

## 48TH G7 SUMMIT: AN ASSESSMENT

By

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July 6, 2022

*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)*



**Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) met in the opulent Schloss Elmau resort in Germany for the 48th Summit on June 26-28, 2022 under the Chairmanship of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. This year, leaders of the G7 were also joined by the leaders of Argentina, India, Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa, and of course Ukraine.<sup>1</sup>**

Unlike last year's G7 Summit in Cornwall, England, where priorities of the world's most powerful leaders (the US, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Canada - including European Union (EU) leadership) were to make joint efforts to fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigate effects of Climate Change and help economies recover, the conversation of this year's summit revolved around reiterating: unity of the G7 members; defence of universal human rights & democratic values, rules-based multilateral order; and resilience of their democratic societies.

According to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, three messages<sup>2</sup> emanated from this year's G7 Summit:

1. full support for Ukraine
2. joint fight against global famine
3. more ambition in climate protection

1 "G7 Leaders' Communiqué - Executive summary", European Council - Council of the European Union, Press Release, published June 28, 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/06/28/g7-leaders-communication/>

2 Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, Twitter post, June 28, 2022, 5: 38 p.m. <https://twitter.com/Bundeskanzler/status/1541762901723299842>

The 48th G7 Summit commenced and ended with great fanfare as the entire world's attention was waiting for the final outcome of its discussions because leading up to the summit, it was speculated that leaders of the G7 would make some important decisions in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Although other important issues such as mitigating impacts of Climate Change & addressing issues of world hunger and increasing commodity prices were also part of the summit agenda, it was no secret that the Russia-Ukraine war remained the main point of discussion during the proceedings.

Some of the most significant announcements made in the final statements<sup>3</sup> of the G7 Leaders included:

1. endorsement of the idea and plan to establish an international Climate Club (to mitigate the impacts of Climate Change)
2. under the Global Alliance of Food Security, additional contribution of \$4.5 billion (more than half of this amount will come from the US)<sup>4</sup>
3. announcement of Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) project (rebranded form of Build Back Better World - B3W project that was announced in the last Summit - an alternative to China's Belt & Road Initiative) which entails mobilisation of massive grants and investments worth \$600 billion in the next 5 years to narrow global investment gap
4. further build upon the previous commitment of provision of 1.175 billion COVID-19 vaccines internationally to overcome the pandemic

There was also some development with regards to G7 plans to engage with emerging economies via PGII as well. The presence of countries like Argentina, India, Indonesia and South Africa, at the summit was in line with this particular agenda.

Although the summit was surrounded by sensational ostentation, it seemed that the gathering fell considerably short of the expectations that were attached to it.

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<sup>3</sup> "G7 Leaders' Communiqué", European Council - Council of the European Union, published June 28, 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57555/2022-06-28-leaders-communication-data.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> "FACT SHEET: President Biden and G7 Leaders Announce Further Efforts to Counter Putin's Attack on Food Security", White House, Statements and Releases, published on June 28, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/28/fact-sheet-president-biden-and-g7-leaders-announce-further-efforts-to-counter-putins-attack-on-food-security/>

It was clear that leaders of the largest industrialised democracies remained daunted and helpless in the face of continued Russia-Ukraine war, along with an exponential spike in inflation, persisting global food shortages and unprecedented increase in energy costs.

The G7 Leaders spoke of unprecedented unity and shared purpose but they failed to manifest it practically. As these leaders met in Germany on June 27, Russia launched a deadly missile attack on the Ukrainian capital city of Kyiv<sup>5</sup> which was a reminder of the fact that regardless of Western steps - including military aid, financial assistance to Ukraine and economic sanctions against Russia, Vladimir Putin remains undeterred.

While the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky made a passionate speech at the G7 Summit<sup>6</sup>, begging the G7 Leaders to provide Ukraine with advanced weapon systems and tougher sanctions on Russia in order to help turn the war in Ukraine's favour, the final statement of the G7 Leaders stated that, "it was up to Ukraine to decide a future peace settlement, free from external pressure or influence",<sup>7</sup> putting the entire onus on Ukraine for the resolution of the ongoing war and absolving themselves of any actual responsibility in this regard.

Moreover, at the end of the Summit, the G7 Leaders seemed to be failing on multiple fronts. As mentioned earlier, despite all their claims and efforts, the war in Ukraine continues, with Russia now establishing complete control over the Donbas' Luhansk region.<sup>8</sup>

Western economic sanctions failed to dent Russian war efforts against Ukraine and the meaningless attempt of rebranding the B3W as PGII project to counter China's BRI was a clear testament to the vivid confusion among the G7 Leaders regarding future course of action.

Unlike the expectations from this Summit, there were no new sanctions on Russian energy except for an agreement to push for a ban on import of Russian gold.<sup>9</sup>

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5 "G7 Leaders Call Russian Missile Strike On Shopping Mall A War Crime, Vow To Hold Putin Responsible", Radio Free Europe - Radio Liberty, published on June 27, 2022.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-zelenskiy-g7-kyiv-bombing/31916542.html>

6 Murray Brewster, "Zelensky asks G7 leaders for better air defences and tougher sanctions on Russia", CBC, published on June 27, 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/g7-summit-zelensky-1.6502456>

7 "G7 Leaders' Communiqué", European Council - Council of the European Union, published June 28, 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57555/2022-06-28-leaders-communication-data.pdf>

8 "Russia claims full control of Luhansk region as key city captured", Al-Jazeera, published on July 03, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/3/russia-claims-capture-of-lyschansk-luhansk-region-ukraine>

9 "G7 leaders agree on push to ban import of Russian gold - EU official", Reuters, published on June 28, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/article/g7-summit-gold-idAFB5N2G102Q>

However the G7 Leaders agreed to instruct their respective ministries to deliberate and formulate mechanisms to put price caps on Russian oil and gas.<sup>10</sup> This matter has also been discussed by the US with India, as the latter has become one of the largest importers of Russian crude oil since late February this year.<sup>11</sup>

Although experts state that this price cap strategy can also prove to be counterproductive as Russia can take its oil off-market and crash the world's energy market.

In addition, most solutions given by the G7 Leaders during the Summit also seemed to be self-defeating, for instance:

- pledge to end the use of fossil fuels but simultaneously back Chancellor Olaf's call to fund new gas infrastructures and exploration to quell Europe's dependence on Russian energy imports
- call to end the war in Ukraine but not fight alongside Ukraine (militarily)
- military, financial and political support to Ukraine but prolonging its EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) membership
- promote capitalism but impose price control on energy

The G7 Leaders also failed to credibly detail how they would meet their halving of global carbon emissions by 2030, and there was also hardly any discussion about setting a deadline to phase out coal, like they did during last year's Summit in Carbis Bay.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, several European countries have effectively turned back to coal-based power generation including Germany, Austria, Poland, the Netherlands and Greece.<sup>13</sup>

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10 Angelo Amante and Sarah Marsh, "G7 agrees to explore cap on Russian oil price", Reuters, published on June 28, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/g7-leaders-agree-study-russian-energy-price-caps-officials-2022-06-28/>

11 Anwar Iqbal, "US discusses Russian gas price cap with India", DAWN, published on June 30, 2022. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1697421>

12 Karl Mathiesen and David M. Herszenhorn, "View from the summit: A self-defeating G7 fails on all fronts", POLITICO, published on June 28, 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/climate-change-scloss-elmau-the-view-from-the-summit-a-self-defeating-g7-fails-on-all-fronts/>

13 "European countries turn back to coal as sanctions on Russian energy backfire", Economic Times - Energy World, published on June 23, 2022. <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/coal/european-countries-turn-back-to-coal-as-sanctions-on-russian-energy-backfire/92399244#:~:text=Germany%2C%20Austria%2C%20Poland%2C%20the,winter%2C%20Xinhua%20news%20agency%20reported>

***Conclusion***

Leaders of the G7 wanted to present a strong and united front to the world in the wake of prevailing international circumstances but it is evident now that, to a larger extent, they failed to do so. There was considerable discord in their words and actions and it was clear that they lack the necessary political will and plan to achieve the goals that they have set out for themselves, especially with regards to deterring Russian aggression against Ukraine and controlling the raging global inflation and soaring energy prices.