of fact, a no-fly zone is not merely about imposing in words. Instead, it will require implementation involving significant use of force, including destroying anti-air defences. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken have rightly rejected this appeal as they believe imposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine would invite a full-fledged war. Zelenskyy has said that NATO, too, now bore responsibility for the deaths in Ukraine. It is worth mentioning that NATO would respond only if Ukraine were a part of it. Article 5 of the NATO charter states that if a member of the alliance is attacked, it is to be considered an attack on all members. Since Ukraine is so far not part of NATO and has only wished to be its member, it is not incumbent upon it to intervene in the war. Russian Federation: Russia is not happy with Ukraine’s appetite for joining NATO as it believes that NATO’s expansion is a threat to its national security. Russia calls the February 24 attack a “special military operation” meant to dislodge “neo-Nazis” ruling Ukraine. In reaction to the no-fly zone matter, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Moscow will consider a declaration of Ukraine as a no-fly zone by any third party as “participation in the armed conflict.”

United Nations: The UN General Assembly voted on March 2, 2022, to censure Moscow for its invasion of Kyiv. 141 voted in favour of the resolution. Russia and four other countries, Belarus, North Korea, Eritrea and Syria, voted against the resolution while 35 states, including Pakistan and India, abstained. The other resolution on March 24, 2022, was no different only with a slight uptick in the number of abstaining countries.

To conclude, following the UN resolutions, the division in opinions in international capitals about the Russia-Ukraine crisis has become more obvious. Whatever the angles to the Russia-Ukraine crisis are, the war is going to benefit no one. Scholars opine that war means the settling of disputes among sovereign states whenever peaceful methods of settlement fail to bear fruit. The Russia-Ukraine conflict needs to be resolved by pacific means because human beings on both sides are in trouble. According to UNHCR, at the time of writing this article, 3,866,224 Ukrainian citizens have been forced to flee and take refuge in neighbouring countries with Poland on top so far. Following the storm of harsh sanctions imposed on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, general masses in Russia are reportedly bearing the brunt of the situation with prices of essential commodities soaring high. This war will encourage an arms race and may prove devastating. The rhetoric adopted by men in some world powerful states for their political interests, which is proverbially adding fuel to the fire, must be stopped. Instead of passing irresponsible statements, there is a need to throw weight behind the peace talks and scale-up diplomatic efforts. With the no concrete results achieved in the several peace talks held in Belarus so far, the two-day face-to-face talk between Russian and Ukrainian authorities in Turkiye is expected to bring about fruitful outcomes. The game of politics being played in the conflict may serve the so-called short term goals of some men in power but will push the world towards an uncertain and disastrous situation, returning from where would be nearly impossible. Let the saner minds prevail and give peace a chance.

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