India’s Ties with Europe without upsetting Russia

Why in news?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Europe comes at a time when the continent is facing its biggest security crisis since the end of the Cold War.

What is the PM’s three nation visit?

- **Germany**- Mr. Modi and Chancellor Olaf Scholz reiterated the partnership between the two countries.
- Berlin has also announced 10 billion Euros for bilateral cooperation.
- **Denmark**- In Copenhagen, Mr. Modi attended the Second India-Nordic summit with leaders of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland.
- The PM held productive talks with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen during which the two leaders reviewed the progress in India's unique 'Green Strategic Partnership' with Denmark.
- He also participated in the India-Denmark Business Roundtable.
- **France**- The Prime Minister held talks in Paris with French President Emmanuel Macron, who was re-elected recently.
- He discussed the issues of bilateral and mutual interests as well as regional and global developments, amid Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

> *In 2020, India and Denmark elevated their relations to a Green Strategic Partnership to advance political cooperation, expand economic relations and green growth, create jobs and strengthen cooperation on addressing global challenges and opportunities with focus on an ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs.*

What is the position of these nations over Russia's aggression against Ukraine?

- **Germany’s position**- Germany, like India, has deep economic ties with Russia as it depends on Russia for almost 40% of its gas import requirements.
- While the Russian aggression has prompted Germany to raise its defence spending and join the western sanctions regime, it has been reluctant in sending weapons to Kyiv.
- Mr. Scholz urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop this senseless murder and withdraw the troops and that dialogue was the only way out.
- **Nordic countries**- Among the Nordic five, Sweden and Finland are now considering dropping their decades-long neutrality and seeking NATO membership.
- **India’s position**- New Delhi maintained a neutral position on the war which has triggered both criticism and engagement from the West.
- India has abstained on a US-sponsored UN Security Council resolution that deplores Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, saying that dialogue is the only answer to settling disputes.

- India has seen several high-profile visits from the West, with some top officials pressing New Delhi to cut back on trade with Russia.

What lies ahead for India?

- In the post-Cold War world when Europe witnessed relative stability, India is managing to build strong ties with both the West and Russia.
- Now, the West is seeking to weaken Russia and Moscow is warning of a new world war.
- The challenge before New Delhi is to build a stronger strategic future with Europe without immediately disrupting its complex but vital partnership with Russia.

References

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