**UN Voting on the Ukraine War**

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March 1, 2023

The UN General Assembly session on the completion of one year of the Ukraine war reflected a changed tone of the US and its allies. From severe threats to Russia in the early days of the war, the UNGA and the Ukraine allies are now urging Russia to withdraw its troops and vacate the occupied territory of Ukraine to end the humanitarian crisis. Secretary-General António Guterres in remarks to the UN Security Council meeting on Ukraine, 24 February 2023: The guns are talking now, but in the end, we all know that the path of diplomacy and accountability is the road to a just and sustainable peace. We must all encourage every meaningful effort to end the bloodshed and, at long last, give peace a chance.

The UNGA session on February 24 adopted a resolution and once again condemned Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, calling for Moscow’s immediate withdrawal and an end to the fighting. A year since President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion, which he has called a “special military operation,” 141 countries backed the resolution calling for a “comprehensive, just and lasting peace” in Ukraine.

Belarus, North Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Nicaragua, Russia and Syria – only seven countries opposed the Resolution. Thirty-two countries abstained from voting including China, Pakistan and India. For Pakistan, it’s a daring step that will have consequences for the IMF deal and bilateral relations with the US and its major allies, which are anxiously searching for strong support in the region against China and Russia at the moment.

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No word against India from any US politician or any member of the Biden administration for abstaining from voting in favour of the UNGA resolution on Ukraine. Strangely, Pakistan has become the target once again for not going against Russia. The US Republican Party, Grand Old Party (GOP) Presidential candidate Nikki Haley wrote in an op-ed that “A strong America doesn’t pay off the bad guys. A proud America doesn’t waste our people’s hard-earned money.” She has said that if voted to power, she will cut every cent in foreign aid for countries that hate the US. This includes China, Pakistan and other adversaries.

The exhausted donors of the Ukraine war, the United States and its G7 allies on February 24 planned to unveil a fresh package of sanctions on Russia, while the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said Washington would send Ukraine a new military aid package worth $2 billion, totalling a bit over $31 billion military aid in a year. While the US and the West keep on fueling the war even one year after with more resolve, the UN is shouting out for generous support to nearly half Ukraine’s population – roughly 18 million people that need humanitarian aid and protection, water, medicines, heating appliances, and other supplies, as well as support for home repairs. UN institutions have dished out about $1.2 billion to some six million affected people – the largest such programme in history. As the war enters a second year, the UN and partners are calling for nearly $4 billion to support more than 11 million people. The appeal is just over 14 per cent funded.

A huge gap in the military and humanitarian aid will further widen once the war lingers on to the second year. Though the Ukraine-US allies never expected a prolonged war, they are trying to have a favourable solution – all occupied parts back and the cost of the country’s reconstruction. Both seem quite difficult for the US-NATO despite all manoeuvring.

On the other hand, the Russian authorities have said the Ukrainian leadership and “Western-controlled UN representatives” are obstructing the full-fledged work of Russian inspection teams at the Joint Coordination Centre. The teams, they said, are monitoring the Russian Interagency Coordination for Humanitarian Response in the Black Sea. Ukrainian and Western experts are obstructing the activities of Russian inspectors on various pretexts in order to prevent vessels from promptly advancing to destination ports and subsequently blaming Moscow for the delays. As a result, nearly 100 vessels have been blocked in the “grain corridor”. According to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, 94 vessels are waiting for inspection in the Bosporus while 69 ships are empty for loading and 25 are already loaded with agricultural products.

Russian authorities fear the unnecessary barriers by Kyiv could possibly prevent Russian inspection teams from keeping eyes on the “more valuable cargo” carried by these ships, maybe the fresh secret consignments of Western weapons and foreign mercenaries. Thus, according to the Russian Defence Ministry, the naval drones that attacked Sevastopol Bay on 29 October last year were launched from the coast of Odesa and from a Ukrainian civilian ship carrying grain located in the area of the “grain corridor.”

In addition, the Russian Federal Security Service reported that the transportation of explosives to blow up the Crimean bridge from Odesa to Bulgaria last August was carried out under the cover of a grain deal and bypassing unauthorized cargo inspections. Similarly, the unlawful use of the Russian Interagency Coordination Headquarters for Humanitarian Response by the Kyiv regime explains the arrival of hundreds of foreign mercenaries in Ukraine to participate in combat operations on the side of the Ukrainian armed forces.

The “grain corridor” and the ships moving in it are more likely to recharge the war with “fresh supplies” of arms and foreign mercenaries in Ukraine. The recent UN voting has given the US-West alliance a new resolve against Russia in the Ukraine war. Their hostile behaviour against some other countries could add more to the humanitarian crisis. Such as the US airstrikes on Syria a couple of days after the country voted against the UN resolution on the Ukraine war.

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