



## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RUSSIA'S MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY IN THE WORLD ORDER (2000–2018)

**Dr.Chakali Bramhayya**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & Human Rights, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh.*

### Introduction

The article will critically examine the dynamics of Russia's multilateral diplomacy in the contemporary world from 2000 to 2018. Russia has challenged Western unipolarity to establish a multipolar world order to have an inclusive approach to global politics. Russia has actively engaged with the multilateral institutions i.e. G-20, BRICS, Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Russia has redefined the global norms based on great power politics, non-intervention and sovereignty. Russia has also used cyber and energy diplomacy as part of the multilateral agenda. Russia's role in the 2014 Ukraine crisis and Russia's intervention in Syria (2011-2018) are the best examples of India's multilateral diplomacy. Russia's multilateral diplomacy and strategy have challenged the dominance of the West and strongly advocated for the rule-based international order.

Vladimir Putin has adopted assertive and aggressive multilateral diplomacy after assuming office as President in 2000 to bring changes to post-Cold War global politics. Putin has not encouraged the policy of the "Atlanticist" approach, which has given much importance to the alignment with the multilateral institutions. Instead, Vladimir Putin has shifted his focus towards the Global South, multipolarity, sovereignty and integration of the Eurasian region. Russia has raised strong objections towards the Unipolar world order, which has been supported and promoted by the United States of America. Vladimir Putin has stated that the Unipolar world order will threaten the national interests and strategic autonomy of the countries of the Global South (Tsygankov, 2016). Russia has promoted regional and global multilateral institutions to challenge the liberal international order and distribution of power in global politics. Vladimir Putin has brought about dynamic reforms in the contemporary global order.

### Theoretical Framework of Russian Multilateral Diplomacy and Global Politics:

The multilateral diplomacy of Russia has been analysed through the lenses of multipolarity, sovereignty and realism. According to scholars of international relations, international politics is nothing but a power struggle. Hans J. Morgenthau has given the following definition related to international politics:

*"International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim." (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 25)*

Source: Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Russia has adopted diplomacy that reflects offensive realism, in which States maximise their power to guarantee survival. Russia has shifted the nature of the global order from unipolar to multipolar. Russia, India, and China have played significant roles in the contemporary multipolar world order (Sakwa, 2017). Russia has stated that non-intervention and sovereignty are the guiding principles of diplomacy. This has been witnessed in Russia's condemnation of the USA's humanitarian intervention in Syria



from 2011 to 2018 and Libya in 2011. Russia has criticised Western interference in Georgia and Ukraine, trying to protect the sphere of influence (Allison, 2013).

### **The Role of Russia in Global Multilateral Institutions: WTO, UN, G20, G8**

Vladimir Putin has played a significant role in the global multilateral institutions, establishing a rule-based international order and promoting its perspective of a multipolar world order.

After 12 years of negotiation, Russia has joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). This has helped Russia play a more significant role in international trade norms and developed greater access to global markets and trade. West has imposed sanctions on Russia after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in Ukraine in 2014. Since Russia has veto power in the Security Council of the United Nations, it has played a vital role in significant global events. In this connection, Russia has vetoed 10 UN resolutions with special reference to Libya, Ukraine and Syria. It has significantly blocked the humanitarian interventions of the Western powers (Allison, 2013). Russia was an important member of the G8 from 2000 to 2014. It has immensely contributed to economic cooperation among the major countries of the global world. The annexation of Crimea has affected Russian participation in the G8. These developments have forced Russia to play a significant role in the G20, and Russia has strongly advocated for economic reforms in the G20 (Sakwa, 2017).

### **The Role of Russia in Regional Multilateral Diplomacy: SCO, BRICS, EAEU**

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has become a strategic platform for Russia to develop regional security to counter the influence of the USA in Central Asia. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has been established in 2001. SCO has helped Russia to develop strategic bilateral relations with China. Russia has challenged the dominance of the USA in Eurasia (Lukin, 2018). Vladimir Putin has played a significant role in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and it has emerged as one of the alternative economic powers to the G7 bloc (Armijo & Roberts, 2014). Russia was key in establishing the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). Also, it brought out significant reforms in the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), which eventually worked as a substitute for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) was established in 2015. Russia has played a more significant role in creating the Eurasian economic space. The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has allowed Russia to showcase its impact on the erstwhile republics of the Soviet Union to counterbalance the European Union (Hartwell, 2016).

### **Energy Diplomacy**

Russia has been a significant energy supplier to Europe and Asia. Russia has bypassed Ukraine to supply gas to Germany through Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 (Proedrou, 2018). Since joining OPEC+, dynamic changes have taken place in global oil diplomacy. Russia has played a significant role in determining oil prices and has acted as a global leader in the energy sector (Proedrou, 2018).

### **Challenges and Resistance to Western Hegemony**

Russia has been facing various challenges and resistance ever since it annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. It has forced Russia to devise its multilateral diplomacy accordingly in the contemporary world order. The decision of the expansion of NATO to Ukraine and Georgia forced Russia to launch military action on Ukraine in 2014 and Georgia in 2008 (Charap & Colton, 2017). After Russia annexed Crimea, the West imposed political and economic sanctions on Crimea. Although the West has played a minimal role in Russia's access to the world financial mechanism, it has further strengthened its ties with India, China, BRICS, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) (Sakwa, 2014).



## Case Studies of Conflicts: Syria (2011-2018) & Ukraine Crisis (2014)

### Syria (2011-2018)

Russia intervened in Syria in 2015 and played a dynamic shift in the global world. Russia has been using its veto power to block the Western resolutions in the Security Council of the United Nations. The military intervention of Russia has facilitated the Assad regime to be in power. Thus, Russia plays a significant role in West Asia (Charap & Colton, 2017). Dynamic changes took place, like Russia's diplomacy, after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Despite the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia, it has devised its policy to counter the Western hegemonistic world order (Sakwa, 2014). It has increased its sphere of influence in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

### Conclusion

Russia's multilateral diplomacy has been pivotal in the contemporary multipolar world order from 2000 to 2018. Russia has strongly condemned and resisted the Western hegemonistic world order. Russia has been actively engaging with India and China. Thus, Russia has been predominant in the BRICS, UN, EAEU, and SCO. Russia has reshaped the world order based on the global balance of power. Even though it has faced economic and political sanctions from Western countries, Russia has substantially grown in global diplomacy.

Russia's multilateral diplomacy has played a vital role in today's world. It has been guided by the principles of strategic autonomy, multipolarity, and sovereignty. Russia has challenged the hegemonistic global order of Western countries, with special reference to NATO and the United States. Russia's diplomatic approach was determined by national interests, counterbalancing Western-led institutions and reasserting itself as a prominent power at the global level.

Russia has played an effective role in various multilateral institutions, such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), OPEC+, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and the United Nations (UN).

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