


## The impact of Ukraine war sanctions on India-Russia defense relations

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original Article                      Main Object: International relations                      Scope: Russo-Ukraine War; India</p> <p>Received: 12 September 2023                      Revised: 28 September 2023                      Accepted: 29 September 2023                      Published online: 11 October 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>                      defense cooperation, neorealism, sanctions, Ukraine war.</p>	<p>The ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine, which commenced in 2014 and culminated with the annexation of Crimea, has had profound implications for global security, international relations, and, notably, defense cooperation among nations. This research aims to meticulously analyze the multifaceted repercussions of Western sanctions triggered by the Ukraine conflict on defense and military collaborations between India and Russia. Employing neorealism as its theoretical framework and an explanatory methodology, this study also delves into recent adjustments in India's defense policy arising from the Ukraine crisis. Central to this research is the inquiry: "What are the impacts of the Ukraine conflict on defense cooperation between India and Russia, and how have they influenced India's defense policy?" The findings of this investigation reveal that the Western sanctions imposed on Russia have catalyzed substantial transformations in India and Russia's defense partnership. These changes have prompted India to diversify its sources of arms procurement, thereby diminishing its reliance on Russia. Additionally, India is actively pursuing investments in its domestic defense industry to reduce future dependencies on Russia and other arms suppliers.</p>

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

Defense cooperation stands as a pivotal element in global politics and international relations, transcending economic, military, leadership, and arms control domains. However, recent geopolitical events have reshaped the landscape of defense collaborations, particularly between India and Russia. The unlawful annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia in 2014, followed by a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, has cast a shadow over the longstanding defense partnership between India and Russia. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the volume of arms trade between these two nations saw a notable decline, plummeting from 62% in 2017 to 45% by 2022. Notably, the significance of defense cooperation with Russia for India cannot be overstated, as a substantial portion of India's weaponry—ranging from 70 to 85%—originates from Russia.

### Aim

This study aims to comprehensively assess the repercussions of Western sanctions resulting from the Ukraine conflict on defense cooperation between India and Russia, employing the neorealism theoretical framework. The central query driving this research is: "What are the effects of Western sanctions stemming from the Ukraine conflict on Russia-India defense cooperation?" To delve deeper into the complex dynamics, this research also seeks to address the following two sub questions: What are the impacts of Western sanctions on Russia's defense industry? How does the evolving relationship between China and Russia influence the mitigation of Western sanctions and, subsequently, Russia-India defense cooperation?

### Research Hypothesis

To address the central research question, this study operates on several key assumptions. Firstly, it posits that India's response to Western sanctions, aimed at safeguarding Russia-India defense cooperation, will involve a concerted effort to reduce its reliance on Russia. Additionally, this research assumes that the substantial impact of Western sanctions on Russia could potentially deepen the Russia-China relationship, thereby raising serious concerns among India's decision-makers about maintaining and expanding its defense cooperation with Russia. Lastly, the research hypothesizes that the adverse effects of Western sanctions on Russia will prompt India to make substantial investments in its domestic defense capabilities, positioning itself to develop advanced weaponry independently.

### Theoretical Framework

This study employs neorealism theory as its foundational framework

to address the research questions. Neorealism offers two distinct approaches—balancing power and relative gains—each offering unique perspectives on international relations. In the first approach, states engage in arms procurement with the aim of accessing advanced technologies to diminish the military advantages of potential rivals. This strategy reflects a proactive stance, wherein states seek to maintain or attain military superiority in the pursuit of their national interests. Conversely, the relative gains approach posits that states carefully evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of cooperation with other nations. This assessment encompasses a wide array of factors, including economic considerations, cultural dynamics, military capabilities, national power interests, levels of technology, and trade volumes. States engage in cooperation with the expectation of realizing mutual benefits, and if these anticipated gains are not achieved, they may reassess their decisions regarding collaborative efforts.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this research underscore the profound impact of Western sanctions on Russia's defense industry, particularly in terms of the quality of Russian weaponry. Simultaneously, the burgeoning partnership between China and Russia, aimed at mitigating the economic effects of these sanctions, has triggered a significant reassessment and redesign of India's defense policy. Within the theoretical framework of the relative gains approach, several key changes in India's defense policy emerge:

1. India is inclined to enhance its defense self-sufficiency in the long term by significantly investing in and expanding its domestic defense projects.
2. Indian decision-makers are actively preparing the military and diplomatic apparatus for potential consequences resulting from India's close relationship with Russia.
3. In the short term, India seeks to bolster its military capabilities by diversifying its sources of arms procurement. This diversification strategy includes engaging with a broader spectrum of arms suppliers, including nations such as the United States, Israel, France, and other U.S. allies.

### **Conclusions**

India has emerged as a focal point of interest for Western nations and Russia in recent years, driven by its surging energy needs, growing population, robust economy, and strategic geographic location. In a bid to assume a pivotal role in global politics, military affairs, and economics while maintaining a delicate balance of power with neighboring China and Pakistan, India is making substantial investments in its defense industry. This research underscores that the

lack of indigenous technological infrastructure has necessitated a reliance on other nations. As a solution, the study suggests that countries can draw valuable lessons from the experiences of nations like Japan, Sweden, and South Korea, which embarked on their journeys to become major arms suppliers following World War II. These nations successfully intensified their relationships with Western countries to acquire critical technological knowledge. India's example stands as a testament to the immense potential for countries situated in competitive regions, where bolstering military strength and gaining the upper hand in military capabilities are paramount objectives.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

### Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the original idea, study design.

### Ethical considerations

The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

### Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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