Why isn’t global interconnectedness halting war?

What is the issue?

Despite wide-raging sanctions from various countries the international world order failed to prevent the Ukraine Russia war.

How was the International Order Post 1945?

- International order created in 1945 rests on assumptions that the preference is for peace and development.
- For this along with United Nations (UN) as a universal institution several institutions like IMF, World Bank and WTO as three pillars was instituted.

Has the international post-world war order failed?

- **First failure** - First jolt to this vision came with the Cold War in 1946.
- When the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union dissolved there was an expectation that we would go back to the vision of 1945.
- But unfortunately, the U.S. and NATO chose a path of containment and confrontation with Russia.
- **Recent failure -** Russia has begun to react to the confrontation after the NATO has planned to include Georgia and Ukraine in the alliance.

How countries react to recent invasion?

- There are some asset freezes and travel bans against individuals.
- There are even calls from some Western nations to remove Russia from the WTO.
- The sovereign debt rating of Russia reduced to junk overnight.

Will the recent sanctions completely isolate Russia?

- Sanctions are unilaterally imposed and not by UNSC.
- Russia controls supply chains in metals like titanium, palladium and neon. It is a full spectrum commodity superpower. Also energy exports from Russia are not forbidden for two political reasons.
    - Europe will suffer if that happens.
    - U.S. is heading towards a mid-term election. U.S. doesn’t would want gas prices to go up.
- And we have to see whether China will come to the rescue of Russia or not.
- So, it is not easy to isolate Russia.
- Only the global economic order is only sought to be rearranged.

What is the reason for this failure?

- Even though Minsk agreement was endorsed UNSC has failed to enforce it.
- USA and European powers are equally responsible for carrying on with NATO in the 1990s.
- All this reflects that we do not have a settled international order.
- We are moving from something like a unipolar moment to a very messy multipolar world order, which is yet to take shape.

Is UN ineffective?

- Recent war is a violation of the territorial integrity of states.
- Sovereignty of states is one of the principles which bind the UN.
- India was the first victims of the violation of this principle when our territory was occupied by Pakistan.
- Today Russia has vetoed this resolution in the UNSC, which was co-sponsored by about 80 countries.
- However U.S. has also vetoed a resolution condemning Israel's activities in its occupied territories.
- All this shows the irrelevance of the UNSC to the ordinary person affected in recent wars.
- It is a major blow to the UN and current P-5 structure.
- Veto-holders believe that the veto saves them from international scrutiny and for being able to do what they do and get away with it.
- This inability of the multilateral institutions like WTO, UNSC and NPT, to rewrite the rules will make them irrelevant if they continue to be discriminatory.

Do we need to reform the UN now?

- The Ukraine crisis should actually act as a catalyst for the UNGA to convene a general conference to review the Charter.
- If there are issues with the veto, this is the place with the legal framework to do it.
- But there is no single word about UN reform in any of the recent statements.
- If it doesn't reform itself the world will seek a new order when people unilaterally do whatever they want to do.
- For this countries like India have to take a leadership role to articulate the issues during multilateral agenda.
- India has nothing to lose and everything to gain by going to the court of international public opinion and making our case strongly for a seat on a reformed Council.

Do consistent abstentions affect India's aspirations as a global leader?

- India's abstentions are in India's interest.
- We have abstained to create room for diplomacy.
- Though abstention generally comes with negative connotations of sitting on the fence in certain circumstances abstention is a positive and strong decision.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/why-isnt-global-interconnectedness-halting-war/article65188591.ece

