

# TOPIC OF THE WEEK

## DEC'18 (06 to 12)

## **Vested self interest in Geopolitical situation**

What is the strongest reason to act in a particular way? Some people fight to protect their power, money or reputation. This is the time when one gets personally involved due to some personal interest. This in other words is vested self interest. What happens when this becomes the situation of a country? We have seen many wars and a lot of blood have been shed over the years. The geopolitical situation of many areas has been the reason of many wars. When there is self interest involved in functioning or the decision making of various countries then the problem is bound to occur.

The crisis in Ukraine today has swiftly turned into a global standoff. It has become the focus for war of words about the meaning of democracy, freedom and legitimacy. This also brings about a debate of communism.

Russia engaged in armed conflict against two independent states that were formerly part of the Soviet Union – Ukraine and Georgia. It annexed Ukrainian territory Crimea and continues to support the armed

rebels in eastern Ukraine. It also backs separatist enclaves that broke away from the Georgian government.

Russia is on alert with NATO's growing incursion in the region. The three nearby states, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey are members of the alliance. NATO conducts air policing operations out of Romania and help to defend the territory by intercepting Russian jets approaching the air space.

Many people in the west compare Russia's operations in Crimea to Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938. Some also fear that Vladimir Putin is launching new Cold War. Russia on the other hand accuses the West of helping overthrow an elected government in the Ukraine.

What is hardly acknowledged in this war of words is that the conflict in Ukraine is far dangerous and complicated. Many Western people see the protests that led to the overthrowing of President Viktor Yanukovich as a revolution. Many claim Mr. Yanukovich's government was corrupt and authoritarian. The fact that Mr. Yanukovich was democratically elected complicates the situation. The thinker and commentators put a point that democracy is not just about placing a cross on a ballot paper. It is also about creation of a robust public sphere

and of environment conducive to personal growth and good working condition.

### **The big question?:**

People are asking that should Crimea be allowed to secede from Ukraine? Russia insists on the referendum in Crimea to determine whether it wishes to join the Russian federation. It believes that this as an expression of self-determination and democracy. Western thinkers condemn it as illegal vote and say that it is contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution and international law. The presence of Russian forces and government control of the media make the possibility of a clean vote impossible.

The breakup of Ukraine would be disastrous and it may threaten sectarian violence. Many groups in Crimea, like Muslim Tartars, are apprehensive of Russia's domination.

Warfare is changing. The boundary between war and peace is dissolving. We hear about military exercises, information operations and cyber attacks. Earlier these were a prelude to conflict. But today they are the war.

Russia is already having some success against Ukraine. So today one uses a variety of tools and applies pressure to achieve results.

**Suggested Reading:**

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/30/ukraine-bans-russian-men-from-entering-the-country>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46425777>
- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/russian-threat-highest-since-2014-ukraine-military-chief/articleshow/66951392.cms>