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**RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: A FOUR YEAR- LONG
HOSTILITY**

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Keywords	Abstract
Invasion, Military, Civilian, Airstrikes, Missiles, Counter- Offensives, Ussr, Union Republics, Western, Nato, Eu, Peaceful Co- Existence.	The present Russia- Ukraine War is causing tremendous loss of properties and lives of people and creating economic, social, environmental and human problems throughout the world. Russia’s full-scale invasion on Ukraine, its south-west neighbour started on February, 24, 2022, when Putin, the President of Russia announced ‘a special military operation for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine’ (1). He claimed that Russia had no plans to occupy Ukraine, but within a few minutes’ missiles and airstrikes hit across Ukraine, including its capital Kyiv. Then happened a large ground-invasion on Ukraine by Russia from multiple directions. Russian attacks were initially launched on a northern front from Belarus towards Kyiv, a southern front from Crimea and a south- eastern front from Donesk and Luhansk. On April 9, 2022 a renewed Russian attack happened on the Donbas region. Russian forces continued to bomb both military and civilian targets. Ukraine, in response, enacted martial law, ordered general mobilization, retaliated back with counter- offensives and severed diplomatic relations with Russia. This war has not ended even in March, 2026; it is still going on.

1. LOOKING BACK TO HISTORY

Let us now go back historically to a few years back. Ukraine was included in the Russian empire till 1917. After the 1917 Russian revolution (2) Ukraine proclaimed autonomy and then full independence in 1918 and began to build its own state (3). Soon the Russian red army launched



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invasions on Ukraine, conquered Ukraine in 1921 and Ukraine became finally a part of the Soviet Union in 1922. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic or USSR was created in the post-revolutionary era (five years after the revolution) by the treaty between Russian SFSR, Byelorussian SSR, Ukrainian SSR and the Transcaucasian SFSR (4). Both Russia and Ukraine became its two parts, along with thirteen other parts, who all came to be known as Union Republics. This period from 1917 to 1922 established a pattern of attempted subjugation of Ukraine by Russia, followed by Ukrainian resistance, which influenced the later conflicts of 2014 and 2022 between the two.

2. BREAKING UP OF THE USSR AND THE CONSEQUENT EVENTS

Let us now concentrate our focus on December, 26, 1991, when the USSR broke up. Thereafter all the constituent Union Republics of USSR gained full independence. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became independent on September 6, 1991 (a little before the dissolution of the USSR) and the remaining twelve Union Republics signed on December 8, 1991 the Belavezha Accord, which agreed that the USSR would be dissolved and that it would be replaced by a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On December 26, 1991 the Council of Republics voted to dissolve the USSR and since then fifteen Union Republics of the USSR have been governed independently. Ukraine adopted a new constitution in 1996 (5)

Ukraine had been divided then along two issues –

1. its relation with Russia and the western countries and
2. the classical left- right divide. The first two Presidents of independent Ukraine Kavanuchuk and Leonid Kuchma tended to balance the common interests. After them Victor Yushenko became the President and he was pro-western.

During his time the relations between Russia and Ukraine were strained. Next president Victor Yanukovich was pro- Russian. He refused to sign the EU- Ukraine political and trade deal (6). Major protests of violent nature erupted in Kyiv. Finally the Ukrainian parliament removed him from office. Thereafter President Poroshenko supported the EU-Ukraine deal. But Russia wanted to keep Ukraine away from EU and USA. So Russia attacked Ukraine in March, 2014 on the pretext of defending the Russian -speaking citizens of Ukraine. Russia annexed the Ukrainian region of Crimea and spread its domination on the Black Sea region. Following this attack on Ukraine by Russia there have been ongoing conflicts between the two with regular shellings and skirmishes occurring along the Russia- Ukraine border. Donbas war was fought between the Russian backed separatist groups and the armed forces of Ukraine. Thereafter two Minsk accords of September, 2014 and February, 2015 (7) were signed between Russia and Ukraine, which sought to end the Donbas war. They aimed at ceasefire, heavy weapon withdrawal and special status for the separatist areas. But the accords ultimately failed to bring peace, with violations on both sides. In 2017 Ukraine wanted to join NATO, which according to Russia would be detrimental to its security. Russia sent military forces to Donetsk and Luhansk and recognised them as separate states. It began to disturb Ukraine and to interfere in Ukrainian affairs in the name of helping



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Donesk and Luhansk. Ukraine also got engaged in war with Russia to protect them. Military operations continued for a long time from both sides. Finally on February 24, 2022 Russian military forces invaded Ukraine and quickly occupied much of the south and the east of Ukraine, but failed to take the northern part and Kyiv. Since the start of this invasion by Russia on Ukraine, hopes of a peaceful co-existence of the two countries evaporated and the Minsk Accord collapsed. The attack on Ukraine by Russia is a steep escalation of the Russia- Ukraine conflict. The Russian attack on Ukraine was condemned internationally. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning the invasion and demanding full withdrawal of the Russian forces. The International Court of Justice ordered Russia to suspend its military operations. The Council of Europe imposed sanctions on Russia. Russian invasion received wide-spread international condemnation from governments and inter-governmental organisations. New sanctions were imposed on Russia. They triggered wide-spread economic effects on Russia. They forced Russia to reorient its oil exports to non- sanctioning countries and shift its local exports from Europe to Asia. Most European countries stopped cooperation with Russia. Seventy European states and EU delivered humanitarian aid and fifty sovereign countries and EU provided military aid to Ukraine. A ban was imposed on Russian aircrafts on the use of EU airspace, on Russian banks on the use of SWIFT international payments and on some Russian media outlets. Worldwide protests and demonstrations took place and slogans of boycott of Russian goods spread on social - media platforms.

3. THE REASONS FOR THIS UNWILLINGNESS OF RUSSIA TO MODERATE ITS DEMANDS AND THE CAUSES FOR THIS RUSSIA- UKRAINE CONFLICTS ARE:

1. Russian desire to regain control over Ukraine and to turn it into its puppet regime.
2. Russian conception about itself as a great power, which can control the former Soviet Republics.
3. Russia felt insecure at Ukraine's closeness with EU and NATO. It wanted to prevent the attempts for western integration through EU and NATO.
4. Russia challenged Ukraine's legitimacy as a state and claimed that Ukrainian government is an exporter of Nazism and it wanted to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine.
5. Russia viewed the existence of a democratic and pro- western Ukraine to be a danger to the authoritarian regime of Russia.

Four years have passed since the start of the Russian invasion on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Russian forces are continuing their military operations on the ground in Ukraine, in the skies over the frontline and on the cities of Ukraine and also in the minds of the people of Ukraine. But the reality is that Russia still demonstrates zero willingness to moderate its demands. Russia-Ukraine war of more than four years resulted in huge loss of military casualties, massive loss of civilian lives (8), and destruction of infrastructure, long-term economic collapse and poverty and displacement of people throughout the world. Strike on hospitals and energy-grids of Ukraine, sex-violence, torture and massacre of people, murder of prisoners of war, genocide etc. stunned the



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world. There have been damages to 522 cultural heritage sites, including 153 religious sites, 39 museums, 33 monuments and 20 libraries in Ukraine (9) Hazardous chemicals, shelling, burnt chemicals, explosives, contaminated debris in cities and towns, increased Co2 emission etc. are creating environment risks. Use of nuclear power is also a danger to humanity. Russia- Ukraine war is having huge impacts on the global supply chain, impeding the flow of goods, fuelling cost-increases, increasing product shortages, creating enormous food shortages around the world and is bringing huge amount of inflation, which is damaging the world economy. There have been several rounds of peace talks to end the Russia- Ukraine war since the start of the war on February, 24, 2022. Peace talk took place on February 28, 2022 in Belarus, on March 3 & 7, 2022 on the Belarus- Ukraine border and on March 10, 2022 in Turkey. More peace talks were arranged at different places at different times, but no agreement could be reached. Russian terms were:

It must be allowed to keep all the land it occupied

1. Ukraine would give up plans to join NATO
2. Ukrainian military must be curtailed
3. Sanctions against Russia must be lifted.

Ukrainian terms for withdrawal of troops were:

1. Russia must withdraw all troops from Ukraine
2. Ukrainian prisoners must be freed
3. Russian leaders must be prosecuted for war crimes
4. Ukraine must be given security to prevent future aggression on it. Neither Russia nor Ukraine accepted them.

There happened renewed peace talks with both sides separately to end the RussiaUkraine war after Trump became US President on January 20, 2025. Several peace negotiations took place at different places in different times in 2025, but the peace terms imposed on both were refused by both. It was found that US sided with Russia (10) and the EU countries aligned with Ukraine.

4. CONCLUSION

Historians, politicians and people of all levels throughout the world are worried over the devastation and chaos all over the world since the beginning of this Russia-Ukraine war. Would it turn into a new cold war? Does Putin's claims on Ukraine echo some of the racial and colonial arguments of imperial powers of the past? It is a war of conquest of the kind, people have not seen in Europe since 1945. It is interpreted by some experts as an attempt not just to take over the foreign state of Ukraine, but to wipe out Ukrainian sense of nationhood and is rather difficult to resolve. It is bringing ruinous war back to Europe. The world finds itself once again contemplating the outcome of the possible use of nuclear weapons. What would be the end- result of this war? Are we possibly on the verge of a third world war?



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5. AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

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6. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

7. PLAGIARISM POLICY

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8. SOURCES OF FUNDING

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- [1] Russian president Putin said that the purpose of the invasion was to support the ussian-backed breakaway regions of Donesk and Luhansk, who were fighting Ukraine since 2014. He expressed the imperialist view that the neo- nazi Ukranian government was committing Genocide against the Russian minorities in the Donbas and challenged Ukraine's legitimacy as a state.
- [2] Russian revolution was a pair of revolutions -- i) February Revolution, 2017: It was directed against the imperial Romanov rule and ended the 300 years of imperialism.
ii) October Revolution, 2017 : It established a communist government under the leadership of Lenin.
- [3] Ukraine war of independence lasted from March, 7, 2017 to November, 17, 2021.
- [4] USSR was created by the Treaty on the Creation of the USSR and the Declaration on the Creation of the USSR, which were approved on November, 29, 2022 and ratified on December 30, 2022. USSR started with four Republics and finally extended upto fifteen Republics. It continued upto 1991.
- [5] Causes for the breaking up of the USSR are : i)economic -- poverty, food scarcity and a failed central economy ii) political :Concepts of Perestroika (restructuring) and Glasnost (openness) were intended to modernize the system, but they exposed deep Systematic failures and reduced all controls. iii)Nationalism: Independence ovements



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in the Baltic states and other areas reduced the feeling of unity among the people. iv) Failed coup: Coup against Gorbachev in August, 1991 weakened his authority. v) others: Costly war in Afganistan and 1986 Chernobyl disaster undermined the trust of the people in the government.

- [6] Yanukovych's refusal to sign the political association and free trade agreement with EU gave rise to mass movements and widespread protests, civil disobedience and general strikes by the public in November, 2013. Then Ukrainian parliament voted unanimously (328 -- 0) to remove Yanukovych (February 22, 2014). He left Ukraine and fled to Russia on that day. He sought Russian intervention in this matter. Russia- There after a Ukrainian court found him guilty of treason, nullified his election and ordered re-election, which he lost to Yushenko.
- [7] Minsk Agreements were two -- i) signed in September, 2014 and signed in February, 2015. They failed to stop the war.
- [8] verified by UNESCO on February, 25, 2026.
- [9] Civilians are dying in Ukraine, but exactly how many, remains a mystery. Stated by Washington Post on September 19, 2023. Russian troop deaths climbed. Stated by New York Times, November 17, 2022.
- [10] verified by UNESCO on October,16, 2024.
- [11] Peace plan (November 25) of Trump was pro- russian -- published in the Guardian, November 26, 2025.

