Is the post-Cold War security order changing?

What is the issue?

The Ukraine crisis has brought the unstable security architecture in Europe to the fore of U.S.-Russia ties.

What the recent happenings signify?

- The annexation of Crimea and the recent crisis has brought the post-Cold War European security architecture into sharp focus.
- It shows that the post-Cold War European security architecture is not complete yet.

Why is Russia asking for these legal guarantees now?

- Russia understands that the strategic interests of the U.S. are elsewhere currently.
- As of now, US want to focus on its domestic problems. At the international level, the focus is more on the Indo-Pacific.
- The withdrawal from Afghanistan is symptomatic of this desire.
- For this USA wants a predictable and stable relationship with Europe.
- Russia feels that this is the most opportune moment to press forward its demands.
- For Russia its security needs to be taken care of. It doesn't want to constantly skirmish with NATO all around my periphery.
- Though some of Russia's actions may look provocative Putin hopes that a negotiation will result in something that is mutually acceptable.

Has Russia achieved anything from its mobilisation?

- After a weeks-long stand-off with Ukraine, Russia announced that it is pulling back some of its troops, signalling a possible de-escalation.
- However its core security concern on NATO's expansionary open-door policy remains unaddressed.
- But there is a significant victory that Russia has achieved.
- The U.S.-led West has at last recognised what Russia has been saying since 1994 —that the security architecture in Europe is not in accordance with what Russia considers the security architecture should be.
- Willingness of the West to address and discuss this appears to be a big victory for Russia.

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- NATO consists of 28 European nations and two non-European nations — the U.S. and Canada.
- Europe is right next to Russia. It has been facing the brunt of the Soviet as well as Russian actions over the last many decades.
- It is obvious that Europe will look at Russia differently from the U.S.
- The impact of any NATO sanctions or security measures will first be felt in Europe, not in the

U.S.
- So, naturally, Europe's interest is in accommodation. Gradually it has moved forward more towards meeting Russia's demands.
- However it has not gone anywhere that Russia's demands are fully satisfied.
- Europe's interest in sorting out this matter is immediate and existential, while that of USA is strategic and long term.

How can Russia's security concerns be accommodated by the West?

- Russia has essentially three demands.
    - Ukraine and Georgia should not join NATO.
    - Ukraine impasse should be resolved through Minsk Agreement.
    - Mutual security guarantees must be met.
- **NATO membership -** Now the West says that Ukraine's entry into NATO is not on the cards.
- This is an informal statement but Russia wants a legal guarantee.
- Neither the U.S. nor Europe has said that Russia should vacate Crimea as part of the security guarantees.
- One of NATO's principles before it admits a country is that the country should not have disputes over its territory.
- As long as Crimea remains with Russia, and two breakaway republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain outside the control of Georgia neither Ukraine nor Georgia can join NATO.
- **Minsk Agreement -** Russia's view is that the U.S. in particular has obstructed the implementation of the Minsk agreement.
- But the Normandy process looks like they are moving towards agreeing to that.
- Normandy format is a Russia-Germany-France-Ukraine initiative to implement the Minsk accords.
- **Mutual security guarantees -** The West has already provided guarantee over missile deployments and military drills.
- So, these three elements exist for a solution.

How the post-Cold War security order got changed?

- Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline could give Russia complete dominance over gas supplies to Europe
- Russia could leverage and influence over some European countries.
- **Ukraine and Russia -** Ukraine is angry with the pipeline because it bypasses the country and thus denies it transit fees for Russia's gas exports.
- It has also raised fears that Russia could cut off gas supplies to Ukraine without endangering its own gas exports to Europe.
- **Germany and Russia -** Some European countries fear that Russia and Germany are coming together against the rest of Europe.
- Germany pushed ahead with Nord stream 2 despite opposition from USA.
- The pipeline was completed in September 2021, although it is awaiting German certification to become operational.
- The US believes the pipeline hinders its own efforts to contain Russia from invading Ukarine.
- Germany however agreed that Russia would not be allowed to use the pipeline as a weapon against Ukraine.
- This assurance prevented US sanctions against Germany and other supporters of the pipeline in Europe — notably France, Austria and the Netherlands.
- **Germany and NATO -** US views Russia and Germany economic partnership as a precursor to

upending its role as the guarantor of security in Europe.

- There was a widespread criticism at home and abroad that Germany was “missing in action” during the Ukraine crisis.
- It was French President Emmanuel Macron who took the lead with his shuttle diplomacy between Kyiv and Moscow.
- However Germany reassured that it was not about to break away from its NATO allies by taking part in the diplomatic process.
- **EU and USA -** As a net exporter of LNG since the middle of the last decade, the US wants to expand its markets and reach in Europe.
- Russia’s economy is mainly dependent on exports of oil and gas, and Europe is its largest buyer.
- US exports are seen by some as vital to the diversification of Europe’s energy supplies.
- During a war-like atmosphere, Europe imported more gas from the US than from Russia.
- According to USA if Russia invades Ukraine there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2.

Reference

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