

In the mid of 1930's, both Dollfuss and Schuschnigg governments were pleading for the west to intervene. It fell on deaf ears. The western European nations along with the US was unwilling to pledge support to a cause they thought wasn't worth or was self defeating. In that moment of heightened stakes, Adolf Hitler and his Third Reich pounced on Austria. On 15th March, 1938 with Hitler's address and a month later a 'formal' plebiscite confirmed Austria's absorption in the Third Reich-The Anschluss was completed.

The early morning of February 24 saw a similar pivotal moment, Russian troops started pouring in the nation of Ukraine and cities were attacked left, right and center. Dubbed as the biggest mobilization since the second world war, the event followed a long scheming on the part of the Russian leader-Vladimir Putin.

The Russian aggression bound to upend the lives of 44 million Ukrainians came amidst the hue and cry of Ukraine joining NATO and also the hearsay of it developing nuclear weapons. The rationale of Russian geography and its associated natural instinct to expand in order to survive was in full swing. To make matters intriguing, the Russian president also talked of getting rid of Kyiv's 'stooge' leader for the welfare of the Ukrainian people.

To Russia's credit, The concerns around Ukraine and its 'lost love' for the west is not misplaced however it was a two way street for most part, for the west, The quest to include Ukraine in NATO despite getting defeated earned a lot of traction every time it was brought. The west had no qualms using it as a bargaining chip to ward off any Russian misadventures and to say the least attempting to justify the rationale of NATO ,which to many experts caused angst to the Russian leader.

On its part, Ukraine's simpleton attitude ignoring geography at its peril led the nation into the primrose path it is finding itself currently . The Ukrainian nation post the Crimean annexation allowed itself to be a part of great game leaving all sense of neutrality behind.



Image source: The New York Times

Having said that, the brutal aggression on Russia's part disregarding all international norms had literally upended the rules based order that for long was holding by a thread. This aggression must be condemned in unequivocal terms everywhere followed by crippling sanctions or measures to stop or at least not repeat it again.

While the first is forthcoming, there is almost a unanimous condemnation for the invasion, unfortunately the second part is mundane and half hearted. This is where the problem comes- The West is divided-AGAIN. The 'devastating sanctions' as promised by President Joe Biden in G7 are anything but that. On his part, he had frozen Russian banks assets in The US while European nations are following suit but none of it would matter unless Russia remains part of SWIFT and the global financial system in its current format. Thanks to Crimea and other mishaps, the Russian dependency on western resources had reduced. For its part, the Europeans need more Russian than it needs them. Besides it continues to trade with the world nonchalantly and unaffected.

Such a reaction to an aggression on a sovereign nation by apparent protectors of the world

is to say the least expository. It exposes the false promises and the hollowness of the liberal international order established post the fall of Berlin wall, an order apparently based on ensuring that global governance continues in tandem with the rule of law. No matter who wins, the liberal international order would die in Kyiv as and when it is subdued and taken over.

Post 1991, the emergence of US led world order based itself on the paradigms of liberty, order and aiding and averting any mishaps. The order had its flaws, the most important being it held hostage to the whims of Washington and catering in large part to the western interest but it had its moments of reckoning too-aiding in development of the third world, ridding Africa of its sectarian conflicts, restraining the totalitarian regimes and many times punishing them. The rise of China along with fatal flaws of the US riding high on Pax Americana tore the tapestry of the global order. To add to this, the redundancy of The UN exposed further problems in the system as it attempted to reflect the realities of the past even in a different century.



Image source: Getty

Last year, Afghanistan's withdrawal provided a window for making amends but the chaotic exit coupled with no end game strategy exposed fragilities of the liberal internationalism and the futilities associated with the promotion of democracy. The expected fall of Kiev and the doling affair of a world leader leading his nation to the end while the rich elites watches from the sidelines is a knell to the order crafted by the ideological victors of the cold war.

The benefactors of the end of history maxim would now have to adhere to a world where chaos may become a norm, dissipation of power to multiple centers and extinct pertinence of the United Nations. The world is now midst two chaos-a dying pandemic and an incoming conflict, unless redeemed differently it might change forever. The churn is on and if the events unfold the way they are, a prophecy is to come true-THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL ORDER which got bruised in Iraq, marred in Libya, amputated in Kabul will die a fateful death in Kyiv an unheard, untimely and easily avoidable demise.

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