

## Questions

Propose Prospective Foreign Policy Options for Pakistan in the Wake of Russian Invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

### Introduction:

The bumpy roller coaster ride of Pakistan's foreign policy has espoused a neutral & independent pathway in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Therefore, Pakistan should have to adopt some prospective foreign policy options to sustain itself in the competitive international political and strategic environment. As it has been evident from the universal statement, "To formulate a pragmatic, far sighted foreign policy is to help the country become socially, politically, and economically stable." Taking a general account, Russia and Ukraine - their shared border has become the centre of many looming issues:

- Territorial supremacy hustle
- Increased NATO alliance along the edge of Russia
- Ideological differences
- The west expansion phobia of Russia since the decolonization of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

The full scale invasion episode of the Crimean Occupation in 2014, which led to the Ukraine invasion in 2022, is ample proof of it. Moreover, Russia is much keener on its security. The world response to attack depends on immensely upon their ties with big blocs i.e. USA and Russia. However, Pakistan's stance remains neutral. The country

Clearly stated that war is not the solution to any problem. Pakistan, having the beneficial geostrategic location for Russia - having access to warm waters via Afghanistan - would play a positive role in conflict resolution/peaceful co-existence in the basic principle of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan may use its good offices, become a mediator or use regional organizations as a tool of foreign diplomacy in the Russia - Ukraine conflict.

A glance at the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 Feb 2022: Russian-Ukraine crisis has its roots in the dismemberment of the Soviet Union (USSR) as a result of the Cold war and Afghan war, leading to the Crimean occupation in 2014. The annexation took place after the Crimea referendum declared results in favor of Russia due to its pro-Russian demography. The crisis has taken its toll by the Russian backing of the separatist movement in the regions: Donetsk and Luhansk, creating more political unrest in south-eastern Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin has given a green signal to the invasion over the increasing role of the NATO alliance and Ukraine's integration with EU. Later, the Minsk agreement, known as the Minsk protocol was signed by the belligerent groups France and Germany acted as a mediator in that agreement. However, the unnecessary NATO exercises in Ukraine incited the steppe game "Russia". The Russian invasion could be considered retaliation against the increased role of NATO and deployment of nuclear weapons alongside the

leaders of NATO alliances. Therefore Russia took the invasion seriously and declared it a noble cause.

The reaction of the world:

i, USA:

Amid the Russian-Ukraine war, the USA condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine. It called it an "unprovoked and unjustified attack," holding Russia responsible for Ukraine's human loss and infrastructure destruction.

Furthermore, the USA imposed many economic sanctions on Russia, followed by the western bloc. It is aptly said:

"All war is a symptom of man's failure as a thinking animal."

—John Steinbeck

ii, The UK and Alliances:

The UK and NATO alliances condemned the Russian invasion, which shows international condemnation following the footsteps of the USA. They declared the invasion "unjust," killing hundreds of innocent men, women and children. Turkey also condemned the Russian attack and denounced it as a "heavy blow" toward regional peace.

iii, China:

Being the major player in Asia along with Russia, China took a stance against the west and stated the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia. Both states enjoy strong bilateral ties and are also members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

and the South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Additionally, BRICS states other than China refused to condemn the Russian attack.

### in Pakistan:

Pak opted for a neutral stance over the Russian invasion. It condemned the resolution against Russia in UN General Assembly (UNGA) by stating that all doors for foreign diplomacy will be closed if the resolution is passed. Later on, the visit of the Ex-PM of Pakistan created pressure on the country to condemn the attack and issue the reason for the visit. The visit was scheduled ~~two~~ months ago; the countries have to discuss the 1100KM gas pipelines project costing \$ 2.5 billion.

### Impact of Russian Invasion:

Russia faced economic sanctions

### The Prospective Foreign Policy Options for Pakistan:

Pak should adopt prospective foreign policy options in the wake of any ony conflict to balance the international environment. Pakistan has recently shifted its foreign policy from geo-politics to geo-economic, giving more importance to the regional players by keeping in view the basic principle of Pakistan's foreign policy i.e. peaceful co-existence. Following are the policy choices for Pakistan:

#### • Use of good offices:

Pakistan may offer its good offices by inviting the belligerent parties to resolve their conflict peacefully to restore regional peace. It will

help the conflicting states to solve the issue without the interference of a third party. This would allow the countries in the Asian region to uplift their economic conditions and strengthen their ties with Russia.

### Mediation:

Pakistan would play its role as a mediator in the Russia - Ukraine conflict in reaching an agreement or consensus b/w the parties. It will prevail the soft image of Pakistan in the international community.

Pakistan has been quite prosperous in mediating Doha Accord between the USA and the Taliban government in Afghanistan. The success stories may be considered as precedent in resolving the conflict.

### Role of Third Party:

Pakistan may use regional powers like China, India, and the world leader USA to come closer to resolving the conflict and balance of power by inaugurating economic ties. The power hurdle b/w Russia and the USA needs to be neutralized as the world faces two full-fledged world wars and proxy wars,

bringing the world to the edge of political & economic destruction. Additionally, the regional cooperation likes SCO and SAPRC would be functional in resolving the conflict. Pakistan has recently set the example by bringing all the OIC member states closer to resolving the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, Pakistan can crack the skirmish in this manner as well.

Critically, Pakistan having a long history of politico-economic instability always designed its foreign policy framework based on ideology and historical events instead of national interest. Whereas, Pakistan has taken a U-turn while formulating the policy determinants and adopted the strategy of independent foreign policy, seeking neutrality in the war situation instead of an alignment strategy. Undoubtedly, the new dimensions of the foreign policy designs require prospective policy options so, ~~Pakistan~~ On the other hand it would help in the containment of hegemonic designs of the USA in Asia. The world order has been changing from bipolar to multi-lateralism.

To conclude, the changing dimensions of the world order have commended Pakistan to adopt an independent foreign policy and tilt its interests toward regional development policies instead of alignment with the western bloc. The world is now moving to multilateralism, which would be more a blessing for Pakistan if dealt with sagaciously. The role of the US and its undue support to India become neutralized with the help of regional players, especially Pakistan, in maintaining peace in the South-Asian region. It further encourages the Pakistan-Russia bilateral ties. To end up, it is still unknown whether Pandora's box of neutrality will prove to be fruitful in the coming years or not. Still, it will give hope for human development in the region jointly with economic freedom. As it has also been proved in the words of John F. Kennedy,

day / date:

"Domestic Policy can defeat us; Foreign Policy  
can kill us."