**Ukraine War: The Black Sea Dark**

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November 2, 2022

This Monday has been another merciless day for Ukraine. Russian missiles struck critical energy and water infrastructure across Ukraine; leaving behind power outages and limited water supply in large parts of Kyiv, reported Al-Jazeera. The Ukrainian capital’s mayor noted, “Forty percent of Kyiv residents have been left without water, and 270,000 apartments remained without electricity as authorities announced emergency blackouts across the country to help save power and carry out repairs.”

Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, is facing far less of the situation other parts of Ukraine are going through. Extremely miserable conditions for the war-hit Ukraine. It is doomed today what I feared in my opinion piece “Ukraine: The Next Afghanistan?” published in Daily Times on February 16, 2022. Unfortunately, we don’t learn from the case studies and examples around us. Interestingly, neither the warmongers change their strategies nor the merchants of falsified fantasies. But, the power-mongering leaders and their followers get trapped in their lust for the forged commitments. So has happened in Ukraine.

Moscow’s Monday attack on Kyiv seems a retaliation for what it faced on Saturday. Moscow’s forces alleged “specialists” from the United Kingdom had helped prepare and train Kyiv to carry out Saturday’s attack from the Black Sea. London has denied the claims. After the brutal situation, Moscow on Saturday pulled out of the landmark Turkey and UN-brokered deal that it signed with Kyiv in July that allowed vital grain exports after what it said was a “massive” attack on Russian ships in the Black Sea.

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Russia has asked the UN to “get guarantees from Ukraine that the Black Sea humanitarian corridor and Ukrainian ports designated for exports of agricultural products shall not be used for hostile acts against Russia.” Unfortunately, it is claimed that the Black Sea is getting darker with war fleets more than the Ukrainian food grain ships as the US and NATO promise more military aid to Ukraine.

The US has sent another round of aid to Ukraine including additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) as part of a package worth US$275 million, the State Department confirmed Friday. With this, the total US military aid comes to about $17.9 billion in support to Ukraine since the war erupted in February this year. It comes with the US “continued commitment” to stand with Ukraine along with more than 50 allies and partners supporting “Ukraine’s defence of freedom.”

No eyes on the actual miseries of Ukraine, which has become an economic slave of the US and NATO. No food, no water and no energy to survive in the ever-increasing harsh winter for the Ukrainians. Most of the infrastructure has been ruined while inflation is at a historic high. Its food grain is being exported to Africa to prevent famine, and reduce food shortages in Europe and other parts of the world while the custodians of the food grain suffer from the war. Claiming record food grain exports, Ukraine may be suffering from a shortfall of staple food for its own people.

On the other hand, the Western countries and the Ukrainian leadership are attempting to cause a rift in Russia-China relations. European leaders, through Asian bloggers and media outlets under their control, have initiated massive rumours of a coup d’état in China in late September this year. The source of these rumours was the author of the blog “Inconvenient Truths,” human rights activist Jennifer Zeng, associated with the “Falun Gong” heretic sect, which is banned in China. This illegal structure operates in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Subsequently, major Ukrainian media outlets joined the general flow of the anti-Chinese agenda and picked up information about the overthrow of the Chinese government and the inevitability of Beijing’s revision of its course towards a strategic partnership with Moscow.

It is an endorsement of Russia’s claims that Ukraine actively supports any propaganda actions that can harm Russia, both directly and indirectly. By spreading rumours of a coup d’état in China, Kyiv and Western countries tried to show Moscow that China, its most influential ally, is extremely weak and the Kremlin was risking its geopolitical positioning against the US and its partners. Meanwhile, the US is rudely imposing its position on the Ukrainian issue on China. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said on August 15 that Beijing should stop cooperating with Russia, especially on the Ukrainian issue. However, China has been ignoring the pressure. Rather, both sides have reiterated to further their mutually beneficial cooperation. The visible result is a reduced impact of the Western sanctions on Russia, and a successful gain for China in the energy market.

Reflecting on the Black Sea dark, what we see is how briskly a prosperous and fertile country has fallen victim to invisible twinkling dreams and pretended patronage from the US, NATO and EU. In the lust for free lunch in the West, the presidency of a comedian actor Volodymyr Zelenskyy has lost everything to the elephants of the war. A sheer lesson for other such types of leadership anywhere out there in the world. A special alert for those Pakistanis who believe a cricketer would do wonders if selected again despite his total failure in his first four-year tenure. Believe me, comedy of errors will not lead you to a free lunch in the power game.

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