

Q2 Propose prospective foreign policy options for Pakistan in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

### Introduction:

Every region has been affected by ongoing Russian-Ukraine war, whether it is Europe for its dependence on Russian oil or other countries of world that imports Ukrainian food products. As US and West enjoy influence on every country so every country has to choose either west or stay neutral. However, there were many options for Pakistan either to go towards Russia or to choose Ukraine or to stay neutral by keeping in view the current political and economic situation of country. Like India and China Pakistan managed to not to take any side till now. But neutrality has its own challenges. Therefore, for national interests and to build soft image, Pakistan must adopt three point formula: that is ceasefire, negotiations, implementation and by developing its own defence powerful which is crucial for its security and national interest.

Different options ahead for Pakistan's policy makers:  
 why should Pakistan supports Russian stance on war:

One option for Pakistan was to support Russia. Supporters of this stance want that Pakistan should jump into Russian ship and prove Pakistan's relevance to world. There are many arguments in this regard. Since Pakistan has recently adopted multidimensional foreign policy to maintain good relations with major powers, it is pragmatic to take a policy that does not undermine its relations with Russia.

Another argument is that US itself has committed multiple acts against sovereign countries and is not a reliable friend.

Furthermore, NATO has an agreement that it will not expand its sphere in Eastern Europe and it has violated the agreement. Ukraine joining NATO was a direct attack on Russia from NATO, so Russia has every right to exercise its influence on neighbouring states.

**Why should Pakistan support Ukraine on war:**

Another option for Pakistan's foreign policy was to support US stance on war. As US and Pakistan enjoyed sustained periods of closeness, mutually beneficial engagement and even now US is largest trading partner of Pakistan, while economic and potential.

cooperation with Russia is also negligible. Organizations like FATF, IMF, EU also running the machinery of state. To many, this stance made clear sense that how Pakistan can support larger country invading smaller one? In future would countries like India not encouraged to adopt such measures in pursuit of South Asian hegemon and regional power in wake of multipolar world?

Another strong argument is that Russia invaded a sovereign country which is violation of International Law. So by keeping in view all stances Pakistan could mould its foreign policy towards Ukraine if its purposive nature is inclined more ~~than~~ towards Ukraine than Russia.

## Why Pakistan should stay neutral:

### Historical view:

As Pakistan adopted the policy of neutrality since the war started. Pakistan needs to continue her policy of neutrality. Pakistan has good relations with Ukraine in various domains. In economic domain, their bilateral trade of 2021 stood at USD 411.184 million.

Both countries also have military relations. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Pakistan is

among biggest arm market for Ukraine with USD 1.6 bn in contracts. Both countries also have cooperation in "Science and technology". Due to this rather than become a party in war and make another enemy or at-least lose a friend; it would not be beneficial to assume one side.

On the very other hand, Pakistan and Russia, while moving on from their history of cold war, have gradually enhanced their bilateral relations in economic and military domains. In 2020, their bilateral trade stood at USD 790 mn. Both also have talked about enhancing industrial and energy cooperation. They also have agreed on "Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline", an 1100 km gas pipeline project that will carry 12.4 bn cubic feet of natural gas annually. In military domain, their collaboration has enhanced in recent years. Pakistan acquired Mi-35 helicopters from Russia. Whereas joint military exercises have been conducted in both countries on regular basis. Russia also helps Pakistan in energy sector. Even though Pakistan wants to enhance its relations with Russia, it should not be at the cost of compromising its relations with other countries.

History has also taught us that there has always been a huge cost that Pakistan had to pay when it was not neutral.

For instance, during cold war, Pakistan had remained indulged in bloc politics for decades in pursuit of geo-strategic interests. However, this did not result in any fruitful outcome in longer term.

Similarly in post 9/11 era, Pakistan supported US as a front line state in Global War on Terror in pursuit of peaceful world. But cost in human and economic terms had been enormous. It suffered the loss of 83,000 lives and economic loss of over USD 150bn. Moreover, despite this support and sacrifices there has been consistent lack of trust and changing US prioritize towards Pakistan. In fact, India has now emerged as an important partner of partner for US and a more relevant stakeholders in regional affairs. This obviously has implications for Pakistan since despite paying huge cost, it remains at the losing end.

## Conclusion:

Taking sides to any country has not resulted in any substantive economic gain. ~~either~~ So, bottom line is that Pakistan must maintained

a non-aligned posture in its foreign policy and it must protect and prioritize its national interest. Under influence of US and West, it has become very difficult for Pakistan to stay neutral. So, Pakistan must adopt three point formula that is negotiations, ceasefire and implementation. Also, Pakistan must be self-sufficient in domain of defence, so that it maybe capable of to secure <sup>itself</sup> in future attacks. So such measures must be needed with the stance of neutrality.

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