



In The Light Of The Recent Russia-Ukraine Crisis, Analyze India's Relational Dynamics With Both Russia and US. (250 Words) (GS2 International Relations)

Ans : Approach :

- Brief intro of Russia-Ukraine war.
- Dynamics with Russia & US.
- Way forward.

The recent Russian invasion in Ukraine has been a **watershed moment in shifting the course of geopolitical developments**. Russia's declared goal is the "**liberation of Donbas**" – broadly referring to Ukraine's eastern regions. The war's devastating effects on humanity has created **not only a political crisis but also a global moral crisis**.

Dynamics with Russia :

- India has **abstained from voting in the UN against Russia** and is also **not ready to follow the US-led economic sanctions** on Russia. However, India has condemned the civilian killings and has urged to end violence through **peaceful resolution of hostilities**. India believes in '**dispute resolution through diplomacy and by respect for international law, sovereignty & territorial integrity of states**'.
- India's so called '**neutral**' stance is rooted in its **strategic autonomy** guided by its **national interests** :

1. A **weak and isolated Russia will not be good for India**. Still, **more than half of its military hardware** comes from Russia. During the **Indo-Chinese border skirmish**, Russia's defence supplies at **competitive prices** have proved **strategically important**. Although **Russia has forged a closed nexus with China to attain a geopolitical balance**, this has **not affected the decades old Indo-Russian ties**.
2. If India antagonises Russia, it could lead to an even **closer Russia-China axis**, which India shall avoid at any cost. A stable friendship with Russia can open **viable communication channels in manoeuvring its issues with China**.
3. Also, India is largely dependent on Russia for its **energy security**. Reportedly, Russia is willing to **sell high grade oil at heavily discounted prices (\$ 35 / barrel)**, of which India desires to buy **15 million barrels**.
4. Apart from defence and energy purchases, Russia is important for **geopolitical reasons** – India is both a **maritime & continental power**. Hence, **strong ties with Russia, Iran & Central Asia** will ensure India's **continental security**, especially after US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Dynamics with US :

- The US seems antagonised at India's '**neutral**' stand. The US has lamented India's position as "**somewhat shaky**", besides **warning India of "consequences"** if it tries to



subvert the sanction regime. **The US seems disappointed at India's lack of appreciation for US's deep security interests in Europe.** The US believes that if **India prioritises its relations with Russia, it could impinge on the cooperation within the Quad.** Also, it is **sceptical about India diluting the sanctions by carrying on trade with Russia, which is a sheer violation of America's hegemonic clout.**

- Notwithstanding this, **India is important to the US in the *Indo-Pacific*, as both perceive China as their biggest threat and are committed to cooperate to limit China's rise as a 'regional hegemon'.**
- US is also **India's one of the largest trading partners, with robust defence partnerships** through institutional arrangements like **LEMOA, COMCASA**, etc. Besides, ***new domains*** are also emerging in their ***strategic partnership*** like **climate change, technology transfer, space, public health, cyber security,**
- The recent **2+2 meeting** represents the **continuing upward trajectory** in Indo-US bilateral cooperation, placing **highest priority to ensure no further erosion of rules-based international order.**

Both the US and **Russia are *India's Strategic Partners*.** India, seeking recognition as a principled voice & responsible global power, may have to tread a fine line w.r.t its strategic backing of Russia. So, it is ***unlikely that any amount of western pressure can compel India to abandon its balancing act on the Ukraine war.***