

The Republic of Poland

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Topic: Russia-Ukraine Crises



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Country: Poland

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Poland is located at a geographic crossroads that links the forested lands of North-western Europe to the sea lanes of the Atlantic Oceans and the fertile plains of the Eurasian frontier. Now bounded by seven nations, Poland has waxed and waned over the centuries, buffeted by the forces of regional history. Ukraine lies on the eastern border of Poland. The two countries share a long land border which represents Poland's longest eastern border.

. Warsaw has established itself as the linchpin of Western involvement in the war. Three months into the fighting in Ukraine, Poland has established itself as the main conduit of weapons and aid from the West to Ukraine. It has also absorbed the highest number of Ukrainian refugees, 3.4 million people. And it is working to end its energy dependency on Russia within months.

Russian leaders have warned Poland – which joined NATO in 1999, several years before it joined the European Union – against taking such a strident role against Moscow. Post the disintegration of Soviet Union, Ukraine gained independence in 1991. Ukraine was a member of the Soviet Union until 1991 when it disintegrated, and Russia has tried to maintain the country in its orbit since then. In 2014, a separatist insurgency started in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, **Donetsk Basin**, also known as, Russia further gained a maritime advantage in the region due to its invasion and annexation of Crimea. As a result, both the US and the EU have pledged to safeguard the integrity of Ukraine's borders. **Economic Factors-** Russia, considering the economic significance of Ukraine, sought Ukraine's membership in the **Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC)**, which is a free trade agreement that came into being in 2015. With its huge market and advanced agriculture and industrial output, Ukraine was supposed to play an important role. But Ukraine refused to join the agreement.

Geo-Political and Strategic Factors -Russia claims that the eastward expansion by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which they call "**enlargement**", has threatened Russia's interests and has asked for written security guarantees from NATO.

NATO, led by the U.S., has planned to install missile defence systems in eastern Europe in countries like Poland and the Czech Republic to counter Russia's intercontinental-range missiles. NATO is a military alliance of twenty-eight European and two North American countries that constitutes a system of collectively. Enlargement of NATO is the process of including new member states in NATO. Since the German unification in 1990, NATO has added new members five times. The alliance had 12 founding members in 1949, which currently has 30 members. Members include three Baltic countries of **Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania** that share borders with Russia. Members also include **Hungary, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria**, all of them were a part of the former Soviet-led **Warsaw Pact**. Russia has been indulging in military build-up along its border with Ukraine, an aspiring NATO member. Russia has stated that its troop deployment is in response to NATO's steady eastward expansion. Russia argues that its moves are aimed at protecting its own security considerations. Russia has mobilised around 1,00,000 troops on its border with Ukraine. Russia seeks assurance from the US that Ukraine shall not be inducted into NATO. This has resulted in tensions between Russia and the West which have been supportive of Ukraine. The U.S. has assured Ukraine that it will "respond decisively" in case of an invasion by Russia.

- India called for "a peaceful resolution of the situation through sustained diplomatic efforts for long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond".
- Immediately after the annexation, India abstained from voting in then UNGA pass a resolution that sought to condemn Russia.
- In 2020, India voted against a Ukraine-sponsored resolution in the UN General Assembly that sought to condemn alleged human rights violations in Crimea.
- India's position is largely rooted in neutrality and has adapted itself to the post-2014 status quo on Ukraine.

The US along with other western countries is expected to revive the peace process through diplomatic channels in mitigating the tensions between Ukraine and Russia which would be a time-consuming process. Experts recommend more dialogues between the west and Russia that exert emphasis on the issue surrounding Ukraine. Ukraine should approach and focus on working with its **Normandy Format** allies, France and Germany, to persuade the Russian government to withdraw assistance for its proxies and allow for the region's gradual safe reintegration into Ukraine. The Russian military expansion in Ukraine can be prevented on the geo economic grounds that will hamper its trade in the region especially with the Nord Stream pipeline that can carve out a way of resolving the ongoing crisis as pointed out by an expert. Ukraine's internal disturbances need to be addressed to revive the **Minsk II agreement** for the development of peace in the region and dissolve the ongoing tensions.