A Divided Europe

Europe is one, and yet it is divided in more ways than we care to count.

The countries of the European Union share common currency, common trade space that implies free flow of goods and services as well as commons bureaucracy. They share common political views and aspirations, at least on paper.

But reality is quite different

Not all is well there. The war in Ukraine has revealed fissures and how ill prepared and partitioned the countries are in the face of a common enemy. Each nation has their own political agenda and in many case it is different from others.

Germany apparently is not supplying weapons to Ukraine. Why? Maybe out of a misguided pacifist view. But, most likely Germany is being held hostage by an over dependence on Russian natural gas and oil that if cut-off would surely collapse the German economy. Germany is the biggest landmass nation in Europe and the strongest economy. It's the German economy that allows the Euro to hold its strong value. A serious and sudden devaluation of the Euro could have a devastating impact on the entire European Union economy. It's a delicate balancing act that Germany is playing with Russia, not giving them reason to cut-off Germany's energy source. Yet both Putin and Germany's leadership are very aware of the major importance the German revenue flowing into Russia from energy purchases is to the survival of the Russian economy. Right now, it's a chess match and they seem to have each other in "Checkmate." This tense "Match" is being played each day. What Germany has been doing to help Ukraine is allocating large sums of money towards the war effort. Must say this – allocating and delivering are two different actions. We cannot be sure what is real and what is a PR stunt at this time and what funds had been turned over. We have our doubts

Hungary is a client for Russian oil and political influence; it openly sabotages common European sanctions against that country. France pursues its own relationship with the invaders and wants to stops the war by giving away some territory of Ukraine to Russia as a goodwill (or shall we say, ill will) gesture. Ukraine had vehemently rejected this political course. Serbia hosts Russia's Foreign Minister and his vile propaganda. Serbia is the only country that has an open-air route with Russia thus breaking with the rest of Europe.

Turkey, which is a part of NATO alliance (though not a European state) is supporting Ukraine politically and also with its war technology; and yet participates in plunder, by accepting and apparently reselling the grain stolen from the above country by the occupiers. Italy, too, is trying to save Putin's face and wants to give away parts of the occupied territory to the invaders. Cyprus hosts much of Russian offshore wealth and has a large Russian community that owns property and invested a lot of money in its real estate; they too are looking to be exempted from the slew of anti-Russia's sanctions.

On the other hand, the countries of Eastern Europe that were once part of the Warsaw Pact and the former Soviet Empire, are opposing Russia's war with everything they got – they host refugees, give money, supply fuel, arms, train Ukrainian military; apply political pressure on other NATO countries and speaking in support of Ukraine; they condemn others within the Union for their half-assed efforts. To their honor, Scandinavian countries are quietly and consistently support the embattled Ukraine with whatever they can deliver. United Kingdom is a staunch supporter of the war effort and made it their goal to see Putin's army defeated. They go out of their way to do as they say and say as they do in shoring up the fight of the Ukrainian nation against the common enemy.

It's a mess.

The split revealed something else no one really thought much about – some countries object to the use of their military technology by third parties. It is written into agreement clauses, but until now who would have thought that Israel would object to its missile transfer from the Baltics to Ukraine? Or that Switzerland, bent on neutrality, would not permit its mobile artillery units to go from Germany to Ukraine? They would only permit the new technology to go to another NATO, Eastern European member state, which, in turn, would give up its Soviet-days equipment to Ukraine, in a quid-pro-quo exchange. BTW – this is changing as we speak.

Germany, the horse-trader state, promised to provide Poland with modern tanks, to fill the void left when Polish Soviet-era tanks went to Ukraine, but so far welshed on its promises. The same Germany is transferring military equipment to Greece so that country can ship an equal number of Soviet-era arms to Ukraine. Germany apparently goes out of its way not to be seen by Russia as an active anti-war participant and arms supplier of Ukraine.

All this will inevitably lead to future efforts of some countries to develop their own, home-grown military technology and systems where the transfer and use of it cannot be restricted by third parties. What good is having weapons and not

be able to use it to support countries' changing foreign policy goals? Many complacent, "peace years" had deprived NATO nations of being fully battle-ready, of having significant arms' stockpiles needed to go into any major war and having actionable plans to support each other. They may be there on paper, but reality is different. Ukraine war demands enormous supplies of weaponry and other stores. We don't know much about how these provisions are delivered; yet there is this constant clamor for them, which in itself is an indication.

We must mention the United States as well. They are a part of NATO alliance, though not a European nation. American "lend-lease" for Ukraine had been enacted and put into motion. Yet, America giveth with one, generous hand, and taketh away with another. Our HIMARS vehicles' deliveries come with caveats – they don't want Ukraine fire on Russia's territory when Russia fires missiles at Ukraine across the border. What sort of asinine policy is this? Yea, not drawing the USA into an almost direct confrontation with the Russian Federation is great political thinking, but winning the war is a stated goal here and anything goes, short of nuclear war. Hit them where it hurts. Don't pin down Ukrainian forces and stop them from executing their military plans where it can make a difference. Russia must be defeated militarily and politically, else it will come back, to try again in some years from now. Do we really want that, do we? No, we do not. And neither does NATO.

This war is in full swing. Much is still to take place, and, sadly, many lives to be lost. The sooner the war ends, the better. This simple thought must be the guiding principle to any country that placed its bets with Ukraine. Do all you can do. Cast your other war-related political aspirations aside. Stop playing both ends. Stop being stupid, mercurial and manipulative of Ukraine or other nations. It's all or nothing. Defeat Russia – fully, completely; defang its military, propaganda and political machines. Letting it crawl back to lick its wounds and come back to start another fire is utterly wrong and glaringly nearsighted.

Much rethinking must take place on every aspect of the common European future and NATO itself.

Russia so far managed to overcome some of the Western economic sanctions by collaborating with China, India, Turkey and some Arab states. It must not be permitted to succeed on the battlefield. The Europeans and the USA must mend their fences and fight together. Disagreements can be dealt with after the war is over. Division offers opportunities Russia instantly and inevitably exploits in its own favor.

United we stand, divided we fall. Isn't that a timely thought?

Stay safe out there!