**State death**

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The Russian-Ukraine conflict has generated a lot of sympathy and support for Ukraine, and condemnation and sanctions for Russia. Moreover, the Russian-Ukraine conflict has broken many norms and set new precedents.

State death has generally been defined as a state’s loss of control over foreign policy to another state or failure to act independently on the world stage. The end of WWII generally put an end to territorial conquest as the superpowers realised that physical occupation/annexation lead to wars. Thus, a new norm was enunciated: dividing the world into various spheres of influence: and propping regimes of choices that helped to usurp their resources without the need for physical occupation. Thus, the puppet regimes retain their freedom but in actuality are severely restricted to act independently.

This norm is nowhere more evident than in the Middle East, where US and European influence reign supreme. And whenever this influence was challenged, ‘state death’ took place. Iraq invaded Kuwait. Instead of diplomatic persuasion and sanctions, the largest military armada since WWII descended at the ports of GCC countries. Kuwait was ‘liberated’ and Iraq was ‘vanquished and annihilated.’ The latest weaponry was tested on hapless Iraqis; hundreds and thousands of Iraqis were killed. The invading armada after conquering Baghdad, first secured the ‘Oil Ministry’ to ensure that the oil resources of the country remain in safe hands. Further, in a pure Machiavellian way, the political leadership of the country was eliminated. Thus, to this day, there is political and economic turmoil in the country. Similarly, on the pretext of weapons of mass destruction, a prosperous, affluent country was invaded and annihilated, and its political leadership was brutally executed. And to this day, there is political and civil strife in the country and despite being oil-rich its people are starving. Thus, these countries have not been physically annexed but have met a fate worse than ‘state death’: became functionally dysfunctional and hundreds and thousands were killed and are still being killed. And the most ironic part of all these invasions and killings was the legitimacy offered to these barbaric invasions by international bodies such as the UN, which was created in the first place to stop such heinous acts from happening.

[Indian opposition's 'unity march' ends in disputed Kashmir](https://www.nation.com.pk/31-Jan-2023/indian-opposition-s-unity-march-ends-in-disputed-kashmir)

Contrary to the above precedence in the Muslim world, in the Russian-Ukraine conflict, there have been diplomatic efforts to dissuade Russia; and Ukraine is being prodded to enter into negotiations for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Further, international media is highlighting the plight of Ukrainians, who are without gas, hot water, and electricity; and central Europe has opened up its borders for Ukrainian refugees fleeing the conflict. Also, defensive military hardware is being provided on an emergency basis along with monetary aid, and the leader of Ukraine has been given the status of a ‘resistance hero’ battling the Russian hegemony. However, the factors which precipitated the conflict are not being discussed by the international media.

Moreover, before the Russian-Ukraine conflict, the sports arena was considered sacrosanct where politics and conflicts could not be discussed. But with this conflict, it became kosher to sanction/bar Russian athletes from world sporting events, and many western players and countries refused to compete in events involving Russian players and teams, a complete disregard for established norms and sportsman spirit.

[Gold prices jump to Rs210,500 per tola](https://www.nation.com.pk/31-Jan-2023/gold-prices-jump-to-rs210-500-per-tola)

However, every cloud has a silver lining, and it allowed Arab and Muslim athletes to raise Palestinian issues at international sporting events. First, it was the Egyptian Squash superstar Faragh who highlighted the Palestinian cause at an international squash event. At the recently concluded Qatar Soccer World Cup 2022, the Palestinian cause was highlighted as never before. Arab and Muslim spectators at the stadiums continuously waved Palestinian flags. Moroccan players waved Palestinian flags along with their own country’s flag at their spectacular wins. Thus, these actions have amply demonstrated to the World where the sympathies of ordinary Arabs lay despite many Arab leaders cultivating diplomatic relations with Israel.

The major takeaway for the Muslim world in general and the Arab world, in particular, is to solve their problems diplomatically as foreign intervention brings nothing but death and annihilation, and listen to their masses rather than to their vested interests.