



By: The Editorial Board

The G20 summit was not wrong regarding Ukraine - the compromise has brought a significant result



Everyone is rightfully dissatisfied with the absence of a direct condemnation of Russia for its aggression against Ukraine in the final statement of the G20 summit in New Delhi. They must accept that this is only one part, although a significant one, of the final communiqué.

The complete final statement of the G20 leaders has been tailored so that Ukraine and its Western allies, whose leaders signed it, could be satisfied with it.

The formulation regarding the war in Ukraine left a bitter taste in Kyiv, where they announced that the G20 "has nothing to be proud of in the part about Russia's aggression against Ukraine".

But just as when Kyiv was somewhat disappointed that it did not get a clear path to NATO membership at the summit in Lithuania last July, regarding the decisions at the G20 summit, we must consider previous expectations, which were far beyond achievable.

"Of course the G20 statement's language could have been stronger. But this is the G20, not NATO or the G7. The language is on the right side - a weak version of good rather than bad. Russia comes out the loser. As it should", Daniel Fried, a veteran of US diplomacy and former assistant secretary of state, wrote on X.

Has the position regarding Ukraine become milder?

Is this year's formulation of the G20 leaders on Ukraine milder than last year's from the summit in Indonesia, or was this just the first reaction?

The declaration from Bali stated that the leaders expressed the positions of their nations, including those in the UN, whose General Assembly on March 2, 2022, has declared that it "deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine".

The final statement from New Delhi reminds us of the same decision, though only by mentioning its serial number, not its content, as was done in Bali. Is this difference not too insignificant for disappointments and assessments that a step forward was made regarding Ukraine or, is it a concession to Russia?

The New Delhi declaration regarding Ukraine is qualitatively stronger than the prior one from Indonesia. It is agreed upon by all participants, and it leaves no room for distancing from these positions, particularly regarding Russia and China.

The previous statement from Indonesia still provided scope for Moscow and Beijing to keep their reservations on record because it stated that "most members" of the G20, - that is, not all -strongly condemned the war in Ukraine.

The New Delhi statement represents a significant compromise that the West, led by the US, reached with several key G20 partners from the so-called Global South and India, the host country.

Significant support for India

India had already been damaged enough by the fact that the summit it organised would not carry full weight due to the absence of Chinese leader Xi Jinping and, in general, the

Chinese effort to reduce the significance of decisions throughout the duration of India's chairmanship of the organisation.

As the most complicated to find the final wording, the question of Ukraine posed itself as a kind of turning point for the summit: either there will be some kind of jointly agreed wording on Ukraine, or there will be no joint statement.

With their concessions, the Western G20 members helped India avoid a situation that threatened to make the summit under its organisation a failure, an objective on which China worked systematically.

On the other hand, within the framework of this formulation about Ukraine, even if it is milder than the one in Bali, some members still have a neutral position towards the war in Ukraine and even a favourable attitude towards Moscow, such as Saudi Arabia, South Africa or Turkey.

All of them signed a statement on this occasion which, in the context of Ukraine, unequivocally reminding those present of the UN Charter, stating that all countries should "refrain from action against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state". The reference to Russia's violating the UN Charter is quite clear.

New Indian Silk Road

The New Delhi summit's ground-breaking agreement to create a trade and technological corridor from India through the Middle East to Europe was "bought" in part by the Ukrainian portion of the summit's conclusions.

Partner investment in ports and maritime corridors, trade, exchange of clean energy, and

digital infrastructure between regions has been imposed as a direct response to China's strategic Belt and Road project and its global ambitions.

"This is a game changing regional investment", said US President Joe Biden, emphasising that this is about "creating jobs, increasing trade, strengthening supply chains, boosting connectivity, laying foundations that will strengthen commerce and food security for people across multiple countries".

This initiative fundamentally puts India at the centre of the attention of Western partners, placing it into a shared camp that will respond to the growing and negative Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region and globally.

The list of participants in the deal includes, in addition to the European Union, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, whose economic strengthening of ties with China has upset the balance of influence in the Middle East to the detriment of Western democracies.

In this respect, the new Indian "Silk Road" emerges as a vital and potent response to China's "Belt and Road" project, which has been showing severe signs of waning on its 10th anniversary.

New pressure on Russia

As a balance to the "soft" wording on Ukraine, the document from New Delhi also gives a strong tailwind to the renewal of the Black Sea grain deal, from which Russia unilaterally withdrew last July.

After the G20 request to return to the agreement on the Ukrainian grain exports across the Black Sea, Russia will be under even stronger pressure and in an even more

isolated position that will weaken its blackmail capacity.

Western support for Ukraine's defence against aggression has not diminished after the G20 summit and the compromises made. It went a step further in opposing Russian aggression and Chinese benevolence towards Moscow by strengthening the partnership with India and some members outside the circle of the developed West (Saudi Arabia and South Africa).

After all, only their two leaders - Xi and Putin - were absent from the summit in New Delhi. In their absence, US President Biden had a good meeting with their BRICS partners - the leaders of Brazil, India and South Africa.