

# India's Great Balancing Act

by Anil Shrivastava "Musafir"



As of today, April 5, 2022, a massive amount of Russian oil is still flowing into the 27 member states of the European Union. Germany's EnBW announced that it plans to

buy 3 billion cubic meters of gas a year from Russia. However, India was criticized by the western countries including the United States for recently placing an order of 3

million barrels of crude oil from Russia. “This duplicity is not lost on India. “In a parliamentary session on March 25, one politician described the West’s double game of turning a blind eye to Europe’s imports while criticizing India’s. India’s foreign minister, Jaishankar said, “there was a report that Europe has bought 15% more oil and gas from Russia in March than in February.” (Source: The Washington Post)

On January 31, India abstained from the United Nations Security Council vote on Ukraine. However, India’s move was rather well-calculated and thought-out. India did that to balance its ties both with Moscow and Washington. It’s no secret that Moscow makes up about half of India’s total weapons import. India needs Russia to service its arms, and also for joint products, like the Brahmos missile. Russia has always supported India in its time of need. Hence, abandoning Russia is not an option for New Delhi.

The U.S. can’t displease India with sanctions because India is a part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) alliance of pacific democracies against China. Those democracies are the United States, India, Australia, and Japan.

Russia is attempting to sway India in one direction — toward a more forceful statement in support of Moscow’s actions. The United States is trying to sway it in the other — an outright condemnation, a vote with the West in the UN.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic courting of New Delhi these past two weeks have been intense. The visitors to India consisted of Russia’s Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov,

China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi, U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, the U.S. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland. Others to pass through the capital include the foreign ministers of Austria, Greece, Mexico, and Oman.

Jaishankar, the foreign minister of India pushed Sergei Lavrov for a ceasefire and a durable peace deal with Ukraine. It’s not a mere coincidence that Russia is now retreating and is changing its tune. I have no firm evidence to support that this happened because of India’s pressure on Russia, but I’ll give India a benefit of the doubt in this matter and I wish India the best in trying to maintain its policy of non-alliance.