
Russia-Ukraine War: Question on Efficiency of United Nations Organization

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Abstract

This article analyses the role of the United Nations Organization that has become subdued in the Russia- Ukraine War. It has forced World Leaders to pose questions about its efficiency in preventing the world from a looming Global War. Russia and Ukraine are the immediate neighbors sharing socio-cultural dynamics adjacently. In the former USSR regime in Ukraine, people of Russian origin are residing with long-standing ancestral history. However, the recent tension between them is created by their distinct strategic interest in national security. That has forced them to go to war in no time. The event has questioned the relevance and efficiency of global bodies like the UN in preventing war. In the aforementioned war, the United Nations has failed in war prevention. More than that UN's objective of creating peace and sustainability is seen as challenged by emerging bilateral wars in different geographies of the world in different historical contexts. Rather than cooperation the entire world is stepping toward hatred and suspicion. No region is free from conflict of different nature. The battle of creeds in Africa, Religious conflict in the Middle East, different bilateral wars like the India-Pakistan war, Iraq-America war, Israel- Palestine war, and at present Russia-Ukraine war have emerged as challenges to the pragmatic approach of a global institution, the UN in the prevention of war. Regarding this, the present research mainly focuses on the role of the United Nations in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war to analyze the relevance and effectiveness of the United Nations as the war-preventing global organization.

Keywords: War, Mediation, Security Umbrella, NATO, Economic Interest

Background

Russia and Ukraine were the nations under the former United States of Soviet Russia (USSR) until 1991. After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine got independent status as a sovereign country. Ukraine is one of those multinational states that gained independence from the USSR. However, in the post-independent period, both countries have been going through very intense confrontations. The most significant aspect of their relationship is the population of Ukraine which is an amalgamation of different nationalities including people of Russian Origin. Having proximity, the countries have very hostile relations. Both countries went to war in 2014 after which Ukraine had to lose Crimea, a very strategically significant geography in European geopolitics where about 13% of Russian-speaking people are still living (Kuzio, 2019). The annexation of Crimea was a hegemonic approach of Russia; still, United Nations Organization could do nothing in this annexation. It was enough to raise questions on the efficiency of the UN

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because of its role in front of powerful states. However, there were no questions raised regarding the role of the UN in such a context. In 2022, Russia waged war against Ukraine with the name of 'Special Military Operation' (Johannesson&Clowes, 2020) but it is still far from justifying its aggression over sovereign independent Ukraine. Though the war was expected to come to an end in a short period of time, it is getting more complicated with its prolonging. There are numerous arguments on the reasons for war; however, the primary reason for war is related to the economic interest of Russia. Russia's economy is largely dependent on the export of energy like gasoline in Ukraine and through Ukraine to the different countries of Europe. Ukraine is geographically the bottleneck of the trade between Russia and Europe but Ukraine has a huge collection of energy within herself and the pipeline network to trade with Europe. This situation made Russia suspicious of its neighbor; especially because it can go into the bowl of Europe which became the prime reason to wage a war in Ukraine (Johannesson&Clowes, 2020). Whatever the reason can be, the Russian attack on Ukraine at a different historical juncture is not out of the imperial mindset of the Russian ruler. These types of warring mentality can cause anarchy in the world society and there looms the threat of global war if global powers collide in interest. Does it make sense in a global peace context? It has become a huge issue in the modern world. Vladimir Putin's whimsical character is becoming a threat to the world community. Nevertheless, the West is not out of the blame zone because Putin's aggression is grounded on retaliation against Western aggressive surroundings in the Russian export zone posing a threat to Russian trade and market route to the outer world (Wood et.al, 2016). Russia's aggression is not only limited to economic interest rather it is deeply rooted in its security concern. Ukraine's growing attachment to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its quest for membership in European Union are some hidden factors in the ongoing bilateral war. Russia is out of European Union from the very beginning because European Union is in a joint security system under the umbrella of NATO in which the old long enemy of Russia, The USA is providing Shield over them. Wolczuk (2016) thinks Ukraine's increasing proximity with European countries as well as the United States of America is developing a 'tug-of-war' between Russia and Ukraine as well as to European Union. However, it is not far to understand that Russia feels a security threat in Ukraine- EU relations in this geopolitically significant region (p.56). So, this conflict has a lot to do with Russian Security interests and European attempts to surround Russia through contentment policy. From this perspective, the Russian attack on Ukraine is not out of its retaliation against European and American interests to interfere with the Russian interest through engaging in Ukraine, a geopolitically strategic place. But, Ukraine never realize the gravity of the strategic step the EU and USA are taking by making it a scapegoat for their political and security purpose which resulted in the devastating war causing millions of people to abandon their homeland and millions of others to lose their lives in the battle. The United Nations Organization is also seen as very ineffective in its approach to preventing this ongoing war. This article attempts to unlock the failure of the UN in preventing the war between Russia and Ukraine in this present world.

Role of the United Nations Organization in the Russia-Ukraine War

United Nations Organization is a planetary body that has been established to prevent the world from possible world war in the future. As the preamble of the United Nations Charter says, it is established to save the succeeding generation from the possible threat of devastating war because

two times it had happened in the same century within thirty-five years of time (preamble: United Nations Organization). Though the UN has been working in the field of peacemaking in the world either through negotiation, deterrence, or by deploying its peacekeeping force, it has not been able to prevent some devastating wars like; the Iraq America war, in which America was proven wrong in finding weapons of mass destruction. However, a narrative was created by the USA that the step was taken as an act of self-defense “against the anticipatory threat”. United Nations Organization has nothing to say about the futile US war against Iraq (Kumar 2014). Nevertheless, no questions were raised on the role played by UNO during that war even after the accusation of the USA came out to be unjustified and the UN did not even publish a press note on the mistake it made by passing a resolution in Iraq- America War. This is a clear evidence of the inefficiency of the UN to have a strong say against the whimsical act of powerful states in the world. This is a perfect example of UNO’s subdued status in a very extreme context that always questioned on maintaining peace and even neutrality in world politics.

Ongoing Russia- Ukraine war has exposed the weaknesses of the UN in such a way that it has almost seemed defunct to protect the lives of millions of people. Although the war is affecting almost all the regions of the globe, there is no clear sign to say in which way the war is heading. This is not only the European crisis; it has challenged the notion of the establishment of the United Nations and its diplomatic endeavor (Crocker 2022). Knowing the impacts of this on the world community, the UN has to play significantly in the prevention of its dignified presence. Unfortunately, as evidence is seen UN is becoming so clueless to drag both the warring parties to the table of negotiation instead it is seeking the assistance of third-party mediation in which it is eyeing India and China like emerging nations to fill the gap and bring both the parties on the table of talk (183-86). The subdued status of the UN in front of two mighty sides Russia and Ukraine with the support of NATO is a loud cry against the efficiency of the UN in peace-making and creating a perfect world order.

On 23rd February 2023, the United Nations organization demanded Russia take back its army abandoning the war but Russia never looked back from where it was heading. Though 141 countries favored Ukraine and the UN’s demand, no sign of a ceasefire is seen yet (UN News Feb. 2023). Here too, the UN could do nothing to take back Russia from waging war; instead, its demand was ignored strongly by Russia questioning its relevance in the modern world. This is a glimpse of the trembling foundation of the UN and its relevance in peace-making in the world. Boutros BoutrosGhali, a former UN General Secretary claimed that the UN has not been able to play a significant role in peace-making in the world and he proposed the “*Agenda for Peace*” in the 1990s emphasizing the need to reform in structure and process of peacemaking missions (Roberts, 1993). Though his proposal was not taken ahead seriously, he had already envisioned the future of the UN very clearly. However, no significant reformation has been done in the field. The lack of adhering Ghali is seen in almost every war in a 21st-century context. Russia- Ukraine war is an utter reflection of UNO’s failure in maintaining world peace by being subdued in front of world powerhouses.

Conclusion

The fundamental objective of the establishment of the United Nations Organization is to prevent the world from the possible scourge of war in the future. During the cold war, this organization

was playing a significant role in peace-making and mediation in war-prone areas. However, from the 1990s onwards, many questions were raised about its ineffectiveness in peace-keeping missions. UN general secretary Boutros BoutrosGhali had envisioned the threat of ineffectiveness of this planetary organization in the future and had proposed reform in the UN peace-making process but no significant reform is done. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, UNO is losing its effectiveness in different wars like the US-Iraq war. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has completely exposed the inefficiency of the UN even in mediation, more specifically, it exposed the dominated nature. The UN is clueless about stopping the war and waiting for some third party to intervene. The growing influence of China and the interest of India in mediation is a huge challenge for UNO's relevancy in the future. The present inefficiency is caused due to the lack of confidence and impartiality it has started to feel difficult to take action against world-powerful nations to stop hegemonic behavior.

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