

**مركز البيدر للدراسات والتخطيط**

**Al-Baidar Center For Studies And Planning**



# **Lessons Learned from the Russian–Ukrainian Conflict**

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The Ukrainian-Russian crisis began at the media and political levels before it began militarily. Once the Russian military action started inside Ukraine, events escalated rapidly and comprehensively on military, economic, political, and media fronts.

Newspapers, channels, and social media closely followed the event in real-time. Many analysts, writers, and thinkers have written and spoken about the background of the issue, its political and military nature, and its various repercussions on global security, both politically and economically, as well as militarily, in the conflict zone and different countries around the world.

Although the Ukrainian-Russian event and its military nature are still ongoing and escalating among international parties, and its final scope, objectives, and the resulting global political changes are not yet known—some specialists indicate that the world is going through a new phase, the crystallization of a new world, either in birth or growth, a post-unipolar or multipolar world. Some have discussed an essential aspect of the Ukrainian-Russian event, related to the lessons and insights that have emerged in various aspects of the issue, including official positions and statements by countries, organizations, and international figures.

In this context, several important lessons have emerged for those contemplating and following the nature of the events and their surroundings, which may serve as a point of review for many of the opinions and positions adopted by political, cultural, and social entities and figures. The most important of these lessons, which we will briefly address, are three:

### **First Lesson**

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has raised a notable and recurring issue in politics and international relations: the reliance on the United States of America and

the tying of a state's or country's fate to its relationship with the U.S. or a promise made by it. This has led many who bet their fate and that of their countries on this into a trap and failure. This fate has befallen Afghanistan with President Ashraf Ghani, who fled Afghanistan dramatically and admitted that the biggest mistake of his life was trusting the United States and its Western partners, stating that the Americans used him as a "scapegoat." He did not know that August 15 would be his last day in Afghanistan, and said that the commander of his Republican Guard gave him only two minutes to decide whether to stay or leave; he chose the latter to avoid death after his army collapsed and the Taliban entered the capital.<sup>1</sup>

This situation is repeated with Ukraine, which is supported by the West and the United States, which have given it promises and guarantees of protection. Still, when the moment of truth arrived, they abandoned it and broke their promises. Ukrainian President Zelensky said, "Western promises regarding the protection of Ukraine from Russian attacks were not fulfilled" <sup>2</sup>. There are many similar examples and experiences. Therefore, the critical lesson from the Ukrainian event is that the United States and its Western partners cannot be trusted or relied upon. It is a grave mistake to place the fate and future of any country in the hands of the United States, for it knows only its interests and does not hesitate to abandon its closest friends and allies, even if it has made the strongest covenants, agreements, and treaties with them.

### **Second Lesson**

Among the lessons raised by the Russian-Ukrainian event is the double standard with which the "international system," led by the United States, operates. The world has been inundated with slogans of liberal democracy such as human

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1. Rai Al-Youm: December 30, 2021

2. Asharq Al-Awsat: March 8, 2022

rights, the right of peoples to self-determination, international legitimacy, and the rule of international law, which have been echoed by the media, channels, newspapers, and institutions in the Western world these days in defense of Ukraine, its independence, its people, and human rights there.

But all of this is absent when it comes to aggression against other countries and the rights of oppressed or poor peoples in different regions, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. There was no resonance for such slogans as human rights, independence of states, or international law in the occupation of Afghanistan or the war in Iraq and the disasters, killings, and displacement they caused. Nor do you see any trace of those media machines and their loud cries regarding the ongoing violations against humans and children in countries like Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and others.

This is in addition to the racist aspects of discrimination among humans based on skin color, hair, and eyes. The right to asylum becomes a humanitarian act if the refugee has blond hair and colored eyes. Still, if the refugee has dark hair and non-colored eyes, he becomes illegal, violating the law and its borders. This color-based discrimination is among the ugliest known to humanity, both ancient and modern.

### **Third Lesson**

Among the lessons provided by the Ukrainian-Russian conflict is that the foundation of any state's strength lies in its internal depth, represented by its people, who are considered the cornerstone of protecting the state, its institutions, leaders, and officials. Relying on internal resources to face various political and military challenges is the basis for confronting different challenges, difficulties, and problems.

Therefore, a state and ruling system that does not rely on its people and does not trust its citizens internally, but instead places its hopes on the outside—even if the outside is major international powers—in facing challenges, cannot withstand and is inevitably exposed to collapse and downfall, becoming helpless and without support. For this reason, the world repeatedly sees Ukrainian President Zelensky appealing to the outside, whether it be the European Union, NATO forces, or the United States, as if Ukraine were an empty desert with nothing but more than forty million people, institutions, an army, a system, and so on.

Military conflicts and wars remain exhausting and destructive for the parties involved, regardless of the calculations of political, economic, and military gain or loss. However, the most important thing is to draw lessons from these events for future benefit, namely, for the benefit of states, societies, and peoples.

## **About center**

Al-Baydar Center for Studies and Planning is a non-governmental and non-profit organization established in 2015 and registered with the NGO directorate in the general secretariat of the council of ministers in Baghdad.

The center seeks to contribute to developing the state and its institutions, by proposing ideas and practical solutions to the main problems and challenges facing the state, including improving public sector management, policies, and strategic planning, using reliable data and best practices. The center engages the relevant authorities in the state with regular meetings to support this objective and utilizes the support of international organizations dedicated to assisting Iraq's development. The center also seeks to support economic reforms, and sustainable development and provide technical assistance to the public and private sectors. The center also seeks to support the development of the private sector to provide job opportunities for citizens through training and upskilling, in a way that reduces dependence on government institutions and contributes to supporting and diversifying the country's economy.

The center aims to utilize the vast amount of potential in Iraq's human resources by organizing programs to prepare and develop promising young people, including leaders capable of proposing, adopting and implementing visions and future plans that advance society and preserve its value-system based on the commitment to a high moral standard and rejection of all types of corruption.

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