



Montreux Convention

For Prelims: Montreux Convention, Location of Black Sea, Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits.

For Mains: Russia's War over Ukraine, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests.

Why in News?

Turkey is set to activate the **Montreux Convention** in response to [Russia's War over Ukraine](#).

- The declaration that situation in Ukraine had become a war, authorizes Turkey to activate the Montreux Convention and **ban Russian war vessels from entering the Black Sea through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits.**



What is the Location of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits?

- The Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, also known as the **Turkish Straits or the Black Sea Straits**, connect the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea via the Sea of Marmara.
- It is the only passage **through which the Black Sea ports can access the Mediterranean and beyond.**
- Over **three million barrels of oil**, about **3% of the daily global supply**, mostly produced in **Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan**, pass through this waterway every day.
- The route also **ships large amounts of iron, steel, and agricultural products** from the Black Sea coast to Europe and the rest of the world.

What is the Montreux Convention?

- The **international agreement** was signed by **Australia, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Japan,**

Romania, Yugoslavia, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and Turkey and has been in effect since **November 1936**.

- The Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits **gives Turkey control over the water route between the Black Sea**.
 - Russia has a **major navy base at Sevastopol, on the Crimean Peninsula**.
 - However, for ships to move to and from the Mediterranean – and beyond – they have to pass through **two straits controlled by Turkey under the Montreux Convention**.
- It sets limits on the **passage of civilian vessels and military warships through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus straits**. The key elements in the Montreux Convention are:
 - **In the event of a war**, the pact gives Turkey the **right to regulate** the transit of naval warships and to block the straits to warships belonging to the countries involved in the conflict.
 - Any country with **coastline on the Black Sea – Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Russia or Ukraine** – must notify **Turkey eight days** in advance of its intention to send vessels of war through the straits.
 - Other countries, the ones that don't border the Black Sea, must give Turkey **15 days' advance notice**.
- Turkey has used the **convention's powers before**. During **World War II**, Turkey prevented the **Axis powers** from sending their warships to attack the **Soviet Union** – and **blocked the Soviet navy from participating in combat in the Mediterranean**.

What is the Role of Turkey in the Present Crisis?

- In the current situation, the Turkish government finds itself in a **difficult position, as both Ukraine and Russia** are important partners in **critical energy and military trade agreements**.
- Turkey, a **NATO member since 1952**, wants to strengthen its ties with the **West while not upsetting Russia**. Its control over these key straits may test its **balancing act**.
- In this context, Turkey has held that it cannot block all Russian warships accessing the Black Sea **due to a clause in the pact exempting** those returning to their registered base.
- **Article 19 of the treaty contains an exception** for the countries on the Black Sea that can effectively undermine **Turkey's power in blocking the Russian warships entering or exiting the Black Sea**.
 - Vessels of war belonging to belligerent powers, whether they are Black Sea Powers or not, which have become separated from their bases, may return thereto.
- This exception provides Russia with an alternate way to exploit the **Montreux Convention**, which would be to reassign some of its vessels to the Black Sea.

[Source: IE](#)

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