

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

February and March 2022



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 12

Issue 11 & 12

The Resurgent India English monthly published and printed by Smt. Suman Sharma on behalf of The Resurgent India Trust Published at C/o J. N. Socketed Cement Pipes Pvt. Ltd., Village Bhamraula Post Bagwara, Kichha Road, Rudrapur (U.S Nagar)
email: sadlecjnn@gmail.com, info@resurgentindia.org, URL : www.resurgentindia.org

Printed at : Priyanka Printing Press, Hotel Krish Building, Janta Inter College Road, Udham Nagar, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 12

Issue 11 & 12

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

A PERSPECTIVE* ON THE UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

“The world is fighting for its spiritual life menaced by the rush of hostile and undivine forces.

Lord, we aspire to be Thy valiant warriors so that Thy glory may manifest upon the earth.” (CWM: 167)

I. THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

“The fundamental idea is that mankind is the godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and the chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the State, the family nor anything else ought to take its place; they are only worthy of respect so far as they are images of the human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid its self-manifestation. But where the cult of these idols seeks to usurp the place of the spirit and makes demands inconsistent with its service, they should be put aside. No injunctions of old creeds, religious, political, social or cultural, are valid when they go against its claims. Science even, though it is one of the chief modern idols, must not be allowed to make claims contrary to its ethical temperament and aim, for science is only valuable in so far as it helps and serves by knowledge and progress the religion of humanity. War, capital punishment, the taking of human life, cruelty of all kinds whether committed by the individual, the State or society, not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human being or any class of human beings under whatever

* In the light of Sri Aurobindo.

specious plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by its primary tenets, to be fought against always, in no degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventable death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind. This, speaking largely, is the idea and spirit of the intellectual religion of humanity.” (CWSA 25: 565-66)

“One has only to compare human life and thought and feeling a century or two ago with human life, thought and feeling in the pre-war period to see how great an influence this religion of humanity has exercised and how fruitful a work it has done. It accomplished rapidly many things which orthodox religion failed to do effectively, largely because it acted as a constant intellectual and critical solvent, an unsparing assailant

of the thing that is and an unflinching champion of the thing to be, faithful always to the future, while orthodox religion allied itself with the powers of the present, even of the past, bound itself by its pact with them and could act only at best as a moderating but not as a reforming force. Moreover, this religion has faith in humanity and its earthly future and can therefore aid its earthly progress, while the orthodox religions looked with eyes of pious sorrow and gloom on the earthly life of man and were very ready to bid him bear peacefully and contentedly, even to welcome its crudities, cruelties, oppressions, tribulations as a means for learning to appreciate and for earning the better life which will be given us hereafter. Faith, even an intellectual faith, must always be a worker of miracles, and this religion of humanity, even without taking bodily shape or a compelling form or a visible means of self-effectuation, was yet able to effect comparatively much of what it set out to do. It to some degree humanised society, humanised law and punishment, humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery, raised those who were depressed and fallen, gave large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions. It had almost succeeded in humanising war and would perhaps have succeeded entirely but for the contrary trend of modern Science. It made it possible for man to conceive of a world free from war as imaginable even without waiting for the Christian millennium. At any rate, this much change came about that, while peace was formerly a rare interlude of constant war, war became an interlude, if a much too frequent interlude of peace, though

as yet only of an armed peace. That may not be a great step, but still it was a step forward. It gave new conceptions of the dignity of the human being and opened new ideas and new vistas of his education, self-development and potentiality. It spread enlightenment; it made man feel more his responsibility for the progress and happiness of the race; it raised the average self-respect and capacity of mankind; it gave hope to the serf, self-assertion to the downtrodden and made the labourer in his manhood the potential equal of the rich and powerful. True, if we compare what is with what should be, the actual achievement with the ideal, all this will seem only a scanty work of preparation.” (CWSA 25: 566-67)

In order to accomplish more “...this idea and religion of humanity has to make itself more explicit, insistent and categorically imperative. For otherwise it can only work with clarity in the minds of the few and with the mass it will be only a modifying influence, but will not be the rule of human life. And so long as that is so, it cannot entirely prevail over its own principal enemy. That enemy, the enemy of all real religion, is human egoism, the egoism of the individual, the egoism of class and nation.” (CWSA 25: 567)

2. THE PRESENT CONFLICT

In this conflict one witnesses the relative indifference of the political leaders, the world over, to the naked invasion and ruthless destruction inflicted upon the Ukrainian Nation and its courageous people at the hands of blind demonic forces having their origin in the egoism of dictators and masses hypnotized by them.

At present, it is this egoism of the individuals and collectivities that the Soul of Humanity is battling against by

the way of its most intense expression through the Soul of the Ukrainian Nation and its People to quell the hide of selfishness and greed in the masses and the titanic ambitions rushing to completely engulf this beautiful planet.

3. THE ROLE THAT INDIA SHOULD PLAY

“We speak often of the Hindu religion, of the Sanatana Dharma, but few of us really know what that religion is. Other religions are preponderatingly religions of faith and profession, but the Sanatana Dharma is life itself; it is a thing that has not so much to be believed as lived. This is the *dharma* that for the salvation of humanity was cherished in the seclusion of this peninsula from of old. It is to give this religion that India is rising. She does not rise as other countries do, for self or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great.”
(CWSA 8: 6)

4. COPY OF A COMMUNICATION OF 23-03-2022 TO PRIME MINISTER SRI NARENDRA MODI

Dear Prime Minister Bhai Sri Narendra Modiji:

I feel intensely inspired to send you this brief communication.

India must rise above petty economic and political considerations – as you did when you unilaterally withdrew the economically sound Farm Laws in the national interest – and openly support Ukraine and its people who, to my vivid

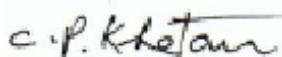
perception have been – in the face of the present crisis in which their very existence is at stake – galvanised to become the very body of Sri Krishna – the Lord of divine Light and Love and Force.

In taking such a stand we shall also be truly serving Russia and its sweet people who have always stood by us through thick and thin. But, our gratitude to them should not be allowed to stand in the way of a deeper vision which shows that to serve the Truth is the best way of truly serving the whole of Creation.

In the present difficult and painful conditions, by taking a clear stand, we will not only be serving the people of Ukraine and Russia but also be going forward a good distance on the way towards the fulfillment of the true role of India which, according to Sri Aurobindo, is to organise Human Unity and thus open the way leading to the establishment of the reign of divine Truth, Harmony and Love on earth.

I very strongly feel that we would miss a crucial opportunity if we fail to rise to the occasion and unequivocally stand for the Truth.

Yours in the service of the Mother,



Chandra Prakash Khetan

Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Ashram,
Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan

Enclosure: Copy of the message sent on 16.03.2022 to the Brothers and Sisters of Ukraine. (Printed on the Back Cover)

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: A DETERIORATING HUMANITY

“War is no longer, perhaps, a biological necessity, but it is still a psychological necessity; what is within us, must manifest itself outright.” – Sri Aurobindo (CWSA 25: 611)

The idea of a country waging primitive, expansionist warfare against an independent nation has been unthinkable in more than half-a-century at least. The aftermath of the Second World War had created a different and new world order where respect for the sovereignty of nations was the foremost principle of mutual co-existence. The principle of war has not gone but has adapted itself subtly to the changing circumstances of the world. However, the war in Ukraine is a departure from the norms of the world we are living in. It takes us back to the primitive thinking – on which the Russian assumption is based – that brute physical power of a nation-state will triumph over a weaker one, and that a weak adversary country can simply be bombed out of existence.

Signifying one of the gravest crises facing the world since the end of the Second World War, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought with it complete destruction, loss of lives and has unleashed immense psychological insecurity and suffering among the people of Ukraine and the rest of the world. All of this was done simply to satisfy the assumptions and diktats of a dictator. Signifying a great setback to the precarious and superficial post-Second World War rules-based international order, the arbitrary Russian invasion of Ukraine has ushered in an era of creeping insecurity among nations. The Russian invasion of Ukraine seems to legitimize the idea that the sovereignty, independence and existence of a nation

can be attacked at the whim of a larger power, making it necessary that Russia be defeated and taught a lesson.

UKRAINE AND RUSSIA: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Modern-day Ukraine is a country that has been independent for only 23 years, being under foreign rule since the 14th century (Kissinger 2014). Modern-day Russia, Ukraine and Belarus trace their ancient ancestry to a federation called Kyivan Rus'. It was a federation of East Slavic, Baltic and Finnic people of eastern and northern Europe, with its capital in Kyiv. Christianity was made its state religion in 988 AD. After its decline and incorporation into various empires through intervening centuries, in 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was formed (IE 2022). The modern Ukrainian identity emerged as a revolt against the Polish-Lithuanian empire in 1648, when the Ukrainian state of Cossack Hetmanate was formed in what is presently central Ukraine. In around 1748-50, Russia's Catherine the Great absorbed the entire Ukrainian state into the Russian Empire. Despite the Tsarist policy of Russification, there was not much outright conflict and the Ukrainians flourished in Russia and fought alongside Russia in the First World War (IE 2022).

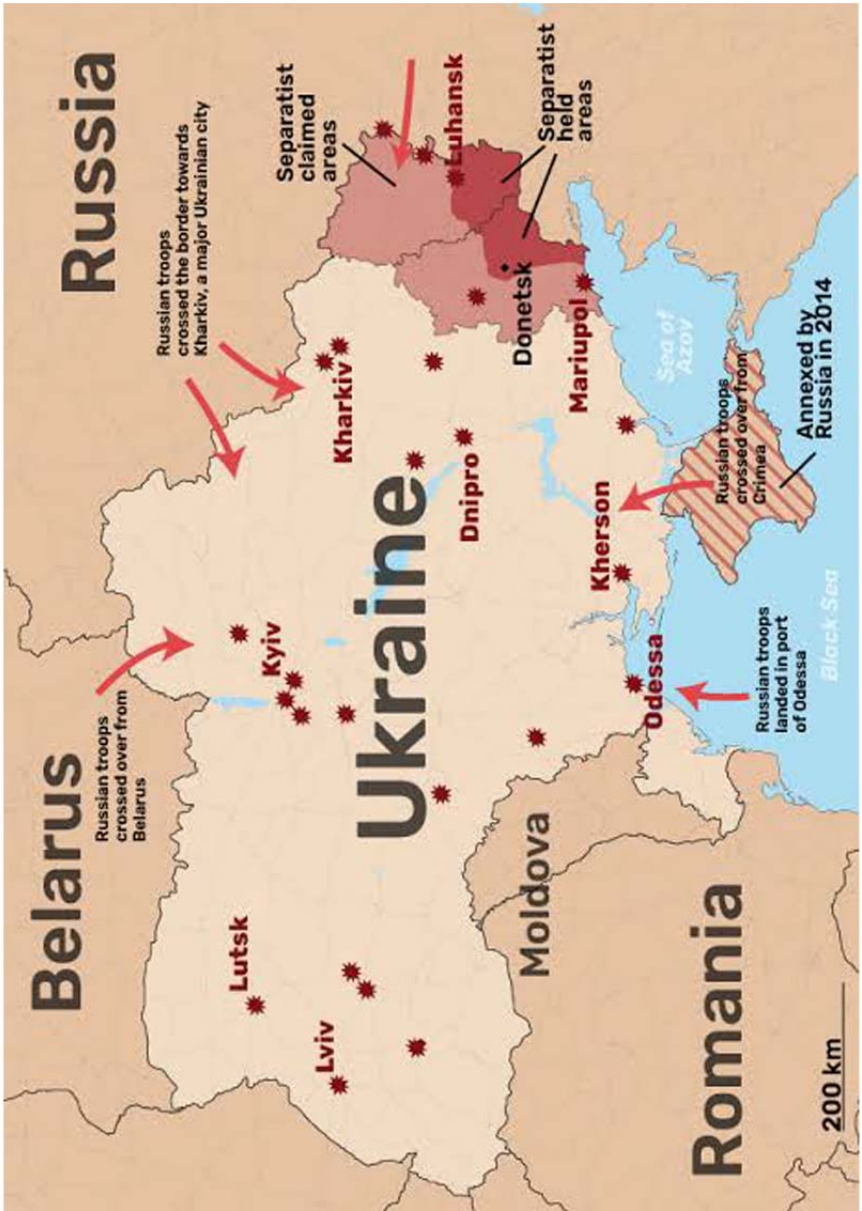
However, the seeds of Ukrainian nationalism were strong. In the middle of the 19th century, to accommodate the growing Ukrainian nationalism, Russians formulated the concept of a tripartite Russian nation, consisting of the Great Russians (Russia), Little Russians (Ukraine) and White Russians (Belarusians). In the aftermath of the First World War, due to the decimation of the Tsarist Empire, several small Ukrainian states and factions, including the Communist one, fought for supremacy, with the independent Ukrainian Republic being proclaimed in 1918. In 1920, Ukraine became a part of the Union of Soviet Socialist

Republics (USSR). The intervening years between 1918 and 1920, gave Ukrainians a taste of independence in modern times. As a result of this independent streak, Bolshevik Russia was forced to grant Ukraine the status of an independent nation, even though it was a part of the USSR.

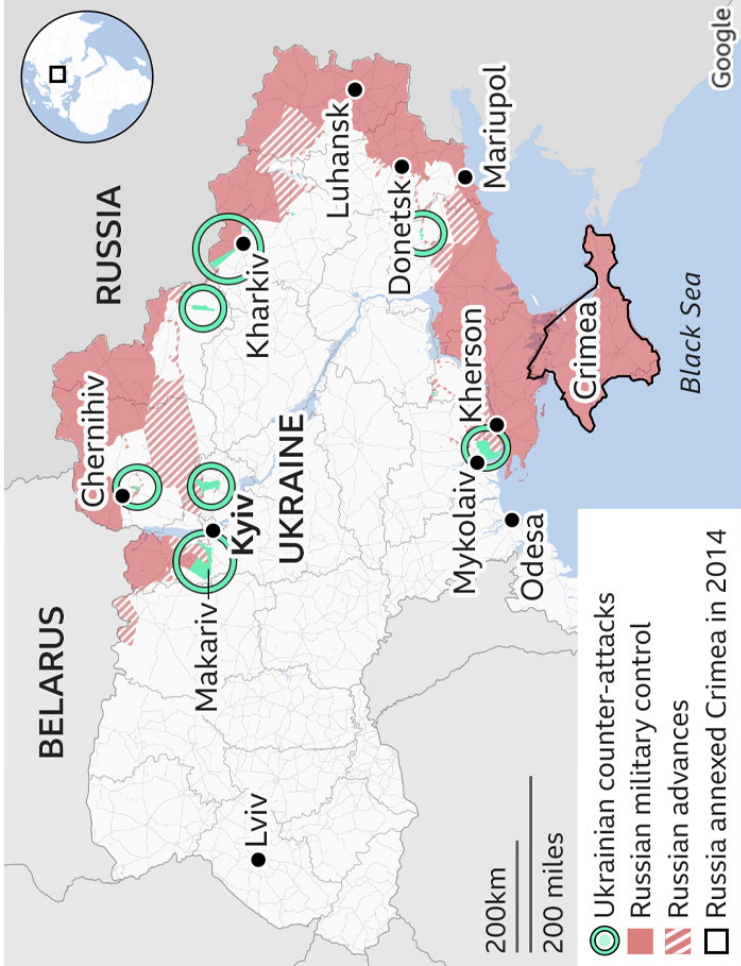
After being a part of USSR for many decades, in the late 1980s, with the rise of a new liberal, global world order, the cultural and economic dominance of the West, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the inevitable weakening of Communism, Ukrainians had already started demanding that Ukraine leave the USSR, with the Ukrainian youth leading a ‘Granite Revolution’ to prevent the signing of a renewed agreement with a nearly finished USSR. In 1991, the USSR was dissolved and after that Ukraine’s Parliament adopted its Act of Independence, with Leonid Kravchuk becoming the country’s first President. Ukraine never ever officially ratified the agreement to become a part of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) created in 1991 – a symbolic, cultural successor grouping to the USSR.

Russia has always perceived Ukraine to be an integral part of itself – notwithstanding the Ukrainian objection to the Russian version of history – from the Tsarist regime to the Bolsheviks to Putin. Lenin was even quoted as saying that, “For us, to lose Ukraine would be to lose our head.” In a recent article titled ‘On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians’ (July 2021), Putin advocated that Russians and Ukrainians were one people who shared a common “historic and spiritual space”.

Presently, Ukraine, located in eastern Europe, is the largest country in Europe after Russia, bordered by Russia to its northeast, east and southeast; Black Sea to the south; Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland to its southwest and west and Belarus to its north.



Ukrainians attempting to push back Russians



Source: Institute for the Study of War (21:00 GMT, 31 March)

BBC

It is also the poorest country in Europe in terms of GDP and GNI per capita. Much like Russia, it has been riven by corruption and run by a few corporate oligarchs. It has a population of around 44 million people, of which around 78% are Ukrainians and around 18% are of Russian ethnicity. The Russian linguistic ethnicity population lives mostly in the restive eastern regions of Ukraine, which share the border with Russia, while the western region speaks Ukrainian. The country is also divided by religion, with the Catholic religion being widespread in the western parts of Ukraine, and the Russian Orthodox Church being widespread in the eastern region. While Russia and Ukraine had a confrontation over Crimea, Crimea was not historically a part of Ukraine. Crimea, which has a majority Russian population, became a part of Ukraine only in 1954, when Nikita Khrushchev, a Ukrainian by birth, awarded it as part of the 300th-year celebration of a Russian agreement with the Cossacks (Kissinger 2014).

Over the last eight years – following the Russian annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 – Russia has fueled an armed insurgency and separatism in the eastern Donbas region of Ukraine, mainly in the provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk, thereby keeping Russia and Ukraine in a continuous state of war. Ukraine's President Zelenskyy had attempted to reach some kind of a solution for the eastern provinces in 2019, through the Steinmeier Formula which proposed elections in the Donbass region under the Ukrainian legislation, in accordance with the Minsk Agreements of 2014 and 2015. It was proposed that if the supervisory body – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – found the elections free and fair, then Donbass will be accorded a 'special status' and Ukraine will have regained its borders. However, this attempt failed due to

Ukraine's insistence that Russia first vacate the region of its military presence and due to protests by Ukrainians who saw the Steinmeier Formula as a surrender to Russia.

The Russian recognition of the two eastern provinces as separate from Ukraine was announced immediately prior to Putin's launch of the 'Special Military Operation' which involved the invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022. The operation/invasion was avowedly launched to liberate these provinces from Ukraine, much like what Russia did in Crimea in 2014.

THE GENESIS OF THE INVASION – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“For the West, the demonization of Vladimir Putin is not a policy; it is an alibi for the absence of one” –Kissinger (2014).

This statement describes well the state of US policy towards Russia – an economically and militarily broken country – since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. In the aftermath of the Cold War and the dissolution of the USSR, a weakened Russia had sought to build new bridges with the US and Europe. Ideally, the US should have perceived no threat from Russia, and yet it has used Russia as a convenient bogey to advance its commercial defence interests in Europe, especially through Ukraine. This unpleasant truth is one of the principal reasons why Russia and the West have had antagonist relations, with Ukraine often becoming a ground for proxy warfare between them. While the US may, by default and not by principles, be standing on the right side of history today, it must also be acknowledged that the US has been one of the key ideological architects of the present war.

This is evident in the persistent US efforts to seek

confrontation with a weakened Russia through the last 30 years, with Ukraine being an important pawn in that geopolitical calculus. Incidentally, much of this confrontation has been spearheaded by Mr. Biden under his various positions in the US administration.

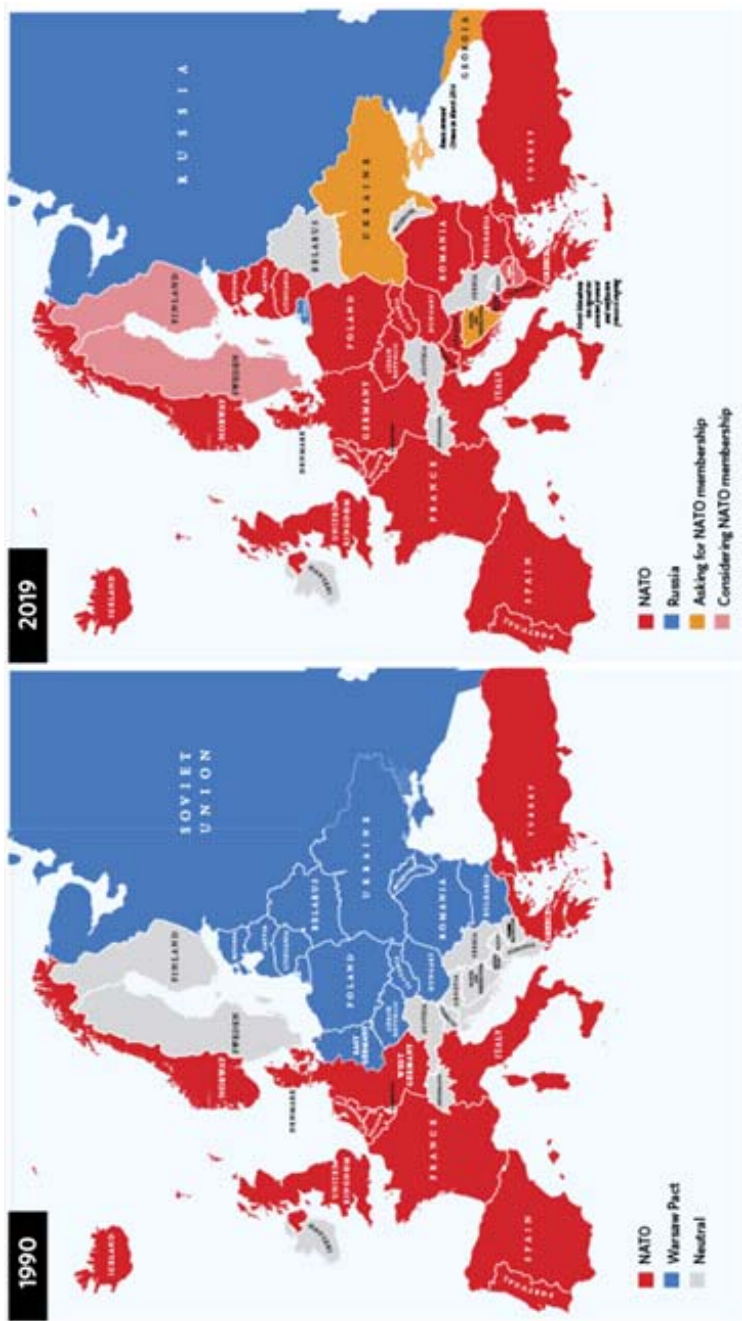
In the aftermath of 1991, a series of goodwill gestures were made to signal the beginning of a new relationship between Russia and the West. Arms reduction treaties and various agreements were signed to foster lasting peace. However, successive US administrations have not been able to work with Russia citing petty reasons for the same, such as domestic disturbances in Russia, and Russia's sliding into dictatorial concentration of power under Boris Yeltsin and then Vladimir Putin after 1999.

At that point of time, both Ukraine's and Russia's key concern was guaranteeing their respective security. For Russia, this mainly translated into the assurance that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) created in 1949 to 'contain' the USSR would – if not disbanded altogether, having outlived its purpose – at least not spread to the countries in eastern Europe, thereby threatening Russian security. Russia's Gorbachev had received the assurance from the West that the NATO alliance will “not move 1 centimetre further east” (Mathew 2022). In return, Russia accepted the democratization and independence of eastern Europe.

Logically, NATO – created to counter Soviet Union during the Cold War – had outlived its purpose, and yet the US refused to disband it. The US not only refused to disband NATO, but also made it the prime focal point of its entire Euro-Atlantic security architecture. The plea made by the West was that

NATO would work to address Russia's security concerns, and yet in the same breath the West claimed that Russia has no security concerns because NATO is a purely defensive organization, and hence not a threat to Russia. This superfluous argument hardly did any credit to the West. For, contrary to what the West claimed, NATO expanded aggressively in eastern Europe.

Thus, despite assurances made by US to Russia's Gorbachev in 1989-90 that NATO would not expand eastward, the US-led NATO did expand in eastern Europe, taking in new countries, including some that were a part of the erstwhile USSR, taking the total number of its members to 30. This expansion began from 1997 under the Clinton administration, with Mr. Biden personally supervising it. In 1999, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland became part of NATO. In 2004, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO. Albania and Croatia joined the alliance in 2009. Montenegro joined it in 2017, and North Macedonia in 2020. During most of these phases Mr. Biden has been at the helm of affairs in US in various capacities, from Secretary of State to Vice-President to President of the US.



SOURCE: Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, <http://en.riss.ru/>.

This expansion took place because of Russia's ingrained apathy and threat perception with regard to NATO, reminding the former that in the event of another European war, Russia would be left with no buffers and would be completely isolated. And US's fickle track record could not be trusted.

A QUESTIONABLE RECORD: THRIVING ON WAR:

“War is no longer the legitimate child of ambition and earth-hunger, but the bastard offspring of wealth-hunger or commercialism with political ambition as its putative father” – Sri Aurobindo (CWSA 25: 494).

In the Russia-Ukraine war, history will judge Russia for the disastrous blunder it committed. It will also judge the US for instigating this war. Russia's insecurity about NATO stemmed not just due to its expansion in eastern Europe, but also due to its practical track record which belies its claim of being a 'defensive organization'. History bears this out. Russia had noted how the NATO had militarily intervened and bombed Yugoslavia, a non-NATO country, and took sides against the Serbs who were Russian allies and did so without sanction from the UN Security Council. NATO's regime-change exploits in Libya and Afghanistan – which they liked to term as 'nation-building' instead of invasion – killing thousands of civilians, were also well-known. Its record in other third-world countries has been hardly any better.

Indeed, the US has always been the architect of warfare in the contemporary era. According to American historian Peter Kuznick, *“War is big business for US.”* It has used war as a means for the fulfillment of its commercial interests. NATO's military record fortified the Russian concern that it does not

want NATO at its doorstep. Russia's "security concerns" are not a recent plea manufactured by Putin as an excuse to invade Ukraine, but are being reiterated by Russia for the last three decades. Among others, Biden's CIA director, William Burns, has been warning about the provocative effect of NATO expansion on Russia since 1995. Russia had warned multiple times that NATO expansion is a red line for it which may force it to resort to war or military action. Despite this, the US placed American rockets in Poland and Romania and armed Ukraine.

In June 1997, 50 prominent foreign policy experts signed an open letter to Clinton, saying, "We believe that the current U.S. led effort to expand NATO ... is a policy error of historic proportions" that would "unsettle European stability." (Sunny 2022). In 2008, Burns, the then American ambassador to Moscow, wrote to US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice: "Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of all redlines for the Russian elite (not just Putin). In more than two and a half years of conversations with key Russian players, from knuckle-draggers in the dark recesses of the Kremlin to Putin's sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests." (Sunny 2022). George Kennan, who was the architect of the American Cold War era policy of containment of communism, had warned in the 1990s that NATO expansion was "a strategic blunder of potentially epic proportions." (Aleem 2022). British author and expert Anatol Lieven had said of NATO expansion that Russians had always "warned that if this went as far as taking in Georgia and Ukraine, then there would be confrontation and strong likelihood of war." (Aleem 2022).

Despite this, NATO has expanded aggressively. The continuous and steady expansion of NATO eastward, the US

support for the ‘colour revolutions’ in eastern countries like Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, and Kyrgyzstan in 2005, and, US support for Georgia’s and Ukraine’s desire to join NATO fomented much distrust.

The Situation became particularly tense in 2008 after the West gave an ‘assurance’ to Ukraine and Georgia that they will eventually be made members of the NATO – without specifying any timeline or concrete commitment for the same. This even led to Russia going to war against Georgia in 2008. The US’s facile assurance on which it did not plan to make good has been one of the principal causes which has enabled the West to prey on western and central Ukrainians’ hatred for Russia, making Ukraine an active ground for conflict between Russia and US.

In 2014, when Ukraine’s pro-Russia President, Viktor Yanukovich, was ousted by the West-supported Maidan protests or the Euromaidan protests, Russia annexed Crimea. Even more damning was the leaked phone call of the then US Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, which revealed the US’ hand in the revolution and in government formation in Ukraine. Since 2014, Russia’s relations with the West have not recovered, even as NATO has continued to expand in the east.

In 2014, US’ Henry Kissinger had advised that Ukrainian politicians should stop becoming a pawn of the West or Russia and should, as the best way forward, seek reconciliation between the eastern and western regions of Ukraine. Indeed, he had suggested that “internationally [Ukraine] should pursue a posture comparable to that of Finland. That nation leaves no doubt about its fierce independence, co-operates with the west in most fields, but carefully avoids institutional hostility to Russia.” This balance could not, unfortunately be struck. And despite the high spirit of the Ukrainian people, their foreign policy was

hostage to either the West or Russia, instead of being independent. Almost every country has had much worse internal contradictions and separatist movements, but an independent country would seek reconciliation between its deeply conflict-ridden internal parts, which Ukraine had not been able to do, all the more surprising given the fact that they share broadly the same racial and religious identity – an advantage not available to most countries.

After 2014, bitterness justifiably grew so much that things could have only deteriorated from thereon. Thus, after 2014, Ukraine has justifiably, out of concern for its own security and being in a state of war with Russia, conducted joint military exercises with NATO, received advanced weapons systems from the US, such as anti-tank missiles, and hosted NATO military units. In response, Russia has also left no stone unturned in actively fueling separatism and war in the pro-Russian eastern regions of Ukraine. The region already had majority pro-Russian population which was subject to persecution by Ukrainian authorities. The Minsk Agreements signed, in the aftermath of Crimea annexation, in 2014 and 2015 have been largely ineffective in stopping the war in Ukraine's Donbass region.

Presently, Russia's calculus is influenced by the fact that the three Baltic states, now part of NATO, share borders with Russia. Belarus and Ukraine are now the only countries – belonging to a past USSR sphere of influence – that are now outside the NATO. Russia considers maintaining a buffer between NATO and itself along its southern and western border as critical to its security. While a small country like Belarus has been somewhat managed by Russia, a hostile and much larger country like Ukraine poses greater problems. Russia claims that the scenario under which Ukraine joins NATO and

gets the protection of NATO's nuclear umbrella could make it a site for hosting missile launchpads within a few hundred kilometers of Moscow, and, together with Turkey, cut off Russia's access to the Black Sea.

Putin had warned about the impending invasion since the last one year at least when Ukraine had issued a public threat that it will develop nuclear weapons unless it is allowed to join NATO. This public blackmail – which Russia saw as creating a fertile ground for Ukraine joining NATO – made Russia issue a statement saying that there will be military consequences unless this issue is resolved.

FAILING TO COOPERATE

The immediate triggers of the present conflict had been brewing for at least about a year. Ever since the Biden administration took charge, NATO once again became a flashpoint in Europe. While US's former President Trump had sought to scale back US role in NATO, arguing that Europe should take responsibility for its own security, Biden has reversed that policy.

Prior to December 2021, Russia had, for several months, been reiterating the warning that NATO should stop increasing its military deployments along Ukraine's border with Russia. These demands were rebuffed by the West. In retaliation, Putin began to amass Russia troops along the border with Ukraine since December 2021, warning, for months, of making good on the threat of military action if NATO did not withdraw. In mid-December 2021, Russia had again presented demands to the West, including the US, concerning NATO withdrawal. Despite talks between Putin and Biden, the impasse continued.

Thus, from December 2021 onwards, Russia began amassing

troops on the border with Ukraine, thereby raising the possibility of an invasion. Russia kept the troops – amassed at more than 130,000 – on standby, in a state of confrontation, even as it held a series of summits with the NATO, Germany, France, Ukraine and the US President, spanning more than two months. Despite such a long period of confrontation and talks, the two sides failed to break the impasse.

During these negotiations, Russia demanded the following –

First, it wanted an “in writing” guarantee from the West that NATO would not expand any further eastward.

Second, it wanted the removal of NATO troops from Baltic states.

Third, and most importantly, it wanted a guarantee that Ukraine would never join NATO.

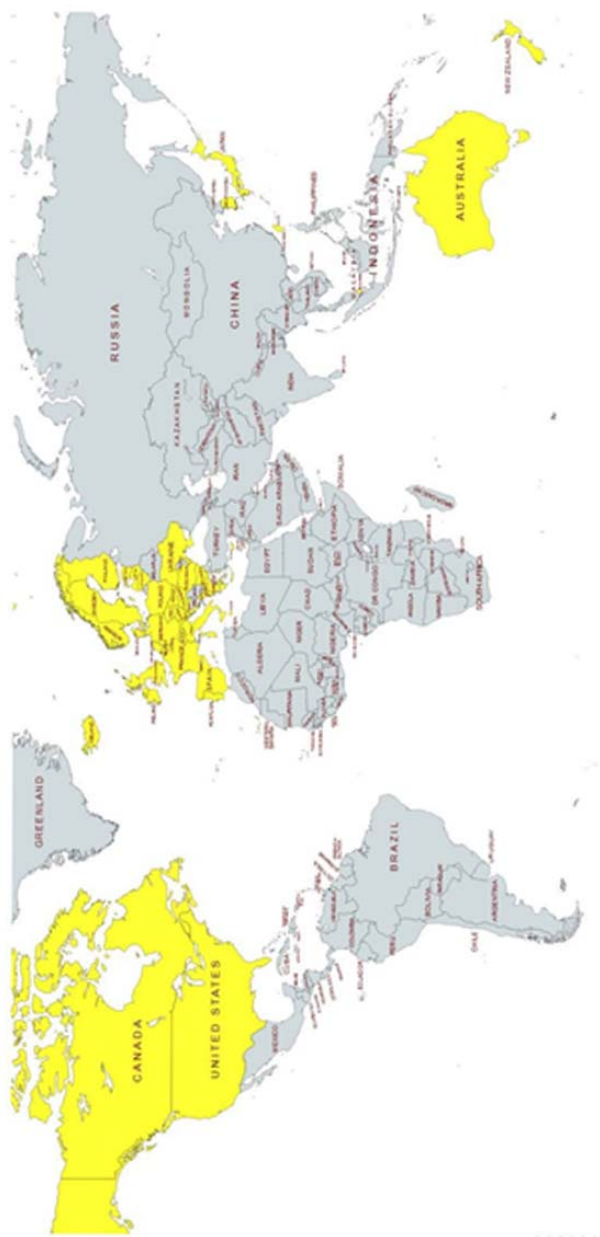
The West had rejected all of the Russian demands as non-starters, leading to a deadlock in negotiations.

RUSSIA’S BLUNDER

The failure in protracted negotiations led to Putin committing the present blunder of epic proportions, wiping out at once all international support for Russia. He invaded Ukraine in a ‘special military operation’ on February 23-24. Based on the crude idea of ‘might is right’, this blatant violation of a country’s territorial integrity found no takers in the international community. The subsequent votes that took place in the United Nations – at, both, Security Council and General Assembly – saw almost all the countries voting to condemn Russia for its actions. There were some like India and China who abstained. In order to show its neutrality, India also abstained from a Russia-sponsored resolution on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.



However, despite the fact that the majority of the world's countries have condemned the Russian act of invasion, the sanctions and refusal to do business with Russia have been endorsed only by some powerful Western countries.



Source: Bremmer (2022)

Even the sanctions imposed by these countries are qualified, with the strictest sanctions being imposed by the United States – in areas where it is convenient to do so.

SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA:

Military:

Ban on the export of dual-use goods – items with both a civilian and military purpose – imposed by the UK, EU and US.

As a result, Ukraine says Russia's main armoured vehicle factory has run out of parts to make and repair tanks and a tractor plant has stopped production because of a shortage of foreign-made parts.

The UK is also imposing sanctions on Russia's Wagner Group – a Russian private military firm.

Flights:

All Russian flights have been banned from US, UK, EU and Canadian airspace.

The UK has also banned private jets chartered by Russians.

Luxury goods

The UK says it will ban the export of luxury goods to Russia. The EU has already imposed a ban.

The UK will also put a 35% tax on some imports from Russia, including vodka.

Targeting individuals

The US, EU and UK have together sanctioned over 1,000 Russian individuals and businesses, who are considered close to the Kremlin.

Oil and gas

The US is banning all Russian oil and gas imports and the UK will phase out Russian oil imports by the end of 2022. However, the *US has refused to ban the import of critical Uranium from Russia*. These imports made up about 16% of the US's uranium supply in 2020 (Russian allies Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan provided another 30%). *US's oil and gas imports from Russia are minuscule, making the oil and gas sanctions easy to administer.*

The EU, which gets a quarter of its oil and 40% of its gas from Russia, says it will switch to alternative supplies “*well before 2030*”.

Germany has put on hold permission for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to open.

Japan has refused to put on hold its Sakhalin-2 LNG project with Russia, claiming that it is critical to its energy security.

Financial measures

Western countries have frozen the assets of Russia's central bank, depriving it of its \$630bn of foreign currency reserves, causing the ruble to slump by 22% since the start of the year, leading to a rise in the price of imported goods and a 14% rise in Russia's rate of inflation.

Some Russian banks are being removed from the international financial messaging system Swift, which is used to transfer money across borders. This will delay payments to Russia for energy exports. However, it is ineffective as Russia is demanding payment in rubles for trade to happen (BBC 2022).

As is evident, the scope of the sanctions, though wide,

continues to be hampered due to lack of depth. While European countries may have symbolically condemned Russia at the UN, they have still been reluctant to go all-out in imposing sanctions.

US has refrained from sanctioning Russia in areas where it imports substantive amounts of goods, while oil and gas sanctions from Europe are not absolute and are contingent upon EU diversifying its supplies over a decade. US oil companies – such as Shell – had, even after the conflict, continued to purchase oil from Russia at discounted prices.

Japan has imposed facile sanctions on Russian individuals and entities, but has protected its energy interests by leaving that out of the scope of sanctions. In particular, Germany has been somewhat reluctant to stop oil and gas imports from Russia and decided to be strict about implementing financial sanctions only after the German public – around 100,000 people – took to the streets in massive anti-Russia protests. Germany's energy dependence on Russia has been a major factor in influencing the German attitude. Russia provides 27% of the German energy supply, constituting around two-thirds of its natural gas consumption. If Russian supply were halted, European economies would be massively derailed, possibly even leading to a recession.

The majority of countries that had condemned Russia have refused to sanction it, including Turkey and Israel. Each country has, therefore, pursued sanctions as per its own convenience.

However, far more effective than the sanctions regime has been the supply of military equipment and weapons, which is the one area where the western support for Ukraine has been robust. In terms of indirect troop supply also, the situation has been supportive. While the western countries could not send troops directly to Ukraine due to fears of triggering a

larger world war, they have been sending citizen-mercenaries to fight in Ukraine, many of them paid handsomely. The US also refused to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine (which would be interpreted as an act of war by Russia), refusing Poland's offer to send fighter jets to Ukraine via Poland.

However, there are tens of thousands of troops being activated and deployed by NATO countries in Eastern Europe and military aid is in full flow. Since 2014, the US has committed over USD 3 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, which has considerably helped the country. In December 2021, a USD 200 million package was additionally announced to supply military equipment to Ukraine. During the course of this conflict, the US has further approved more than USD 1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, and a total of \$2 billion since the start of the Biden administration.

The western supply of military aid to Ukraine has completely diluted Russia's conventional military superiority over Ukraine. Conventionally, Russia – a world leader in missile technology, has amongst the mightiest armed forces in the world and outstrips Ukraine in almost every other aspect, such as airpower, armed personnel, tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery guns, naval vessels and submarines. However, the military equipment received by Ukraine from the West and Ukraine's spirit of nationalism has considerably enhanced Ukraine's military and strategic advantage.

The West has supplied Ukraine with some of the most advanced and powerful weapons systems in the world. These include:

Bayraktar TB2 drones

Turkey began selling the TB2 drones to Ukraine in 2019.

Turkish officials have refused to disclose how many, but independent estimates reckon Ukraine has up to 50 TB2s.

Switchblade drones

This includes supply of 100 drones, also known as “kamikaze drone” that explode on impact.

Stinger missiles

The aid includes 800 Stinger anti-aircraft systems in addition to more than 600 already promised. This type of weapon was seen as crucial to the mujahideen’s successful guerrilla conflict in the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s. Germany has also pledged to send 500 Stinger missiles.

Javelin missiles

The Javelin is an anti-tank missile system that uses thermal imaging to find its target. The latest US package includes 2,000 of these missiles.

Portable anti-tank weapons

The US is sending 6,000 AT4 portable anti-tank weapons. European countries include Germany, which has pledged 1,000 anti-tank weapons, Norway with 2,000, and Sweden, which has delivered 5,000.











Light anti-tank Weapon missiles













The UK has sent 3,615 of these British-Swedish-made short-range next generation light anti-tank weapons, while US is sending 1000 of these.

Starstreak anti-aircraft missiles

They are known to be the fastest short-range surface-to-air missile.

Country		Weapon or Supplies
Australia		AUD \$70 million (U.S. \$51.6 million) worth of military assistance, including missiles and weapons
Austria		Helmets, body armor and 100,000 liters of fuel
Belgium		200 anti-tank weapons, 3,000 automatic rifles and 2,000 machine guns
Canada		Up to 4,500 M72 rocket launchers, 1,600 fragmentation vests, up to 7,500 hand grenades, \$1 million to buy commercial satellite high resolution & modern imagery, machine guns, pistols, carbines; 1.5 million rounds of ammunition, sniper rifles and various related equipment worth CAD \$10 million (U.S. \$7.9 million); CAD \$25 million (U.S. \$19.9 million) in military aid that could include helmets, body armor, gas masks and night vision gear
Croatia		124 million kuna (U.S. \$18.1 million) worth of rifles, machine guns and protective equipment
Czech Republic		400 million koruna (U.S. \$17.9 million) worth of non-light weapons includes 160 shoulder-fired MANPAD systems, 20 light machine guns, 132 assault rifles, 70 submachine guns, 108,000 bullets and 1,000 tactical gloves (possibly also includes 10,000 rocket-propelled grenades); 188 million koruna (U.S. \$8.4 million) worth of 4,000 mortars, 30,000 pistols, 7,000 assault rifles, 3,000 machine guns, a number of sniper rifles and 1 million bullets
Denmark		2,700 anti-tank weapons, 300 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles (returned to United States to be made operational) and protective vests
Estonia		Javelin anti-tank missiles; 9 howitzers (with German permission)
European Union		€500 million (U.S. \$551 million) of military aid

Finland		2,000 bulletproof vests, 2,000 helmets, 2,500 assault rifles and 150,000 cartridges, 1,500 single-shot anti-tank weapons and 700,000 combat ration packages
France		France has not publicly disclosed any specifics of military aid
Germany		1,000 anti-tank weapons and 500 Stinger anti-aircraft defense systems; 1,500 anti-aircraft missiles, night vision gear, 100 machine guns and ammunition; permission given to other countries to send 14 armored vehicles
Greece		Undisclosed number of portable rocket launchers, ammunition and Kalashnikov rifles
Italy		The Cabinet approved a transfer of military equipment reported to include 120 mortars, Stinger anti-aircraft missile launchers, Browning heavy machine guns, Browning rounds, light machine guns, anti-tank launchers, anti-tank shots, K-rations, radios, helmets and vests
Ireland		Body armor and fuel
Japan		Bulletproof vests, helmets and winter military uniforms
Latvia		Stinger anti-aircraft missiles
Lithuania		Stinger anti-aircraft missile systems and ammunition
Luxembourg		100 light anti-tank weapons along with four-wheel-drive vehicles and 15 military tents
Netherlands		200 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, 3,000 combat helmets and 2,000 fragmentation vests with accompanying armor plates, 100 sniper rifles with 30,000 pieces of ammunition, plus other equipment; 400 rocket-propelled grenade launchers (with German permission)
Norway		4,000 anti-tank weapons, helmets, bulletproof vests, other protective equipment

North Macedonia		Military material and equipment
Poland		Reported to be tens of thousands of shells and artillery ammunition, anti-aircraft missiles, light mortars and reconnaissance drones
Portugal		Grenades and ammunition, G3 automatic rifles and other non-lethal equipment
Romania		€3 million (U.S. \$3.3 million) worth of fuel, bulletproof vests, helmets, ammunition, military equipment and medical treatment
Slovakia		Slovakia has agreed to provide its S-300 air defense systems and MiG-29s to Ukraine "immediately" if it can get "proper" replacements in a timely manner
Slovenia		Kalashnikov rifles, ammunition and helmets
South Korea		Military equipment and uniforms
Spain		1,370 grenade launchers, 700,000 rounds of ammunition and an unspecified number of light machine guns, 20 tons of medical supplies, defensive, and personal protective equipment composed of helmets, flak jackets, and NBC (nuclear-biological-chemical) protection waistcoats
Sweden		10,000 anti-tank weapons, 5,000 helmets and 5,000 body shields
Turkey		Undisclosed number of Baykar Bayraktar TB2 armed drones
United Kingdom		More than 10,000 short-range and anti-tank missiles as well as high explosive weapons; £25 million (U.S. \$33 million) in military aid; Saxon armored vehicles; Sky Sabre air defense system (medium range anti-air missile system) to Poland with 100 personnel to operate it
United States		1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft missile systems, 4,600 Javelin anti-tank missiles, five Mi-17 helicopters, three patrol boats, four counter-artillery and counter-drone tracking radars, 2,000 light anti-armor weapons, 300 grenade launchers and ammunition; 600 shotguns and 600 machine guns; 5,000 rifles; 1,000 pistols; 25,000 sets of body armor; 25,000 helmets; nearly 40 million rounds of small arms ammunition and over 1 million grenade, mortar and artillery rounds; 70 Humvees and other vehicles, 6,000 AT-4 anti-armor systems and 100 Switchblade drones

NOTE: Exchange rate as of March 21, 2022.

Source: [Forum on the Arms Trade](#), [POLITICO staff reports](#)

Table: Joseph Gedeon / POLITICO

The advanced, unprecedented weapons supply and military aid to Ukraine and the nature of weapons provided ensure that Russia doesn't stand a chance in conventional warfare against Ukraine. This supply is matched by Ukraine's fighting spirit despite the suffering and devastation it is facing.

THE DEVASTATION OF THE WAR AND THE WILL TO RESIST

The untold amount of havoc, suffering and death wreaked by the Russian invasion will, according to UN estimates, result in one of the largest migrations in European history, if this war is prolonged. *While more than 4.5 million people have already fled Ukraine, this number is projected to significantly increase in the event of a protracted war.*

What Ukraine's lost

Civilian toll



3.9 million refugees fled Ukraine as of March 28
(9% of population)



2,909 total civilian casualties in the country
(1,119 killed and 1,790 injured)

In Donetsk and Luhansk:
1,281 civilian casualties
(360 killed and 921 injured)

Mariupol
In addition, nearly 5,000 have been killed in the besieged city, including 210 children, according to the mayor's office, though this number has not been independently verified.

Infrastructure

\$63 billion in infrastructure damage
(equal to one third of Ukraine's 2020 GDP)

The following have been damaged, destroyed, or seized by Russia:



4,431 residential buildings



138 healthcare institutions



92 factories and warehouses



378 educational institutions



8,265 kilometres of road have been destroyed
(\$27.5 billion in damages)



Eight civilian airports destroyed
(\$6.8 billion in damages)



Seven thermal and hydroelectric power plants destroyed
(\$101 million in damages)

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Source: Kyiv School of Economics, UNHCR

GZERO

It is clear to the whole world that Ukraine has stood and fought Russia all alone in this war. It has displayed a level of resistance, national resolve and unity that has surprised Russia and the whole world. Instead of despairing, Ukrainians have fought back since the very beginning of the invasion. Their common and universal refrain is that they would rather die fighting than surrender to the invader.

Common citizens have readily taken up arms and turned into soldiers in the service of their country. It must be noted

that Ukraine's President has enforced a decree banning male people from the age of 18-60 from leaving the country and compulsorily enlisting in the military to fight in the war. However, much of the resistance has also been voluntary. Ukraine's 'international legion' has also invited citizens from abroad to participate – in which various retired soldiers from different parts of the world, including India have joined. Foreign mercenaries are also being sent to the war in large numbers by the western countries. Even Russia has engaged mercenaries to fight in the war. The young are especially and readily willing to fight alongside the military. Ukraine has also enlisted its elite, albeit neo-Nazi, Azov battalion at the forefront of the battle-lines – the brutal battalion has been able to successfully repel Russia.

The war has brought to the fore the irrepressible spirit of the Ukrainian people, facing which even the invader is helpless. The attitude that they are ready to die and will fight till the last breath has effectively given Ukraine a much bigger psychological and material victory than an isolated and condemned Russia could ever imagine. It is this psychological impetus that is driving the Ukrainians – commons as well as soldiers – to repeatedly re-take even those cities and areas that Russia had conquered.

Due to the Ukrainian spirit of resistance and weapons aid to it, *Russia has faced significant losses and its military and logistical resources are being stretched, placing it in a difficult position the longer the war continues.* This supply is matched by the fact that Russia is facing unprecedented logistical difficulty, troop fatigue and losses on the battle-field. A Ukrainian newspaper, The Kyiv Independent, based on Ukrainian armed forces estimates, calculates that Russia has

lost more than 12,000 troops (including 8-9 elite commanders), 58 planes, 83 helicopters, 362 tanks, 135 artillery pieces, 1205 armored personnel carriers, 585 vehicles, etc., as of March 10th. These figures have shown how Russia's military superiority over Ukraine has been negated and was a big miscalculation on Putin's part. *It just goes onto show that psychological strength and integrity triumphs over brute physical force.*

CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS

This Ukrainian spirit and battle victories have also given Ukraine confidence in the negotiations. Thanks to the unity and nationalism of the people and the military aid flowing in from the West, Zelenskyy has been able to conduct negotiations with the Russian side on his own terms. Despite publicly declaring that Ukraine will not join NATO, Zelenskyy has refused to put this down in writing. He has also publicly stated that he is unwilling to discuss the status of the separatist eastern territories in the Donbass region, until Russia ceases the war first.

Key Issues:

Russian position:

- Legal recognition to Luhansk and Donetsk provinces in eastern region of Donbass.
- Legal and constitutional change to commit Ukraine to neutrality i.e. commitment to not join NATO.
- Restriction on arms accumulation of Ukraine.

Ukrainian position:

- Written agreement for prior legal security guarantees from Russia and the West that Ukrainian sovereignty won't be violated.

This deadlock – despite the costs of war for both Ukraine and Russia – is presently working in Ukrainians’ favour, due to their spirit of dying instead of surrendering, their superior position in the war and the support they have from the whole world. *Ukraine’s refusal to give a guarantee in written about NATO in the negotiations and demanding Russia’s ceasefire first is the result of the newfound Ukrainian spirit of confidence and nationalism. It is also based on Ukraine’s legitimate demand that first Russia give a written legal guarantee that it will not attack Ukraine in the future. This is a very important position; for, anything that comes out of these negotiations will be useless if it leaves Russia to launch a similar attack, few years later due to some imagined grievance or claims. In such a future event, Ukraine cannot possibly give a guarantee of neutrality or territorial concessions without getting its own protective guarantee in return.*

Unless Russia gives a guarantee to not attack in the future, the negotiations will remain where they are – and understandably so. Thus, despite several rounds of negotiations, first in Belarus and then in Turkey, the deadlock continues. It is obvious that, in these negotiations, Ukraine is negotiating from a superior psychological position of strength and determination to secure its permanent interests – a strength which is buttressed by the support of the entire world behind it.

INDIA’S POSITION AND LESSON TO LEARN

In this entire conflict, India has predictably been placed in a difficult position – similar to China. While it is disturbed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has used sharp language to condemn the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty, yet it has successively abstained – five times – from voting against Russia

in the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. India has maintained that the principles of UN Charter should be followed and that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations is sacrosanct. It has also – through talks at various levels, including between the Heads of State – repeatedly appealed to Russia to cease hostilities, and has kept in touch with Ukraine and sent humanitarian aid for the latter. India has – despite abstentions from UN – amply made its empathy for Ukraine very clear. India has also openly and repeatedly refuted certain fake propaganda being spread by Russia about Ukraine targeting Indian civilians in the war zone.

However, despite India’s unequivocal opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, India is also hemmed in by its complex relations with Russia – much like China has vocally supported maintaining relations with Russia, refusing to condemn it and condoning its ‘security concerns’, due to the practicality of China-Russia relations. China has also publicly criticized the sanctions against Russia, imposed by the West and is planning to host Putin for the BRICS summit. India has not done so.

In India’s case, India not only shares a historic relationship with Russia, spanning several decades, with Russia coming to India’s aid unequivocally in the events of diplomacy and war at a time when the West had isolated India, but an estimated 60-70% of India’s defence and military supplies are also from Russia. According to estimates, the share of Russian-origin weapons and systems in Indian forces is around 85% (Kaushik 2022). However, Russia’s share in India’s imports, while remaining high, has also come down, having reduced to about 50% between 2016 and 2020. Part of the reason is that several Russian deliveries were completed by 2020. However, the new

import orders placed by India in 2019-20 will likely increase the import share from Russia.

Russia – for decades – has supplied some of the most sensitive and important weapons systems that India has required, including nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, tanks, guns, fighter jets, missiles etc. At a time when the Western countries – despite relations with India – refused to supply strategic advanced weapons systems to India, Russia was the only country to supply India with nuclear-powered submarines, in many cases even transferring the technology. India's biggest weapons export system is the Brahmos missile, jointly developed with Russia, including much of India's missile platform. India even went to the extent of defying potential US sanctions to import the coveted S-400 missile systems from Russia – one of the world's most advanced missile systems that even Turkey and Saudi Arabia defied US sanctions for.

India has also been in talks with Russia to lease two nuclear ballistic submarines, the first of which would be delivered by 2025. India has also commissioned an indigenously manufactured nuclear ballistic submarine, but most of the technology is based on Russian platforms. India's only aircraft carrier in service – INS Vikramaditya – is also Soviet-made. Russia has supplied most of India's fighter aircraft, and has also supplied the Indian navy's sole operational aircraft carrier and the entirety of navy's fighter and ground attack aircraft.

With a 60-70% supply parts dependency on Russia, any halt of Russian spares and logistical supply will punch a hole in our weapons systems which will cost India dear in the event of a confrontation with China or Pakistan. In the wake of tensions with China after 2020, Russia emerged as a key

diplomatic mediator, with the Indian and Chinese foreign and defence ministers meeting in Russia to smoothen their relations. Indeed, at the height of the Galwan confrontation with China, India's Defence Minister travelled to Russia to ensure that military supplies continued smoothly.

At the same time, India – like many other countries – also realizes that neither West nor Russia nor any other country will come to India's aid in the event of a future crisis. Notwithstanding India's symbolic abstentions at international fora, Indian statements and actions have amply conveyed that India's empathy lies with Ukraine in this conflict. PM Modi – even while constantly in touch with Putin – has also maintained regular contact with Ukraine's Zelenskyy.

Indeed, it is more apt to interpret that India's position is being calibrated according to changing course of the invasion. India's statements at the UN have made it clear that it has abandoned the principle of neutrality in favour of actively criticizing the war and appealing for peace, just short of criticizing Russia directly. Israel has also in its statements appealed for peace, intermediated between Russia and Ukraine, but Naftali Bennet has refused to outright criticize Russia. Indeed, in a phone call with Zelenskyy, Bennett advised him to compromise in the interest of saving the lives of people from further bloodshed. China has adopted a similarly changing and calibrating position, as has Turkey.

However, the conflict has now taken such a turn – with deadlocked negotiations and Russian unwillingness to cease attacks even as negotiations proceed – that most of the countries, especially India and China are being placed in a difficult position.

Under such circumstances, India should, and would be eventually forced to, come out in the open, take a strong stand and criticize Russia for its illegal invasion.

There is also the valuable lesson of nationalism and unity that India ought to take from Ukraine. The Russian invasion of Ukraine should open India's eyes to what would happen if a similar scenario unfolded in India. No military capability alone can save India if the spirit of nationalism continues to elude us. While Ukraine has stood united against the invader, the Indian mentality, over the centuries, has been such that it can sell-out even the country for its own selfish interests. This is not only borne out in the case of historical colonial invasions of India, where powerful sections of Indian elite have always sat in the lap of the invaders, but is also true of the present.

Presently also, the Indian elite – who control India's institutions, the whole system and education – are always raising their voice in favour of powers and forces that are hostile to national interest. Whenever there is conflict with Pakistan or China or whenever there are fundamentalist Islamic protests against India or some foreign or domestic scheme to defame India, this elite always sides with the anti-national powers. If such was the mentality in Ukraine, it would have already been captured. The reason such secular elite could thrive in India was because of enfeebled and emasculated attitude of majority of Hindu population of the country that has sought to prioritize selfishness over nationalism.

More than any external, outer machinery of defence, it is the spirit that matters. Ukraine had little outer machinery compared to Russia, but its spirit was unstoppable. That is why it could stand firm and rally the support of the whole

world. *The Indian government's steps to become self-reliant in defence are commendable indeed and India does have high military capability, but the fundamental spirit of nationalism – which alone can lead to outer victory – is wanting. This is the main lesson India ought to learn from this war.*

TOWARDS GREATER INSECURITY

Russia's invasion of Ukraine signifies an unprovoked attack on the sovereignty of a smaller, non-nuclear nation. It has many implications for the future of the world order, which are as follows –

First, it lays bare the inefficacy of existing international and bilateral agreements and the toothlessness of what is touted as a 'rules-based' international order. Under an international agreement called the Budapest Memorandum signed in 1994, supervised by the UK, Russia and the US, Ukraine had undergone complete de-nuclearization between 1996 and 2001, relinquishing its third-largest nuclear arsenal in the world to Russia for decommissioning. The memorandum prohibited Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States from threatening or using military force or economic coercion against Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. This enabled the three countries to give up their nuclear arsenal and to become a part of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear states.

In return for de-nuclearization and membership of the Non Proliferation regime, Ukraine sought legally-binding guarantees from the US that it would intervene in the event of an attack on Ukraine's sovereignty – which the US did not agree to. In the final agreement, Ukraine settled for a diluted and weaker 'security assurance' to respect "the independence and

sovereignty and existing borders of Ukraine” and the “obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine”. The memorandum committed the signatories to not use their weapons against Ukraine “except in self-defense or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.” It also stated that the signatories would “seek immediate UNSC action to provide assistance to Ukraine” if it was threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons. This was an assurance, but not a security guarantee, with the meaning of the term ‘security assurance’ being left deliberately vague. Often, the US has interpreted it as meaning assisting Ukraine in the event of conflict through the supply of military weapons (Borda 2022).

The West and Russia have repeatedly contravened the spirit of the Budapest Memorandum. During the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent response of the West in the form of economic sanctions, the toothlessness of the agreement was evident. In the subsequent years, the West has consolidated Ukraine’s military capabilities, but even in the case of the present invasion, the response of the West has been limited to military and financial aid, leaving Ukraine to fend for itself on the basis of its own capabilities and spirit, against a nuclear-armed neighbour.

This contravention of the agreement by both Russia and the West is making the Ukrainian public revisit the wisdom of giving up the country’s nuclear arsenal in the face of what now appears to be an ineffective security assurance. The pervasive thinking now is that, perhaps, possessing nuclear weapons could have acted as a deterrent against Russia. For, the probability of a war among nuclear-armed neighbours is lower, as nuclear weapons act as a deterrent due to the zero-

sum outcomes – of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) – that would result from their use.

Second, there is a dawning realization that the fate of Ukraine can befall anyone tomorrow and that self-reliance and spirited resistance is key. The resistance put up by Ukraine has drawn out the war longer and put Russia in a precarious position – if Russia uses harsher weapons and massacres civilians it will be treated as a war crime and Russia would permanently become an international pariah, and, it has reached a point in invasion where it is reluctant to exit without an honorable, face-saving way out. The latter crucially depends on whether Ukraine yields to – presently, watered down – Russian demands of not joining NATO and recognizing the independent status of the eastern provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk. Russia is ready to ‘immediately’ stop the war if Ukraine does this. This will come more as a relief to the beaten Russian side and give them a way out. Ukraine’s citizens are anyway prepared to die to defend their sovereignty.

The Ukrainian resistance sets an important precedent in international politics. It shows that random, unprovoked attack on another country’s sovereignty is unacceptable in a civilized order of things. If Russia had succeeded in its misadventure, it would have set an extremely wrong precedent for other countries. The message would have simply been that might is right. While this message is still there, to some extent, it is diluted.

But the initial audacity of Russia has now put other countries on a path towards self-reliance and rapid militarization – even ‘pacifist’ nations like Germany and Japan. Germany has announced a 100 billion Euro fund to modernize its military

and decided to raise defence spending from 1.5% of GDP to 2% of the GDP. Japan's former Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, argued that "Japan should break a longstanding taboo and hold an active debate on nuclear weapons – including a possible 'nuclear-sharing' programme" (Borda 2022). Japan is also pressurizing the US to station some of its nuclear arsenal on Japanese territory. It has also demanded to know US's position on Taiwan, in the event of a potential Chinese attack. Taiwan is also insecure about what China may do tomorrow. India swung into action on the very day Russia attacked Ukraine, holding a conference on self-reliance in defence. For every country, there now persists the thinking that we are all potentially Ukraine.

Third, there is also a realization among countries – especially US allies – that the West, especially the US, will not be of much help in the event of a conflict. They are on their own. During Cold War, due to division of world into 'spheres of influence' between US and USSR, competitive aid to countries for warfare was justified. But now this is no longer the case. The world is not divided into competitive spheres of influence between two great powers.

It is a multi-polar world, where every country is responsible for itself. It is also a precarious nuclear-armed world with rising reliance on artificial intelligence in warfare, in which no country would prefer seeking confrontation for the sake of another country. The international institutions are also weak, as are moral principles. While world has rallied behind Ukraine today, it may not always do so. For example, China rubbished the treaty with the British and integrated Hong Kong, with little that anyone could do. Same may happen with Taiwan tomorrow. EU and US might not be as forthcoming in the

defence of an Asian country as they were for Ukraine – which is located in the heart of Europe – as they would not like to get involved in Asia.

In such a world, there is rise of insecurity and new forms of warfare. This insecurity and paranoia – combined with our egoistic inability to control the vital organization of external, automated machinery set-up by us – will only rise in times to come. This will pull the world into a far worse vortex than ever witnessed before, of which Russia-Ukraine war might only have been a diluted preface.

WAR AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

“Only when man has developed not merely a fellow-feeling with all men, but a dominant sense of unity and commonalty, only when he is aware of them not merely as brothers, – that is a fragile bond, – but as parts of himself, only when he has learned to live not in his separate personal and communal ego-sense, but in a larger universal consciousness can the phenomenon of war, with whatever weapons, pass out of his life without the possibility of return” – Sri Aurobindo (CWSA 25: 611).

The pace at which the humanity is moving towards its self-destruction, buttressed by the scientific and technological means available at its disposal, has once again brought war to the centre-stage of world relations. The Russia-Ukraine war is a harbinger of the destruction of the fragile world order built on a false façade of liberal internationalism, as symbolized by institutions like the United Nations, and run on the whims of a few powerful countries. Amongst the most understated points of this war has been its brutality, which has been downplayed in the egoistic din of who is winning and who is losing. But

some of the glimpses – as evidenced through the Bucha killings and torture of unarmed Ukrainian civilians – have come through due to the sheer brutality of the event. As per the mayor’s office in Mariupol, the place where Russia bombed a maternity hospital, nearly 5,000 people had been killed there alone (Crawford 2022). On the Russian side, on March 24, NATO officials estimated that there have been between 7,000 and 15,000 Russian military deaths (Crawford 2022). To think that this loss of lives and sheer suffering was completely unnecessary and the result of the whims and ego of an imperialist maniac once again lays bare the frailty of the international system evolved after the Second World War.

This fragile outer machinery is now under assault with the psychological damage already inflicted. It has taken us back to the 20th century era which was marked by wars, showing us how precarious and futile our arrangements and agreements are in the absence of the inner dynamism of the soul and the psychic being. For the sake of our endless greed and selfishness, we have looted the earth and advanced warfare. The selfishness that pervades our nature and lives is what drives our mechanical political machinery to subvert the basic principles of nationalism and national spirit. The perversion at the heart of the present war will likely project itself to relations between other nation-states and lead to much worse conditions for humanity, unless this war is conclusively ended with Russia being humbled and disabused of its assertion.

ANNEXURES:

BUDAPEST AGREEMENT OF 1994

No. 52241

**Ukraine, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of
Great Britain
and Northern Ireland
and
United States of America**

**Memorandum on security assurances in connection with
Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Budapest, 5
December 1994**

Entry into force: 5 December 1994 by signature

Authentic texts: English, Russian and Ukrainian

Registration with the Secretariat of the United Nations:
Ukraine, 2 October 2014

Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America,

Welcoming the Accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon state,

Taking into account the commitment of Ukraine to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period of time,

Noting the changes in the world-wide security situation, including the end of the Cold War, which have brought about conditions for deep reductions in nuclear forces,

Confirm the following:

1. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the CSCE Final Act, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.
2. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used

against Ukraine except in self-defense or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

3. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the Principles of the CSCE Final Act, to refrain from economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by Ukraine of the rights inherent in its sovereignty and thus to secure advantages of any kind.
4. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, as a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.
5. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America reaffirm, in the case of Ukraine, their commitment not to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, except in the case of an attack on themselves, their territories or dependent territories, their

armed forces, or their allies, by such a state in association or alliance with a nuclear weapon state.

6. Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America will consult in the event a situation arises which raises a question concerning these commitments.

This Memorandum will become applicable upon signature.

Signed in four copies having equal validity in the Ukrainian, English, and Russian languages.

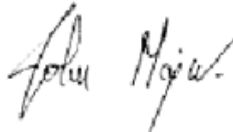
ЗА УКРАЇНУ:
ЗА УКРАИНУ:
FOR UKRAINE:



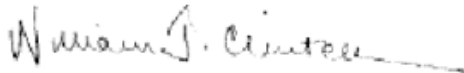
ЗА РОСІЙСЬКУ ФЕДЕРАЦІЮ:
ЗА РОССИЙСКУЮ ФЕДЕРАЦИЮ:
FOR THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION:



ЗА СПОЛУЧЕНЕ КОРОЛІВСТВО
ВЕЛИКОЇ БРИТАНІЇ
І ПІВНІЧНОЇ ІРЛАНДІЇ:
ЗА СОЕДИНЕННЕ КОРОЛЕВСТВО
ВЕЛИКОЇ БРИТАНІЇ
И СЕВЕРНОЇ ІРЛАНДІЇ:
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND:



ЗА СПОЛУЧЕНІ ШТАТИ АМЕРИКИ:
ЗА СОЕДИНЕННІЕ ШТАТЫ АМЕРИКИ:
FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:



Будапешт, 5 грудня 1994 року

MINSK AGREEMENT OF 2015

Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements

1. Immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine and its strict implementation as of 15 February 2015, 12am local time.

2. Withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides by equal distances in order to create a security zone of at least 50km wide from each other for the artillery systems of caliber of 100 and more, a security zone of 70km wide for MLRS and 140km wide for MLRS Tornado-S, Uragan, Smerch and Tactical Missile Systems (Tochka, Tochka U): -for the Ukrainian troops: from the de facto line of contact; -for the armed formations from certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine: from the line of contact according to the Minsk Memorandum of Sept. 19th, 2014; The withdrawal of the heavy weapons as specified above is to start on day 2 of the ceasefire at the latest and be completed within 14 days. The process shall be facilitated by the OSCE and supported by the Trilateral Contact Group.

3. Ensure effective monitoring and verification of the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons by the OSCE from day 1 of the withdrawal, using all technical equipment necessary, including satellites, drones, radar equipment, etc.

4. Launch a dialogue, on day 1 of the withdrawal, on modalities of local elections in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and the Law of Ukraine “On interim local self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk

regions” as well as on the future regime of these areas based on this law. Adopt promptly, by no later than 30 days after the date of signing of this document a Resolution of the Parliament of Ukraine specifying the area enjoying a special regime, under the Law of Ukraine “On interim self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions”, based on the line of the Minsk Memorandum of September 19, 2014.

5. Ensure pardon and amnesty by enacting the law prohibiting the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that took place in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

6. Ensure release and exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons, based on the principle “all for all”. This process is to be finished on the day 5 after the withdrawal at the latest.

7. Ensure safe access, delivery, storage, and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need, on the basis of an international mechanism.

8. Definition of modalities of full resumption of socio-economic ties, including social transfers such as pension payments and other payments (incomes and revenues, timely payments of all utility bills, reinstating taxation within the legal framework of Ukraine). To this end, Ukraine shall reinstate control of the segment of its banking system in the conflict-affected areas and possibly an international mechanism to facilitate such transfers shall be established.

9. Reinstatement of full control of the state border by the government of Ukraine throughout the conflict area, starting on day 1 after the local elections and ending after the comprehensive political settlement (local elections in certain

areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions on the basis of the Law of Ukraine and constitutional reform) to be finalized by the end of 2015, provided that paragraph 11 has been implemented in consultation with and upon agreement by representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group.

10. Withdrawal of all foreign armed formations, military equipment, as well as mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine under monitoring of the OSCE. Disarmament of all illegal groups.

11. Carrying out constitutional reform in Ukraine with a new constitution entering into force by the end of 2015 providing for decentralization as a key element (including a reference to the specificities of certain areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, agreed with the representatives of these areas), as well as adopting permanent legislation on the special status of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in line with measures as set out in the footnote until the end of 2015.

12. Based on the Law of Ukraine “On interim local self-government order in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions”, questions related to local elections will be discussed and agreed upon with representatives of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group. Elections will be held in accordance with relevant OSCE standards and monitored by OSCE/ODIHR.

13. Intensify the work of the Trilateral Contact Group including through the establishment of working groups on the implementation of relevant aspects of the Minsk agreements. They will reflect the composition of the Trilateral Contact Group.

Participants of the Trilateral Contact Group:

Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini_____

Second President of Ukraine, L. D. Kuchma_____

Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ukraine, M. Yu. Zurabov_____

A.W. Zakharchenko_____

I.W. Plotnitski_____

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ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND THE RISE OF NEW POLITICS

The assembly election results of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur herald yet another beginning for the country. They indicate the trend of rising political consolidation in India, which has not been seen before the last few decades. This is especially the case considering that these results have come in the backdrop of the extended farmers' protests that had continued for more than a year, especially in areas of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab and, to an extent, Uttarakhand. The results lay waste to typical assumptions about Indian political patterns, and, about power of identities and protests.

The general assumption that the party ruling at the Centre does not perform very well in states, due to the divergence between national and state level dynamic has been disproven. This has dealt a blow to the fiefdom of regional parties, which have not been able to capitalize on divisive caste-based identities. Rather, BJP's unification of Hindutva consciousness, combined with an efficient and effective delivery of basic public services and goods, has rendered it a party of choice for most of the electorate. This rising above petty social and economic issues, about seeing motivated protests as fake, and rising above sectarian identities and looking at the larger interest signifies the maturing of Indian polity and a sharpening of Indian national consciousness.

STATE-WISE ELECTION RESULTS:

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) retained power in four out

of the five states that went to polls. In all these four states, the incumbent government belonged to the BJP, whereas in Punjab due to severe anti-incumbency, anger against the Centre and state-specific conditions, Aam Admi Party (AAP) was voted to power.

UTTAR PRADESH: A COMPREHENSIVE CONSOLIDATION

In UP, this is the first time that the same party is forming the government after 1985, thereby indicating the comprehensiveness of the BJP victory. The BJP comfortably crossed the majority mark and even managed to increase its vote-share compared to 2017 elections, although its seat-share declined compared to 2017 elections.

	Vote share (%) 2022	Vote share (%) 2017	Seat share 2022	Seat share 2017
BJP+	41.29	39.67	255	312
SP+	32.06	21.82	111	47
BSP	12.8	22.2	1	19
Congress	2.33	6.25	2	7
Others	4.9	7.7	2	6

Phase-wise Results of UP:

- Phase 1 (58 seats) - BJP+: 46 (**all BJP**), SP+: 12 (**SP: 5, RLD: 7**)
- Phase 2 (55 seats) - BJP+: 32 (**all BJP**), SP+: 23 (**all SP**)
- Phase 3 (59 seats) - BJP+: 44 (**BJP: 41, ADS: 3**), SP+: 15 (**SP: 14, RLD: 1**)

- Phase 4 (59 seats) - BJP+: 49 (**BJP: 48, ADS: 1**), SP+: 10 (**all SP**)
- Phase 5 (61 seats) - BJP+: 36 (**BJP: 32:, ADS: 4**), SP+: 22 (**all SP**), Others: 3 (**Cong: 1, JSDL: 2**)
- Phase 6 (57 seats) - BJP+: 39 (**BJP: 35, ADS: 1, NISHAD: 3**), SP+: 16 (**SP: 14, SBSP: 2**), Others: 2 (**BSP: 1, Cong: 1**)
- Phase 7 (54 seats) - BJP+: 27 (**BJP: 21, ADS: 3, NISHAD: 3**), SP+: 27 (**SP: 23, SBSP: 4**)
- Total (403 seats) - BJP+: 273 (**BJP: 255, ADS: 12, NISHAD: 6**), SP+: 125 (**SP: 111, RLD: 8, SBSP: 6**), Others: 5 (**Cong: 2, JSDL: 2, BSP: 1**)

Source: (Bose and Menon 2022)

In UP, the BJP managed to retain and expand the support of its core voter base belonging to Hindu castes, women, beneficiaries of welfare schemes and even the farmers.

	BJP+	BJP+	SP+	SP+	BSP	BSP	INC	INC
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022
Brahmin (7%)	83	89	7	6	2	-	1	1
Rajput/Thakur (7%)	70	87	11	7	9	2	3	1
Vaishya (2%)	71	83	11	12	3	1	-	1
Other upper castes (2%)	70	78	15	17	5	1	2	2
Jat (2%)	38	54	57	33	3	12	1	-
Yadav (11%)	10	12	68	83	2	2	14	1
Kurmi (5%)	63	66	16	25	7	3	5	4
Koeri, Maurya, Kushwaha, Saini (4%)	56	64	18	22	22	4	-	2

Kewat, Kashyap, Mallah, Nishad (4%)	74	63	7	26	15	7	1	2
Other OBCs (16%)	62	66	15	23	11	4	4	3
Jatav (12%)	8	21	3	9	87	65	<1	1
Other SC (8%)	32	41	11	23	44	27	2	4
Muslim (19%)	6	8	46	79	19	6	19	3

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The BJP spectacularly increased its vote-share among all castes (except Mallahs). The inroads made among traditional BSP voters – Jatav Dalits – was particularly impressive, as was the substantial rise in the party’s Jat vote-share, despite the politically-motivated farmers’ protest. Even Yadav and Muslim vote-share of the party saw a minor increase. The speculations about Brahmins and other upper castes being disgruntled with BJP were superficial, as the upper caste vote-share of the party also saw an impressive rise.

The SP’s rise in vote-share among different castes – except Jats and upper castes – was also substantive. The party could successfully improve its performance among non-Yadav OBCs and Jatav and non-Jatav Dalits. The Muslim and Yadav vote was also heavily consolidated in its favour, much more so than before. Interestingly, the community at the epicenter of farmers protests – the Jats – thoroughly rejected the SP-RLD alliance.

The BSP saw a loss among almost all castes. This election also saw its traditional Jatav and non-Jatav Dalits heavily deserting the party. The election results sound a death-knell

for the BSP, while for the Congress the less spoken the better it is. The party has written its own obituary. Its performance has not gone beyond early single-digits in case of any caste, and it has lost whatever little support it had of Yadavs and Muslims as well.

Besides the caste arithmetic, the UP elections also saw the effect of choices of farmers, women, the silent beneficiaries of welfare schemes and religious consolidation having an impact on the outcomes.

	BJP+ (%)	SP+ (%)	BSP (%)
Hindu	54	26	14
Muslim	8	79	6
Farmers (14%)	43	39	13
Farm labour (8%)	42	34	17
Non-farmers	46	36	12
Women	46	33	15
Men	44	39	11

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

Among Hindus, both BJP and SP increased their vote-share. The BJP vote-share went up from 47% in 2017 to 54% in 2022, while SP's vote-share went up from 19% in 2017 to 26% in 2022. It was also the case that *Hindu consolidation behind the BJP was far greater in constituencies with higher Muslim population, while SP performed its best among Hindus in constituencies where Muslim population was less than 10%. This shows that higher Muslim population led to greater religious polarization.*

One of the key highlights of the UP election was the emergence of the silent voter that massively benefitted from the Yogi government's and central government's efficient delivery of welfare services.

Schemes	% of beneficiary households
Free ration	80
Subsidized ration under Public Distribution System (PDS)	60
Kisan Samman Nidhi for farming households	57
Ujjwala scheme	46
Health insurance	30
Money in bank account due to other schemes	27
Assistance to build houses	21
Agricultural schemes	19
Waiver of bills and loans	17
Free/cheap water and electricity	16
Financial assistance for marriage	15
Skill development and employment	13

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

It is clear that the majority of people have massively benefitted from free ration, PDS and Kisan Samman Nidhi schemes. Some of the voter beneficiaries of these schemes voted for the BJP. In many cases, where the scheme coverage was poor, people still voted for BJP, while in cases where the

scheme coverage was wide (like free ration), people did not vote as a whole for BJP. This shows that while welfare schemes do improve electoral prospects, they cannot be sufficient alone in ensuring victory.

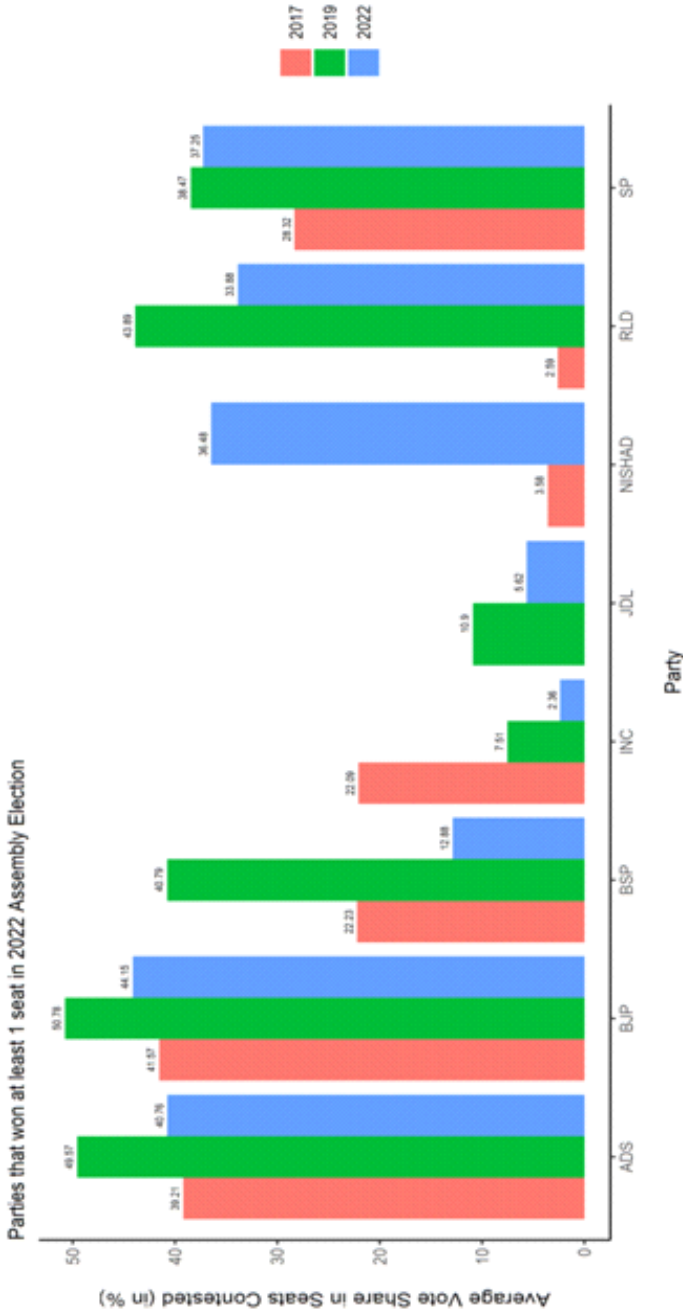
The UP election results signal a new consolidation for the BJP. They are bound to have an impact at the national level. They are significant for many reasons.

First, while the SP did make progress compared to its dismal performance in previous elections, yet it benefitted mainly from the transfer of votes from BSP and Congress – both of which stand decimated in the state. It could not however, despite its best efforts, alliances and support to the toxic politics of farmers' movement, wean away any votes from the BJP. Indeed, the BJP managed to further consolidate its core vote share.

Second, the BJP has a much superior strike rate – the vote-share on the seats contested – compared to SP. This is the real indicator of performance. The BJP's strike rate was much higher than the 2017 elections and much higher than the SP, although lower than BJP's own performance in the 2019 elections.

In terms of margins also, on an average, the BJP's candidates won with the highest margins, almost double that of SP. Even the two and one seat(s) that Congress and BSP won respectively, were won with very low margins. This shows the clear and decisive advantage that the BJP holds over others in the state (Hasin 2022).

Uttar Pradesh: Party-wise Average Vote Share in Seats Contested (2017-2022)



Data Source: Trivedi Centre for Political Data, Ashoka University
 Prof. Fahad Hasan (@fahadhm)

Third, SP performed best in areas that contain the largest share of its core support base – Yadavs in Lower Doab, Muslims in Rohilkhand. This limitation of the SP and the failure of SP-RLD alliance to dent the BJP was predictable. Despite trying its best to raise issues such as unemployment, the Hathras rape incident, farmer protests, price rise and Covid mismanagement, the issues did not resonate enough with the voters to seek a change of guard. The immense improvement seen under the Yogi government in terms of infrastructure, welfare, lack of corruption and law and order overshadowed all political controversies raked up by the Opposition.

Fourth, the farmer agitation was assumed to have hit BJP hard in Western UP specifically in the early phases. However, contrary to expectations, BJP's lead over SP in terms of vote share is extremely high in the early phases of election, with even SP ally, RLD, managing to win just 8 out of 33 seats, registering a very low strike rate. While SP's core Muslim-Yadav voters backed RLD, Jat voters seem to have not shown reciprocity.

UTTARAKHAND: A VICTORY AGAINST ODDS

The case of Uttarakhand proved nearly all exit polls wrong. Despite changing its Chief Ministers thrice and despite performing disappointingly during the 2020 COVID19 lockdown, the BJP kept trying to get its act together in the state and finally found the right person in Pushkar Singh Dhama. The latest Chief Minister single-handedly snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat for the BJP. This is also a unique case where the state has seen the same party come to power successively, beating the trend of a different party coming every five years.

	Seat share 2022	Seat share 2017	Vote share 2022 (%)	Vote share 2017 (%)
BJP	47	57	44.3	46.5
Congress	19	11	37.9	33.5

The results indicate a combination of popularity of the central government as well as for the short performance of Pushkar Dhami. Efficient delivery of welfare schemes also had a substantial impact on the outcome.

	Congress		BJP		BSP		AAP
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2022
Brahmin (12%)	28	26	52	63	1	1	2
Thakur (33%)	29	26	53	60	3	1	3
Other upper caste (7%)	20	25	68	56	-	1	5
OBC (7%)	25	18	54	58	13	9	5
Dalit (19%)	23	48	37	26	27	16	3
Muslim (14%)	78	77	10	6	3	5	5
Others (8%)	42	46	46	34	-	-	5

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The BJP managed to increase its vote-share among all castes except Dalits and Muslims, where its vote-share lowered. The key to BJP's victory was the heavy consolidation of the Brahmin and Thakur vote behind it. This consolidation was seen across the regional divides of Garhwal and Kumaon.

	Garhwal		Kumaon		Maidan	
	Congress	BJP	Congress	BJP	Congress	BJP
Brahmin	17	77	31	54	59	3
Thakur	28	65	21	56	54	3
Dalit	49	38	64	22	25	37

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

While the BJP performed well across the regional divide of Kumaon and Garhwal, yet in Maidan area it considerably lagged behind the Congress. While BJP's sitting CM lost from his seat, his seven-month stint as the Chief Minister far outweighed the entire 4.5 year tenure of the previous BJP Chief Ministers. The seat from which he lost was in the Maidan area, where the Congress had greater foothold.

	Trivendra Singh Rawat's 4-year tenure	Pushkar Singh Dhami's 7-month tenure
Satisfied (%)	33	59
Dissatisfied (%)	61	32

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The overall performance of the BJP in Uttarakhand has belied all exit poll predictions of a hung verdict or a Congress victory, as they failed to anticipate the level of support and turnaround engineered by the Dhama government in just a few months.

THE PUNJAB VERDICT: A CLEAN SWEEP FOR AAP:

The Punjab election results were another surprise that dealt a blow to the Congress in Punjab. Despite having a strong, decades-old social and political base in the state and supporting the subversive farmers' protest, the Congress performed badly in Punjab. The change of Chief Minister from Captain Amarinder Singh to the Dalit face of Charanjit Singh Channi did not work out for the party.

	Seat share 2017	Seat share 2022	Vote share 2017 (%)	Vote share 2022 (%)
Congress	77	18	38.5	23
Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)	15	3	25.2	18.3
BJP	3	2	5.3	6.6
AAP	20	92	23.7	42

In Punjab, people voted overwhelmingly for AAP, cutting across caste and community divides.

	Congress		SAD+		AAP		BJP	
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022
Hindu Upper caste	49	24	16	15	24	35	7	20
Hindu OBC	39	24	14	17	24	41	6	16
Hindu SC	42	32	19	22	25	32	9	10
Muslim	40	33	53	14	6	39	1	2
Jat Sikh	29	16	38	26	31	46	1	2
Khatri Sikh	27	24	25	19	26	36	4	-
Dalit Sikh	42	27	35	18	21	46	2	3
OBC Sikh	35	17	29	14	24	56	2	3
Others	45	25	37	18	16	45	0	5

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

Caste and community-wise vote shares show that the decrease in vote-share for the Congress has occurred across all castes and religious groups, while for AAP the increase in support has occurred overwhelmingly across all castes and religious communities. For the SAD, its Hindu vote-share has

largely remained the same, while its vote-share for other groups has considerably declined. For the BJP – which never had much of a base in Punjab – there is some good news in terms of the rise in Hindu vote-share from single to double digits.

	Congress		SAD-BSP		AAP		BJP	
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022
Sikh	34	20	35	22	27	47	2	3
Hindu	46	27	18	18	24	35	6	16
Other	45	35	46	16	8	37	1	5

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

Religion-wise, AAP garnered maximum support among, both, Hindus and Sikhs, while SAD and Congress performed badly. While SAD retained its small Hindu vote, it made heavy losses among Sikhs. Congress lost badly across both religions. BJP, however, did manage to make some gains among Hindus.

	Congress	SAD+	AAP	BJP	Others
Supported the farmer movement (84%)	19	24	43	4	10
Opposed the farmer movement (13%)	19	19	51	8	3
Non-committal (3%)	27	12	32	22	7

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The farmers’ movement also did not garner the Congress any support. Those who supported as well as opposed the farmers’ protests voted heavily for AAP. Indeed, the major reason for AAP’s brute majority in Punjab was due to its performance in the Malwa region, where it won 66 out of 69 seats. The region was also the epicenter of the farmers’ movement in Punjab. Overall, state-wide also AAP performed well across the farming community, garnering around 44% of its support.

Besides Malwa, in the other two regions of Majha and Doaba, the non-farming communities voted more for AAP than the farming communities. Indeed, in Majha and Doaba, even Congress and SAD could do well – better than AAP – among the farming communities.

The Punjab election was also marked by a strong sense of anti-incumbency, as a result of which Captain Amarinder Singh as well as Charanjit Singh Channi lost from their respective seats. Even other big names like Navjot Sidhu and Badals lost too. Parkash Singh Badal lost after 50 years.

	Capt. Amarinder’s 4.5 years government	Charanjit Channi’s 6-month government
Satisfied (%)	17	42
Dissatisfied (%)	80	54

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The electorate was dissatisfied with Captain’s as well as Channi’s tenure. While Channi’s tenure was rated better than the Captain’s, yet dissatisfaction with Channi was higher than overall satisfaction.

GOA: A LUCKY VICTORY

In Goa, BJP formed the government with comfortable majority. Like Uttarakhand, the exit polls got Goa mostly wrong. Despite the all-important Christian vote moving fully away from BJP, the party was able to win comfortably in Goa. The main reason appears to be not so much Hindu consolidation, but Christian fragmentation, leading to unexpected losses for the Congress.

	2017 vote share (%)	2022 vote share (%)	2017 seat share	2022 seat share
BJP	32.5	33.3	13	20
Congress	28.4	23.5	17	11
AAP	6.3	6.8	0	2
Trinamool Congress	-	5.2	-	-

The BJP victory in Goa was yet another remarkable event. *The victory occurred despite a strong anti-incumbency factor in the state, wherein 4 out of every 10 voters did not favour giving the BJP another chance. However, what worked in the BJP's favour was its ability to successfully convert a quarter of non-committal voters in its favour and the inability of the Opposition to forge any united front or attract the unsure voters onto their side.*

	Congress		BJP		MGP		AAP		RGP	Others	
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	TMC - MGP 2022	2017	2022	2022	2017	2022
Hindu upper caste (16%)	23	17	39	49	12	9	2	7	7	24	11
Kshatriya Maratha (7%)	21	14	53	34	16	16	4	<1	5	6	31
Bhandari Samaj (16%)	18	14	54	44	14	19	4	4	9	10	10
Other OBC (11%)	16	20	39	38	16	10	4	7	11	25	14
STs (9%)	28	21	31	58	31	3	2	3	11	8	4
Muslim (9%)	43	45	10	17	3	16	11	6	5	33	11
Christians (27%)	41	35	18	13	3	15	10	12	14	28	11
Other (including Hindu Dalits) (5%)	19	37	40	33	12	9	10	4	7	19	10

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The caste factor plays a very important role in shaping the voting choices of Goa electorate. Nearly one-third of Goa

electorate voted according to their caste identity. BJP's victory mainly lay in the support it mobilized from the Hindu upper castes (comprising mainly of the Saraswat Brahmins) and the STs, except the Kshatriya Maratha vote and the Bhandari Samaj, whose vote-share declined for the BJP. This is despite the fact the Pramod Sawant – the BJP's Chief Minister in the state – is himself a Maratha. The BJP's dramatic rise among the ST community was due to the support received from Velip and Kunbi castes, while the Gawda ST caste voted for the Congress. BJP's already meagre Christian vote-share saw a decline.

The Christian vote-share of Congress also saw a decline. This decline was a heavy blow to the Congress which was neither able to consolidate Christian nor Muslim votes in the state, leading to its ultimate loss.

	Congress		BJP		Others	
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022
Overall						
Hindu	21	19	41	44	38	37
Christian	41	35	19	13	40	52
Muslim	43	45	10	17	47	38
North Goa						
Hindu	22	15	38	42	40	43
Christian	43	35	33	22	24	43
South Goa						
Hindu	20	28	47	48	33	24
Christian	40	34	11	7	49	59

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

In terms of religion, traditionally, North Goa – with 76% Hindu population – has been a BJP bastion, while South Goa – with 36% Christian population – has been more inclined towards the Congress. Muslims are also more concentrated in South Goa (10%) than in North Goa (7%).

In this election, BJP was able to usurp the Congress party’s Hindu vote. Congress’s Hindu vote fell from 22% to 15%. BJP also independently made gains among the Hindus and some gain among the Muslims, wherein Muslims helped BJP victory in certain cons. The Christian vote was heavily fragmented, with both Congress and BJP losing their Christian vote. The newly formed Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) ate up a large chunk of the Christian vote.

MANIPUR: FURTHER CONSOLIDATION OF THE NORTHEAST

In Manipur, BJP won more than comfortably, along expected lines.

	Vote share (%) 2017	Vote share (%) 2022	Seat share 2017	Seat share 2022
BJP	36.2	37.8	21	32
Congress	35.1	16.8	28	5
NPP	5.05	17.2	4	7
NPF	7.1	8.09	4	5
JD (U)	-	10.7	-	6

While BJP managed to slightly increase its vote-share and greatly improve its seat-share in Manipur, it mainly benefitted

due to the immense loss of the Congress which saw a dramatic decline in its vote-share and seat-share compared to 2017. Even regional parties performed better than Congress.

Geographically, hilly areas comprise 90% of the state, largely inhabited by tribals, while the ethnic Meitei group – comprising of the Meitei Hindus, the Meitei Sanamahis (those following the traditional Meitei religion) and the Meitei Muslims or Pangals – dominates the valley areas, which make up 10% of the state. While Meiteis make up 53% of the population (with 80% as Vaishnavites and 8% as Muslims), tribals – including the Nagas (24%) and the Kuki-Zo (16%) – constitute 41% of the population.

Manipur's political landscape has been mainly marked by mutual differences between these ethnic groups. Of the 60 assembly seats in Manipur, the valley areas are represented by 40 seats, while the hills are represented by 20. As a result, the Meiteis, who reside in the valleys, have wielded more political influence in the state.

There were many reasons for the BJP victory in the state.

First, Manipur – like many other Northeastern states – prefers to vote for the party ruling at the Centre, so as to have a converging developmental and economic agenda for the state and the centre.

Second, the BJP's 5-year tenure has been largely successful, marked by peace, development and stability. Across various areas of the Northeast, the much-reviled Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was removed or diluted, thereby increasing the party's credibility and popularity. Even in those unfortunate one-off incidents of AFSPA misuse – which came down to a bare minimum – the central government was quick to own

responsibility and take strict action, thereby appealing it to the people.

The BJP's tenure has also been marked by the constant principle to unify rather than divide, and to develop rather than corrupt – a stark opposite to the Congress rule since decades.

The party has always tried to bridge gaps between the hills and the valley and amongst the people, making its tenure people-friendly and truly democratic. Unlike the days of Congress, where it was a popular refrain that it was the central intelligence agencies that engineered elections in such Northeastern states, during this time, genuine expression of people is beginning to be seen.

This largely clean record of the BJP has stood in stark contrast to ***the tumultuous and miserable 15-year Congress regime under the Okram Ibobi Singh, which was marked by bandhs, blockades, lack of development, insurgency, ethnic strife, nepotism, a sharp rise in extra-judicial killings, torture of common people, misuse of AFSPA and corruption. The tactics of Congress – when it was a dominant party in the Northeast – has been marked by immense suffering for the common people, and their alienation from India. All this has been reversed now.***

Corruption is at a nadir, with strict instructions from the centre that there should be zero leakage in subsidies and welfare delivery. Ministers and bureaucrats are tasked with performance of their duties and accessibility to masses, and addressing of grievances that remained pending for months and years was immediate. The hill people were subject of extra outreach by the government, so that they do not feel neglected – this helped to bridge and heal one of the most bitter divides in the state, which Congress deliberately kept on a boil.

Third, the BJP has put in systematic efforts over more than a decade in strengthening itself politically – on the back of RSS’s cultural expansion – across the Northeast. In the last five years, the BJP’s political engineering was so sure-footed that much of the Congress leadership in the state permanently shifted base to the BJP, leaving the Congress with very little. This cannot even be called defection, since its not a temporary electoral phenomenon, but permanent shift to a different political loyalty. Despite the internal and external political troubles and headwinds faced by Chief Minister, N. Biren Singh, the BJP government in the state always remained on sure ground. This enhanced the party strength in the final run.

Fourth, Manipur has benefitted greatly from the massive connectivity projects initiated by the Narendra Modi government over the past eight years under the ‘Act East dream’ policy. Manipur is set to become the gateway to Southeast Asia and will emerge as an important trade, manufacturing and logistics hub for the entire region.

CONCLUSION: A MATURING POLITY

The election results of the four states have broken many past electoral trends and belied many intellectual expectations. In UP and Uttarakhand, the BJP saw a much more matured consolidation of its base. In Goa, it won despite effectively marginalizing and fragmenting the dominant Christian vote. In Manipur, the BJP victory underscored how the future potential of India’s Northeast is being unlocked and how the region is emerging out of the insufferable darkness of the Congress era into a new dawn. The region has become the geopolitical motor of India’s regional policy towards Southeast Asia instead of being the backward, insurgency-driven territory forcefully held

by the Army. In Punjab, the lapse into separatism is a serious concern if the AAP were to succeed in its designs. The state still has a long way to go. The only advantage AAP had was of being a dark horse, with an allegedly ‘successful’ governance record in Delhi. Therefore, people – cutting across Hindu-Sikh divide – decided to give it a chance, preferring it over the corrupt Akalis and the inefficient Congress.

The one thing that is common across the election results in all states is the rising awareness of the voter and an unwillingness to be fooled by politicians supporting a subversive, anti-national agenda. The inability of regional parties and Opposition camp to re-create a caste-based coalition from a bygone era shows how far the Indian voter has come. The voter did not fall for the media and Opposition-created myth of the farmers movement as an espousal of some ‘democratic’ revival. In fact, the anti-national and caste-based agenda hidden underneath it – which the Opposition had utilized to the hilt – was exposed and now lies in tatters. Similarly, the so-called gender justice myth raised through the politicization of the unfortunate Hathras incident has spectacularly backfired for parties like the Congress. Only the concrete issues really mattered. In terms of a corruption-free, lawful and efficient governance, the BJP has raised the stakes high, making even its incumbency appear desirable compared to the jungle raj and insincerity of the regional parties.

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HIGHLIGHTS

THE RELEASE OF FARM LAWS REPORT

The long overdue report on the farm laws submitted by an expert Supreme Court-appointed panel to the Court in March 2021 has been released a year later. The report comes in the wake of the repeal of the three farm laws and more than a year of farmers protests at the borders of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. It was released in the public domain by one of the four members of the SC-appointed panel, Anil Ghanwat.

According to the report, the farm laws “endeavor to create an ecosystem to facilitate private investments in well-oiled supply chains to cut down logistics, add value and reduce food losses.” They were “intended to align the agricultural policies with the structural requirements of the sector for enhanced access to agricultural markets and incentivize crop diversification”.

According to the report, the committee had invited 266 farmer organizations, including the ones protesting at the periphery of Delhi. It ended up interacting with 73 such organizations, which represented 3.83 crore farmers.

As per the findings of the report, “[O]f these 73 Farmer Organizations, 61 Farmer Organizations, representing 3.3 crore farmers, fully supported the Acts – a majority constituting 85.7 percent of the total farmers. But 4 Farmers Organizations, representing 51 lakh farmers (13.3 percent), did not support the Act. Another 7 Farmer Organizations, representing 3.6 lakh farmers (1 percent) supported the Acts with some suggestions for modifications. 1 Farmer Organization, representing 500 farmers, was not clear on the implications of the Farm Laws.”

Further, the committee found that,

- Only 42.3% of respondent farmers sell their produce through Agricultural Produce Market Committee [APMC] mandis and are mostly concentrated in Punjab and Haryana.
- Two-thirds of the respondents felt that the laws “would give more choice to the farmers beyond the APMC mandis, and would enable farmers to get a better price for their produce.”
- Around 58.2 percent of the respondents were not worried about the acquisition of their land by the corporate sector, while 28.7% were unsure and 13% felt threatened by it.
- The report also stated that the economic cost of the Food Corporation of India for acquiring, storing and distributing food grains is about 40% more than the procurement price.

The findings of the report should come as a wake-up call to the apologists of the farmers’ protests. Though the farm laws were withdrawn in ‘national interest’ by the Prime Minister and rightly so, the subversive political elements that had funded these protests in the name of farmers should be held to account by the people for spreading unrest, communalism and falsehood in the country and vitiating the national atmosphere.

SRI LANKAN ECONOMIC CRISIS

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since 1948. The crisis was mainly a result of the downturn in the tourism sector – on which the Lankan economy is critically dependent – due to the COVID19 pandemic since the last two years. It has also suffered due to dependence on lucrative foreign remittances which were not forthcoming due to the COVID19

pandemic. The Rajapaksa government's decision to ban all chemical fertilisers in 2021 and shift to organic farming also hit the country's farm sector and triggered a drop in the critical rice crop.

Prior to the pandemic, the crisis was in the making due to governmental mismanagement of the economy over the last few years, leading to mounting twin deficits – current account deficit and a budget shortfall – wherein the country's national expenditure exceeded its national income, and its production of tradable goods and services was inadequate.

This was compounded by the deep tax cuts enacted months before the COVID-19 pandemic, which wiped out parts of Sri Lanka's economy.

As a result of the state of the economy, the credit rating agencies downgraded Sri Lanka and the country lost access to overseas markets. In turn, Sri Lanka's debt management programme, which depended on accessing those markets, derailed and foreign exchange reserves plummeted by almost 70% in two years. As of February 2022, the country was left with only \$2.31 billion in its reserves but faces debt repayments of around \$4 billion in 2022.

The dire economic situation has led to a livelihood crisis in the country, where there is extreme shortage of food and fuel, rising inflation, and, extreme power crisis which has forced small shops and businesses to shut shop. Massive protests have taken place against the government, and emergency was imposed (now revoked). The entire cabinet of the government was dissolved due to mass resignations by ministers.

India and China have sought to help Sri Lanka. India has

extended an additional \$1 billion line of credit in March and has signed several projects with Sri Lanka. Talks of India extending another \$1 billion line of credit are in pipeline.

THE KASHMIR FILES – A MOVEMENT

The release of the movie, *The Kashmir Files*, marks the rise of a new and consolidated India. The response received by the low budget movie – made with a budget of just 15 crore rupees – has been overwhelming. The movie traces the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits at the hands of Islamic fundamentalism through the episode of the 1990 exodus and genocide of the Pandit community in Kashmir. Making this episode the centre-point of its narrative, the movie also delves boldly into critiquing the present intellectual culture and education system – a pawn in the hands of anti-India forces – that has had a creeping role in poisoning young minds as well as distorting history and facts.

Making a distinction between exodus and genocide, the movie – which is really more of a documentary, based on more than 700 real-life interviews and meticulous research – argues that the events that occurred with the Pandit community in Kashmir during 1990 were not a voluntary exodus, but a genocide committed in the name of Islam. It showcases how the Pandit genocide was distorted and marginalized by historians and media, the plight of the once-rich Pandits as they languished in suffering in unhygienic and poverty-struck camps and how terrorists responsible for the gruesome murders were, in real life, felicitated and accommodated by the Indian establishment.

The movie adopts a clear approach towards the question of Muslim fundamentalism. Without mincing words, it shows

how the genocide was not simply the work of Pakistan-inspired terrorists, but was also enabled and actively propagated by ordinary Kashmiri Muslims and their hatred for a Hindu India. The genocide was, thus, not only a political episode to teach India a lesson by separating Kashmir from India, but was an Islam-inspired project.

While Indian politics and academics has humored itself by justifying that Kashmir is a political problem, in reality, it has always been a religious issue. The movie showed that the poison is not only limited to the terrorists, but runs in the veins of even most common Kashmiri Muslims and just needed to be activated under the ideal circumstances.

The reception to the movie – due to its brutal showcasing of the truth of the genocide – was poignant and surpassed all expectations. Most often, people were seen either coming out of the theatres crying or else recharged with vigour against the collective injustice meted out to Hindus in an episode that was deliberately wiped off our history. More than the Islam-inspired fanaticism, the public opinion was spewing venom at the Indian intellectuals, who the movie factually exposed as being hand-in-glove with terrorists.

As a result of its reception, the emotions generated by it and the demand for the movie, the movie expanded at a phenomenal pace. Having been released on only a few thousand screens, the movie was subsequently released across all the screens in the country and abroad. Its special screenings were also held across the country by various community groups, while the government – the BJP-ruled ones – put their might behind it. It was also one of the rare movies – the first one in two years since the pandemic – to become an unparalleled

commercial success, crossing 300 crore gross collection. The movies released alongside it – despite having much more famous actors – failed to make an impact. It was also a box office hit in countries like US, UK, Canada, and Australia. It was released across many other countries as well.

Separately, its success also gave rise to a vociferous political debate across the country. The Opposition, instead of being tactful, revealed its anti-national colours by ridiculing the movie and playing a blame-game over who did what for the Pandit community. AAP convener, Arvind Kejriwal, crossed all limits of decency in the Delhi Assembly when he crudely made fun of the events in the movie, implying them to be false. The intellectual community's reactions to the movie's success appeared to suggest as if they had swallowed poison.

Thus, in no time at all, the movie had gone from being mere cinematography to being a truly national – and international – movement of sorts. The revolutionary fervour it had instigated was something never seen before, especially in the context of a movie. This was when the movie had barely scratched the surface of the gruesome history of Islamic fundamentalism. What it had shown was just 1% of what had actually happened. In many ways, this movie was a beginning. The Pandora's box it has opened will not be shut down so easily and the rising national consciousness of the people will compel the breaking-up of the intellectual-secular ecosystem that has tried its best to keep India handicapped.



A Message to the People of Ukraine

Our Dearest Brothers and Sisters of Ukraine!

This comes to you all from the Minds, Hearts and Souls filled to the brim with utmost Love and Gratitude for all you have been doing to keep ALIVE the Spirit of Courage, Love, Light and Liberty for the Human Peoples in times such as these when people all over the world seem to have been taken over by the narrow Utilitarian Spirit leading to an utter Selfishness and Cowardice in the face of Hostile Forces bent on destroying the Human Race by effacing from its Collective Spirit all the vestiges of Love, Courage and a sense of Dignity which has kept it alive over past millenniums.

We have not the SLIGHTEST DOUBT that by the Grace of the Divine Mother SHALL

“For Ever Live UKRAINE and the Indomitable Spirit of All Who Love Her!”

For You with everything that we are, have and do –

Yours at the Lotus Feet of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Chandra Prakash Khetan

for Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Ashram Family,
Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India.