

The Boym Institute message to Indian policymakers and analysts: India's current position towards the Russian invasion on Ukraine may damage its reputation as a major force of peace in the world

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

1. We condemn the unprovoked Russian aggression on Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. This is a clear example of a war of aggression affecting Ukrainian civilians. Open nuclear threats made by the Russian leadership endanger global peace and security.
2. We strongly highlight that NATO never intended nor planned aggression against Russia. The Alliance's position on the eastern flank in the Baltic countries, Poland, Slovakia and Romania was and remains to be defensive. Conforming with the NATO-Russia Founding Act from 1997, there was almost no American military presence in the countries that became NATO members after 1999. This situation changed only after 2014, the first Russian invasion in Ukraine, when allied forces began their very limited rotating presence. The number of forces and their equipment never matched the highly militarized Russian exclave in Królewiec (Russian: Kaliningrad).
3. There was no "expansion of NATO", a misleading term sometimes used in the Indian public debate. All countries joined the alliance voluntarily after adhering to rigid criteria. It was an accession process fully compliant with UN principles based on conscious and democratic choices. We chose our allies freely and we never posed any threat to the Russian Federation.
4. We always admired India's unconditional support for UN Charter principles of national sovereignty and integrity. We will welcome an Indian position on the current conflict reflecting this commitment.
5. We understand and respect Indian security concerns and the importance of strong Indian-Russian bonds. But Kremlin politics may set a precedent of a major power claiming the territory of a neighboring sovereign state by force, with unpredictable consequences for global stability and security, also in Asia. Nations supporting UN principles should develop a coherent set of policies, which would deter possible future aggressors.
6. We acknowledge the importance and fully support even stronger cooperation between India and the EU, including the Union's eastern member states. Nourishing and sustaining these relations requires practicing common values and condemnation of the violation of international law. We hope to find common ground with India regarding the Russian aggression on Ukraine.
7. At present, no one can afford to turn a blind eye to the war crimes happening in Ukraine, and the tragedy of millions of its citizens, including women and children. In Poland we have first-hand information from more than 280 thousands Ukrainians who managed to find safe haven in our country. Moreover, the Russian aggression left thousands of Indian students under direct threat of loss of life. These students are currently being evacuated to the EU eastern member states.
8. We sincerely hope that Europe will come back to peace very soon and all Ukrainians and foreign nationals residing in Ukraine can further pursue their dreams.

*We are truly counting on your support
The Boym Institute*