

# Current Concerns

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## “Europe can only lose”

Existential political, economic, and cultural dimensions of the Ukraine war

by Guy Mettan



(picture ma)

Guy Mettan is a journalist and member of the *Grand Council* of the Canton of Geneva, which he presided over in 2010. He began his journalistic career while studying political science; he then worked for the “*Journal de Genève*”, *Le Temps stratégique*, *Bilan*, “*Le Nouveau Quotidien*” and later as director and editor-in-chief of the “*Tribune de Genève*”.

Since 2005, he has been President of the *Union of Swiss-Russian & CIS Chambers of Commerce*. He was President of the *Geneva Red Cross* from 2006 to 2014 and a member of the Council of the *Swiss Red Cross* until 2019. In 1996, he founded the *Swiss Press Club*, of which he was President and later Director from 1998 to 2019.

He is the author of several books, including «*Creating Russophobia: From the Great Religious Schism to Anti-Putin Hysteria*» (2017), published in seven countries, including China and the USA.

The text reproduces a lecture given by Guy Mettan to readers of *Current Concerns* on 30 April 2022.

I am pleased to be here for this meeting and thank you for organising it. In my introduction, I would like to raise two issues that seem to me fundamental for understanding the current events in Ukraine. The first aspect concerns the nature of this war. In the second part of my reflections, I will try to explain why, in my opinion, peace in Europe is currently impossible, or at least unlikely, and quite distant.

### The nature of this war

First of all, the nature of this war. In my opinion, it is not just a war between Russia and Ukraine, as tends to be assumed. Certainly, it is a war between these two neighbouring countries, and therefore it undeniably has a local and regional dimension. However, it would be wrong to reduce it to that. It is also a war of civilisations, a global war in which Russia, supported by China, is facing off on one side, and the United States, NATO, and the en-

“The conflict marks a turning point and heralds the end of the neoliberal globalisation associated with the maritime powers and the beginning of a new form of globalisation that is more continent-centred.”

tire Western world on the other. Therefore, this war can be called an unlimited, borderless war, even if they are not compact blocs as they were understood during the Cold War. *Gabriel Galice*, chairman of the *Geneva International Peace Research Institute GIPRI*, has described it very well in a video of the blog *Antiithèse*.<sup>1</sup>

The regional dimension is well known. It is the Donbas conflict, a consequence of the coup d'état of February 22, 2014, which followed the Maidan protests and triggered the uprising of the Donbas population against Kiev after the new nationalist regime banned the official use of the Russian language. So much for the regional dimension.

However, it is its global, existential dimension that is increasingly coming to the fore, both at the level of military operations (mobilising all NATO military forces against Russia, excluding any deployment of troops on Ukrainian soil) and at the strategic level. Therefore, one can speak of a war of civilisations and an unlimited war. Why is it unlimited? Because it concerns the totality of human activities. It is a conflict that goes far beyond the purely military aspect.

It is mainly an economic war between two worlds, Russia, including China and numerous other countries such as India, in the fight against the hegemony of the West and its allies. The sanctions imposed on Russia are a form of war waged with embargoes and blockades. This economic war is even more unlimited and boundless than the military war, because the military war, at least for the moment, remains limited to the territory of Ukraine and to conventional means. It fortunately remains below the nuclear threshold, nuclear bombs. On the economic level, on the other hand, one can speak of an almost total war.

### A war for the right to one's own ideas of social coexistence

It is also a cultural war, an ideological war, an information war that involves all aspects of our daily lives. It is clear that two different world views are at stake here. The liberal or rather neoliberal ideology tries to impose the rule of economic laissez-faire and so-called progressive morality against people who defend their right to have their own idea of life in society.

It is also a war of individualism and abstract values against a more traditional and humanistic vision of human society. I understand the term progressive to refer to what belongs to the LGBT, woke, diversity, multi-cultural ideology, as opposed to a more conservative vision or one that is more concerned with respecting the heritage of ancient Greek, Latin, and Christian humanism.

This war is also spatially unlimited because it affects the entire planet and not just two countries. All the countries of the world are being affected, not only Europe, but also NATO, China, India, and the countries of the global South. For the West, it is a question of survival. It is a question of maintaining its hegemony over the world, which it has exercised for five centuries. That is why the West, led by the United States, wants to fight the war to the bitter end and “weaken” Russia as much as possible, as the U.S. Defense Secretary said during his visit to Kiev at the end of April.

### Awakening of the non-Western countries

This global dimension can also be observed in the awakening of the non-Western countries. China supports Russia, although it had always tried to stay out of

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# Mario Draghi seeks “all-out confrontation with Russia”

## Sports, Culture, Music: Banning Everything Russian

by Manlio Dinucci

In his interview with *Rete 4 Mediaset*, Russian Foreign Minister *Sergey Lavrov* raised a series of issues of the utmost importance for Italy and Europe. However, nobody in the Italian and European political world took them into consideration. Prime Minister *Draghi* dismissed the interview with these words:

“We are talking about a country, Italy, where there is freedom of expression. Minister Lavrov belongs to a country where there is no freedom of expression. This country, Italy, allows people to express their opinions freely, even when they are obviously false, aberrant. What Minister Lavrov said is aberrant.”

The Italian government thus confirms not only that it has turned Italy into a beligerent country, ranking fourth among suppliers of arms to Kiev’s forces, but that it seeks all-out confrontation with Russia.

This is in line with what is happening in Europe and the United States, where the attack on everything Russian is underway: while Russian women’s soccer teams are banned from European championships, the *Metropolitan Opera* in New York expels Russian soprano *Anna Netrebko*, because she refuses to condemn her government.

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At the same time, RAI invites to *Porta a Porta* “the wives of the fighters of the Azov battalion”, which is presented as a handful of heroic resistance to the Russian invaders.

To the recycling campaign of the neo-Nazis of Azov also participate *LA7* and the major Italian newspapers.

To demonstrate the true nature of the Azov battalion, now upgraded to the level of special forces regiment, is a report of *Time* magazine of just a year ago, before the same magazine turned the page by joining the international campaign of support to the Kiev regime.

A report by *Vittorio Rangeloni* from Mariupol demolishes, through the testimonies of the inhabitants of Mariupol themselves, the image of Azov presented by the Italian and Western mainstream.

### Our life is at stake

The war advances, but it is not the one that the political-media mainstream makes it appear to our eyes. To understand this, one cannot remain at the still image of what is happening in Ukraine. One must watch the docufilm of the events that, from the end of the Second World War to today, have led to the current situation.

Crucial is the moment in which, after the end of the Cold War with the disintegration of the USSR, the United States

and the other Western powers impose their unipolar order, their economic hegemony with globalization, their unique thought with the sprawling multimedia apparatus, while the US and NATO demolish with war the States that are an obstacle to their plans of domination.

On this background the Russian military operation in Ukraine takes place. It is not only a response to the US-NATO escalation, including nuclear escalation, which endangers Russia’s security. It is a response to the West’s claim to maintain a unipolar world under its own domination. This opens the challenge of the new historical period, that of building a multipolar world.

It is not a coincidence that, after the daily terrorist hammering on the deadly threat of the virus, the mainstream now carries out the daily terrorist hammering on the deadly threat of Russia, demonizing President *Putin*. While the European Union is suicidally severing economic ties and demolishing centuries-old cultural bridges with Russia, it is up to the peoples of Europe to make the no-longer-postponed choices on which our future and our very lives depend. •

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### “Europe can only lose”

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it and maintain a certain neutrality. Now it has found that it is forced to take sides with Russia as it risks becoming the next target.

The same observation applies to India. India has always defended the principle of non-alignment and has been careful to keep a low profile. But Delhi is de facto supporting Russia by refraining from sanctions. The Indians have realised that this is an opportunity for them to assert themselves on the international stage and get rid of the old Anglo-Saxon colonialism of which they were victims for two centuries.

Finally, an awakening can also be observed in Africa. Many African countries are leaning towards the Russian side, including Saudi Arabia, although it is an old ally of the USA. After the debacle in Afghanistan, the country is beginning to think and distance itself from the USA. So it is willing to sell its oil to the Chinese in yuan and no longer in dollars. As for Latin America, you see that Brazil, Ar-

gentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, but also Mexico are quite positive towards Russia.

Europe, Japan and the US congratulated themselves and said they had achieved a Holy Alliance against Russia. However, a close look at the world map reveals a very different situation. Only 37 countries have imposed economic sanctions against Russia, while 150 countries have avoided them.

Conclusion: This war is unlimited in its scope and extent, but also in time. I think it will last. It will not end tomorrow. The military operations will probably decrease and perhaps stop in a few weeks or months. But in the other areas of the war – the economic, cultural and ideological – it will continue. The conflict marks a turning point and heralds the end of the neoliberal globalisation associated with the maritime powers and the beginning of a new form of globalisation that is more continent-centred. It is the beginning of the end of the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon maritime empire, of Britain and the USA, which are islands, over the continental powers, embodied by Russia, China, India, Pakistan

and Iran, which are land powers. We are witnessing the revenge of the continental powers against the maritime powers.

### New phase of military operations

Now a few words on military operations. From a military point of view, the fighting has entered a new phase. The operations are concentrated in the east of Ukraine and are unfolding slowly, nibbling, step by step. After destroying Ukraine’s large military infrastructure – airports, command centres, depots and weapons factories – in the first phase, the Russians’ goal is now to destroy most of the Ukrainian army, which is concentrated in the Donbas, where it has been able to strengthen for eight years. The advance is slow because the Russians do not want to massacre the Russian-speaking and Slavic population living in these areas. Contrary to what we read in our press – there are always many victims in a war, and I am not trying to justify war – the Russians do not want to kill their own friends, populations that are close to them. That would not make

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sense, which is why they are proceeding cautiously. They do not want to use the American strategy, which is to bomb massively and destroy everything before they advance. If they did that, they would massacre their own friends. And the difficulty for the Russians is that the Ukrainian army has been reformed and trained for eight years with the help of American, Canadian and English trainers, and the conscript force is carefully monitored by Azov retaliatory battalions. The Ukrainian extremist nationalists thus control the regular conscript army and are responsible for eliminating soldiers who want to surrender or avoid combat. Their task is all the easier because the Azov fighters are Western Ukrainians who despise the Russian-speaking and Orthodox Slavs in the east. They speak Ukrainian, not Russian. For them, it is no big deal if people from the east die.

At the same time, Ukraine is provided with almost unlimited military support in the form of arms deliveries, intelligence, command and advisory services, training of soldiers on foreign territory, cyber warfare, disinformation and psychological operations. This military and financial support from the thirty NATO countries can only prolong the fighting and increase the number of victims.

Therefore, from a military point of view, the operations on the ground will take some time.

**Why peace is hardly possible in the short term**

I now come to the second part of my contribution: How will all this end? Is there any hope for peace? I think that peace will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, in the short term. First of all, because Ukraine or Zelensky's government does not want to make peace and cannot make peace. Why is that? There is a video from 2019 that shows Zelensky visiting the Donbas after his election, where he is trying to enforce the *Minsk Agreement* that his country signed. He is seen addressing the Azov battalion and asking the officers to withdraw and pull back the heavy artillery 18 kilometres behind the front line in accordance with the *Minsk Agreement*. The video then shows the leaders of the Azov battalion threatening Zelensky and refusing to obey him. Conclusions: 1. It is Azov, not Zelensky, who rules the country, and 2. peace negotiations mean risking lives, as was shown in March when Ukrainian death squads killed two of the Kiev negotiators because they were deemed too pro-peace and suspected of colluding with the Russian enemy.

The second reason is that the Americans, who advise and direct the Ukrain-

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ian government, also do not want peace. Their latest statements have been very clear on this. And as former Brazilian President *Lula da Silva* said recently [see article on page 10], this should nevertheless have been expected from them. The US will do everything in its power to ruin Russia and send it back to the 19th century (which made the Russians smile, since Russia was never as big as it was in the 19th century!). *Joe Biden* has another goal in mind, namely to win the mid-term elections to be held in November. Being criticised by the Republicans as too soft, he is also being pushed to escalate and has every interest in escalating the war to rise in the polls and distract from his more than controversial management of national affairs and the economy.

The Russians do not want peace now either, insofar as their military and political goals have not yet been achieved. The Russians have set three conditions: Denazification, neutralisation and recognition of the independence of Crimea and the Donbas. So far, only 50% of these goals have been achieved. This is not sufficient. Demilitarisation has partially taken place, but the Donbas army still needs to be defeated and, above all, the neutrality of the future Ukraine needs to be achieved. What the Russians call denazification, i.e. ending the control of the nationalist far right and Azov over Ukraine's political and military life, is also halfway there. The victory in Mariupol, the Azov capital, and the “liberation” of the coastal provinces were important steps, but the Kharkiv region and the rest of the Donbas have yet to be “denazified”.

**Bucha – accelerant of the anti-Russia hysteria**

There is another reason why peace is impossible: Bucha and its media “massacre”. When the Russians withdrew from the Kiev region at the end of March after negotiations in Turkey, they were confronted with the Bucha case, which is obviously largely a skilful staging. It is obvious that the victims of Bucha died as a result of the war. They are victims of war, and that is a tragedy that we must all acknowledge, especially if they are civilians. But

these civilian victims were not necessarily the target of a Russian massacre. These people were also killed by bombardments, especially Ukrainian bombardments, because the city was occupied by the Russians and therefore bombed by the Ukrainian army and was fiercely contested for four weeks.

It is possible that there were attacks by Russian soldiers. Such occur in all wars, and it would be surprising if there had been none in Bucha during the weeks of occupation. Therefore, one should not rule out this hypothesis. However, it should not be ruled out that there were civilians massacred by the Azov and Safari Group death squads that combed the town in the two days between the withdrawal of Russian troops and the announcement of the “massacre” in Bucha. It should be recalled that these Ukrainian soldiers had officially announced on their websites that they would eliminate “the saboteurs and accomplices of the Russians” who were suspected of having made pacts with the enemy by accepting biscuits, water or food from the Russians.

All this means that there are several types of victims in Bucha who died for different reasons, but who are classified exclusively as war crimes, crimes against humanity or even “genocide” committed by the Russians. Even the satellite photos, which were obligingly provided by an American company on behalf of the Pentagon, are highly suspect. What is certain, on the other hand, is that the crime, if it is a crime, benefits exclusively the Ukrainians and the West. This reinforces the suspicion that it is a staging or at least a rough arrangement of the truth.

For the case and the subsequent mediation, with its troop of journalists brought in in buses and attended by Ukrainian officers, and its processions of Western politicians who went to the scene in a kind of macabre tourism, will have served to create hysterical fits of the European and of the Ukrainian public against Russia. The warning is now clear to everyone: Ukrainians know that they will be mercilessly liquidated if they cooperate with the Russians.

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Likewise, those who have sided with the Russians in the east and south know that they no longer have any choice: Any return to a Ukrainian regime dominated by nationalists is forbidden to them on pain of death.

I witnessed the same scene in Sarajevo during the 1993 war, with the same kind of scripting intended for the Western media and the same impact on the combatants. Such montages only serve to strengthen the extremists on both sides and lead to pogroms and massacres. They act like self-fulfilling prophecies. The aim is to make both sides irreconcilable. I also do not give much credence to individual testimonies broadcast on television or radio. And when you see old ladies on TV proclaiming, “Yes, the Russians massacred, did this and that,” European journalists take that at face value: “These are testimonies about Russian war crimes.” But how can they be taken seriously when we know that these survivors probably fear for their lives because they have seen the Azov battalions at work and know that they will come to call them to account if they do not testify in the way they want. They will not take the risk of telling the truth in such a context.

**Europe without reason**

One more word about Europe. We have seen that the USA does not want peace, because as long as the war continues, they can sell their gas, oil and weapons and consolidate their domination over Europe. The attitude of the Europeans, however, is a mystery. I do not understand the Europeans’ interest in becoming hysterically anti-Russian, because objectively they would have to find a way to cooperate with Russia. German industry and French agriculture will buy their oil, gas and their fertilisers much more expensive and run the risk of no longer being competitive. Europe will spend even more money and get into even more debt.

Germany has announced 100 billion euros for military loans. This is an equally big loss for the population. It will also have to finance and provide for five million Ukrainian refugees in Europe. At the moment, the situation is still manageable, but what will it look like in two years? Neither is it possible to isolate Russia, since it is almost autonomous in terms of energy and food resources, and it furthermore can continue to trade with countries that represent almost two-thirds of humanity.

So Europe can only lose. The way it is dealing with this conflict shows the weakness and incompetence of its leaders, who have no strategic and long-term vision and

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only react under the influence of immediate emotions.

**Damage to democracy and the rule of law**

In conclusion, I would like to say that I believe that this war will continue. It will not end tomorrow. Since both sides are aware of the danger of nuclear escalation, we are more likely to have a medium-intensity war, like Afghanistan and Iraq, that will probably last for years. As a result, we will again have a Europe divided in two. A new Iron Curtain will be erected, 1000 km further east than the previous one. This means, that long-term tensions will not diminish. Another consequence will be what I call the Sovietisation of our states.

The West keeps saying that it leads a war for democracy and human rights against the Russian dictatorship and fascism. This is wrong, because in reality, a hardening on both sides is to be expected. There will be a hardening of the Russian regime, but with us as well. If you look at things closely, you see that the freedom of the press has also been abolished by banning Russian media. But this is a profound encroachment on the freedom of opinion and freedom of press. When I go on television to express a critical point of view, I am not allowed to have my say. Even the right to property, which is guaranteed by the rule of law and national constitutions, is severely violated. When 300 billion dollars that belong to the Russian people, are confiscated, and billions from the oligarchs, then this is a violation of private property, which is considered inviolable. And I am talking here about our house, our Banks, Switzerland, and not Moscow.

All this is very harmful to the people, whose rights were guaranteed by the Enlightenment and law. It is understandable that sanctions are imposed on states as long as it is in accordance with international law, which is not the case here. But that Western states, which are considered to be the role model for respecting the rights of the individual, behave in

this way, this has never happened in the democratic history of the last centuries. The countries that have committed such outrages were dictatorships. This is what Nazi Germany did, for example, when in the 1930s it deprived Jews of their property, solely under the pretext that they were Jews. And yet that is what Europe, our Europe, is doing today to the Russians, only under the pretext that they are Russians.

One can only hope, that these actions do not lead to the tragic consequences that we have seen in the past. Thank you for your attention. •

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.antithese.info/videos-antithese/gabriel-galice>

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# The war for globalism in Ukraine

by Colonel (ret.) Douglas Macgregor\*



Douglas Macgregor  
(picture realclear-politics.com)

*Washington's proxy war in Ukraine is the globalist scheme to transcend the continuity of history, culture, and geography embodied in the nation-state.*

During the 1999 Kosovo air campaign, President Bill Clinton told<sup>1</sup>

Americans, "That's what this Kosovo thing is all about. [...] It's globalism versus tribalism."

In 1999 very few Americans paid attention to Clinton's remarks. Kosovo was yet another conflict on someone else's soil with little or no relevance to daily life in America. Frankly, Clinton's use of the word "tribalism" probably confused many Americans. To most Americans, nationalism means<sup>2</sup> devotion to the country, the U.S. citizen's readiness in crisis or conflict to place the needs of the country above the citizen's own. American nationalists aren't tribal. They want to protect and defend the United States, its historic institutions and the rights embodied in its laws, not start wars.<sup>3</sup>

The term "globalism" has since evolved to mean much more than free trade and comity between nations.<sup>4</sup> Today, the Western nation-state<sup>5</sup> and the nationalism it inspires are condemned by globalists as the sources of prejudice, exclusivism, and war. In retrospect, Clinton's use of the term "globalism" is in continuity with the Biden administration's proxy war against Russia.

To Washington's contemporary ruling political class, globalism involves more<sup>6</sup> than purchasing products manufactured by cheap labor in non-Western countries. Washington-led globalism now promises the dissolution of traditional political and social forms of human organisation – national governments, borders, identities, cultures – and replaces them with a world of consumers united only by their dependence on amorphous corporations, unaccountable non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and supra-national institutions.

Put another way, globalism is now synonymous with the progressive left's view

of the postwar liberal international security order that must expand to survive. Washington's proxy war in Ukraine is the globalist scheme to transcend the continuity of history, culture, and geography embodied in the nation-state, to homogenise disparate peoples in the process of assimilating rapid social and technological change. In this sense, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's recent call<sup>7</sup> for Washington and its strategic partners to establish global control of Russia's nuclear weapons aligns nicely with the Biden administration's progressive globalist vision.

And therein lies the problem. Nations and their peoples do not evolve in a vacuum, nor do they surrender their existence without a fight.

## Russian national identity and culture challenged

These points should alert Washington to the fact that its proxy war for globalism in Ukraine involves national identity<sup>8</sup>, a dynamic force that stirs the deepest human emotions. Yet it is not just two kinds of nationalism, Ukrainian and Russian, rooted in language, culture, and history, that are in conflict. Washington's brand of globalism, dressed in the guise of NATO expansion, directly challenges Russian national identity and culture. It is Russia's unique geographic role in linking European and Asian civilization, as well as its Orthodox Christian culture – a belief system enshrined in Russia's current state ideology, foreign, and security policy – that are imperiled.

In light of U.S.-led NATO military interventions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, it is fundamentally dishonest to pretend that NATO's encroachment on Russia's western border is benign. But it is far more dangerous to ignore the truth that, in Moscow's view, NATO expansion into Ukraine is inextricably linked with the extension of globalism to Russia.<sup>9</sup>

Statements by the U.S. Secretaries of Defense and State that Washington wants to "weaken"<sup>10</sup> Russia make it clear that Washington's allegedly benevolent "rules-based order" is of no benefit to Russia. In fact, the statements simply confirm in Russian minds the belief that the U.S. is a co-belligerent in Ukraine's war for NATO expansion.

Perhaps even more important is the suggestion that Poland, NATO's proverbial wild child, would provide so-called "peacekeeping forces" to Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> It's no secret to Europeans that Poland dominated most of Ukraine for nearly 400 years, or that Moldova, though technically Romanian, spent 300 years as a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire. Washington's apparent readiness to introduce revanchist Polish

forces<sup>12</sup> into Western Ukraine and, potentially, revanchist Romanian forces<sup>13</sup> into Moldova suggests that Washington's globalists will do anything to harm Russia<sup>14</sup> even if it involves advancing the territorial ambitions of Russia's historic enemies.

War still tests the legitimacy of those who govern inside the warring states, as well as the resilience of their societies. This observation applies to the Biden Administration as much as it does to the governments of Zelensky and Putin. As he presides over fiscal crisis, scarcity, and rising criminality in America, and displays his willful ignorance of Eastern Europe and its peoples, President Biden and his supporters on the Hill are stirring a regional pot that could quickly boil over with dangerous consequences for Washington and its NATO partners. As Sigmund Freud wrote<sup>15</sup> of Biden's "internationalist" predecessor Woodrow Wilson, Biden "has a marvelous ability to ignore facts and believe what he wants." However, it's much tougher now than it was in 1917 to pull the wool over Americans' eyes.

Washington actively cultivated<sup>16</sup> Ukraine's war with Russia for many years, harnessing Ukrainian nationalism—the incendiary force globalists claim to loathe – in service to their cause. It worked. Now the same globalists are prolonging the war<sup>17</sup> with arms, advice, and encouragement, even though Ukraine is being destroyed.

In the last 30 years, Washington's over-emphasis on military assistance and intervention in the pursuit of regime change has drawn the U.S. into conflicts and crises in the Balkans, the Near East, North Africa, and Southwest Asia. American nationalists<sup>18</sup> are not responsible for the current war in Ukraine or the last three decades of Washington's self-defeating wars. But American nationalists are needed now more than ever to stop the globalist war to destroy Russia<sup>19</sup> before that war spreads like a cancer across Eastern Europe. •

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.globalresearch.ca/globalisms-first-victim-natos-war-on-yugoslavia/5633684>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/the-problem-nationalism>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/Case-Nationalism-Rich-Lowry/dp/0062839640>

<sup>4</sup> <https://fee.org/articles/is-good-globalism-being-undermined-by-bad-globalism/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.jns.org/opinion/globalism-is-not-a-jewish-concept/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theglobalist.com/united-states-globalism-patriotism-donald-trump/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/world/ukraine-concerns-zelenskyy-global-control-russian-nukes>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/1981-12-01/political-pilgrims-travels-western-intellectuals-soviet-union>

<sup>9</sup> <https://internationaltimes.it/putin-calls-out-west-satanic-cult/>

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# “Not in Our Name”: Opposition to US war escalation with Russia

## Open letter to US President Joe Biden from US citizens

A group of US intellectuals – journalists, political advisers, and scholars – are initial signers of an open letter to President Joe Biden (see full text below), pleading with him to reject policies which lead to an “intensification of conflict with Russia” and which “could lead to the deaths of millions of innocent people.” The petition has 625 signatories as of 20 May 2022.

Dear Mr. President,

The undersigned strongly and unambiguously express their opposition to your policy with regard to Ukraine. Your strategy is edging the world closer and closer to a nuclear war with Russia, and to another world war. Recently, you requested Congress for even more funds to be sent Ukraine in order to help them buy more weapons for the military conflict with Russia. “So we need to contribute arms, funding, ammunition ... so that they continue what they are doing,” you said on April 28 when asking for some more \$33 billion in taxpayer funds to support Ukraine. “Robust military assistance” for Ukraine is your expression. Reuters reported that “President Joe Biden asked Congress for \$33 billion to support Ukraine” and called it “a dramatic escalation of U.S. funding for the war with Russia.” At the same time, the U.S.-led NATO April 27 meeting in Ramstein, Germany urged NATO members to provide more military support to Ukraine, with Germany promising to send 50 self propelled Cheetah anti-aircraft weapons. We reject

### “The war for globalism in Ukraine”

continued from page 5

- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/25/us/politics/ukraine-russia-us-dynamic.html>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-propose-ukraine-peacekeeping-mission-nato-summit-says-pm-2022-03-18/>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://gilbertdoctorow.com/2022/04/28/russian-media-today-28-april-2022/>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://intellinews.com/moldova-rejects-ukraine-s-offer-to-seize-transnistria-242742/?source=moldova>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/29/putins-middle-finger-to-the-un-sends-clear-message-to-the-west>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/thomas-woodrow-wilson-psychological-study/author/freud-sigmund-bullitt-william/>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/in-for-the-long-haul-bidens-33-billion-request-foreshadows-extended-war-in-ukraine>
- <sup>18</sup> <https://news.yahoo.com/rand-paul-heres-prevent-war-180055675.html>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/ukraine-donbas-russia-conflict/>

Source: *The American Conservative* of 4 May 2022; reprint with friendly permission of the author

your heightened escalation of this conflict as dangerous and a provocation.

The response from Russia? Just days before Biden’s appeal to Congress, Russian Foreign Minister *Sergei Lavrov* responded to the increased U.S. military support of Ukraine by saying there was a “serious” risk of nuclear war over the conflict. “It’s real. It shouldn’t be underestimated,” he stated.

Do we want to risk a nuclear war with Russia over a regional conflict in Eastern Europe?

The independent journalist *Glenn Greenwald* just recently stated, “Whatever your views on the moral dimensions of this war, it’s hard to deny this is the most dangerous moment in US foreign policy in two decades. Every week, US/NATO involvement in the war intensifies, as Russia explicitly warns of nuclear war. For what?”

We hereby declare that your escalation of this conflict as the President of the United States has not been done in our name.

Nor did you act in our name when you, as Vice-President of the United States, were involved in the 2014 coup in Ukraine that toppled the officially elected leadership of Ukraine. At that time, a telephone conversation of your collaborator *Victoria Nuland* (Assistant Secretary of State under President *Barak Obama*) revealed how she discussed which leaders should be placed into the new government in Ukraine. The transcript of that conversation also exposed your own direct involvement in this interference with a foreign nation state. This intrusion into the internal affairs of a sovereign nation was not done in our name, either.

You designated this same official, *Victoria Nuland*, now as the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. In that position, she has recently had to admit that Ukraine does have bio labs and that the U.S. is involved in them and is worried what Russia would do with its dangerous content should they get a hold of it. “Ukraine has biological research facilities which in fact we are now quite concerned Russian troops may be seeking to gain control of,” *Nuland* said. “So we are working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces should they approach.” Some of those very same Ukraine bio labs are ones that your own son, *Hunter Biden*, only months after the U.S.-led political coup in Ukraine in 2014, invested money by way of the U.S. Company *Metabiota* which is

working with the Department of Defense. Additional evidence has been recently unearthed, effectively proving the U.S.’s involvement in Ukrainian bio labs.

This strange and troubling U.S. involvement in bio labs at the border of Russia – with direct involvement of your own family – is not done in our name, either.

And let us also remind you that the United States does not have a good moral standing when it comes to condemning unjust wars of aggression. Recent U.S. history demonstrates a pattern of multiple military invasions of sovereign states – or military and tactical support for others to do so – most prominently the unjust 2003 invasion of Iraq with hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties, but also in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria.

At this dangerous moment in history, the U.S. must exert its power to become a force for just peace, urging Russia and Ukraine to come to the negotiation table in order to agree on compromises that would enable and ensure peace in the region.

The U.S. should not engage in a policy of intensification of conflict with Russia that could lead to the deaths of millions of innocent people. There are grave consequences of cumulative provocations.

Not in our name, Mr. President.

First Signatories

Dr *Chuck Baldwin*, Pastor, Author, Columnist, Radio Talk Show Host, Presidential Nominee; *Donna F. Bethell*, Esq.; *Walter E. Block*, Ph.D.; *Harold E. Wirth*, Eminent Scholar Endowed Chair and Professor of Economics Loyola University New Orleans; Dr. *Peter Chojnowski*, philosopher and director of Sister Lucy Truth; *Patrick Delaney*, journalist; *Matt Gaspers*, Managing Editor, Catholic Family News; The Most Reverend Bishop *René Gracida*; *Carrie Gress* and *Noelle Mering*, TheologyofHome.com, Fellows, Ethics & Public Policy Center; Scholars, Institute for Human Ecology, CUA; Dr *Robert Hickson*, (USA ret.), retired professor of literature and military history; Dr *Maike Hickson*, journalist; *Steve Jalsevac*, Co-Founder of LifeSiteNews.com; *Jim Jatras*, retired former U.S. diplomat, GOP Senate foreign policy adviser; *Jason Scott Jones*, movie producer, founder of the Vulnerable People Project, host of the Jason Jones Show; Dr. *Clifford A. Kiracofe*; *Jack Maxey*, journalist and political analyst; *Brian M. McCall*, Editor-in-Chief, Catholic Family News; *Eugene G. McGuirk*, BA, MA, MBA, Deacon and educator; *Eric Metaxas*; Hon. *Andrew P. Napolitano*, former jurist, constitutional scholar, and legal commentator; *Pater David Nix*, Diocesan hermit; *Jack Posobiec*, Editor, Human Events; *Eric Sammons*, Editor-in-Chief, Crisis Magazine; Dr *Michael Sirilla*, Professor of Theology, Franciscan University of Steubenville; *Beverly Stevens*, REGINA Magazine; *Frank Walker*, Editor Canon212.com; *John-Henry Westen*, co-founder and editor-in-chief of LifeSiteNews.com; Sir *Owen Samuel Whitman*, GCS, political commentary and consultant; *Michael Yon*, War Correspondent/author; *Elizabeth Yore*, Esq., Founder, YoreChildren; *John Zmirak*, Ph.D., Senior Editor, The Stream

To sign the petition:

[https://www.change.org/p/not-in-our-name-opposition-to-u-s-war-escalation-with-russia?utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=custom\\_url&recruited\\_by\\_id=fe98e4a0-b266-11e6-a35e-f1e0a03ea9b0](https://www.change.org/p/not-in-our-name-opposition-to-u-s-war-escalation-with-russia?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=fe98e4a0-b266-11e6-a35e-f1e0a03ea9b0)

USA, NATO, EU, Ukraine and Russia

## What happened before 24 February 2022?

by Karl-Jürgen Müller

*For as long as there have been wars, the enemy has always been accused of only the worst. Everyone confronted with the statements of our politicians, our media etc. should have this in mind. But the escalation of the image of the enemy does not serve peace. Those concerned about peace are therefore looking for other ways.*

If currently, when comparing the accessible Russian statements with those from Ukraine and our countries, it is noticeable that the Russian ones are far less aggressive than those from Ukraine and the “West”, then this is also an indication that Russia is keeping the doors open for a negotiated solution, while the “West”, i.e., the NATO states and their allies – including influential forces in Switzerland – have so far focused entirely on war.

That our countries are war parties and that our media are a driving force in this has once again been shown by the Ukrainian ambassador to Germany, *Andrei Melnyk*, with his appearance at the German *Federal Press Ball* on 29 April. Here, the reference to his tweet of 30 April may suffice:

*“Dear German journalists, thank you very much for your tireless work. Only with your help and support Ukraine can win this war.”*

But it is also worth quoting a reply tweet from a Dr *Uwe Schmidt*:

*“You, Mr Melnyk, are a politician. You have been given the task by your president to raise money and weapons. When a politician like yourself is thanking journalists, that should be an alarm signal for an independent journalist: Have I allowed myself to be taken in for political ‘purposes’?”*

### Where are the reliable investigations?

As a citizen, one would like to see serious investigations into the actual causes and reasons for the war in Ukraine. Causes and reasons must be known so that one can strive not only abstractly but also concretely for something like a just peace.

The big problem in the search for the actual occasions and causes is that many records and documents that would be necessary for such research work are not yet accessible at present. Shouldn't it therefore be natural to be rather cautious when one is asked to formulate firm judgements about the causes and course of war, let

alone war culprits, while a war is still in progress?

### What we can know so far

However, a lot is already known about the war in Ukraine, its causes, and occasions. The following are some indications that should be followed by thorough investigations.

#### 1. A war with global dimensions

The war in Ukraine cannot be adequately grasped if it is reduced to a Russian-Ukrainian dispute alone. Rather, this war is the disastrous escalation of a conflict that has been going on for many years between the USA, NATO and the EU on the one hand and Russia – but not only Russia – on the other. The Cold War was not really ended in 1990/1991 – despite numerous public avowals and hopes of people all over the world. In the 1990s, the US government and its allies tried to steer and control Russia – the largest country within the dissolved Soviet Union and still armed with nuclear weapons – to further weaken it (“shock strategy”) and to integrate it into neoliberal globalisation, to exploit its raw materials and, if necessary, to break it up into different parts. A prejudiced Western propaganda campaign against Russia (“Russia as an enemy”), which had already developed into an outright smear campaign before 24 February 2022, was more or less a direct continuation of the Western rhetoric of the Cold War.

#### 2. NATO has become an offensive alliance

In the 1990s, Russia's political leadership was not in a position to counter the claim to power of the USA and its allies. Even in the 1990s, Russia regarded the expansion of NATO to the East as directed against Russia and as a threat to peace, as an expression of US plans for world domination, but at that time it was unable to take countermeasures. In 1999 at the latest, with the NATO war of aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the new NATO strategy formulated during the war, Russia's political leadership realised that NATO had become an alliance of aggression intended to serve the US plans for world domination. NATO's east expansion was an essential part of these domination plans.

#### 3. Russia has been trying to counter this for 20 years

Russia's new political leadership from 2000 onwards was primarily concerned with the internal reconstruction of the

country after the catastrophic 1990s and with pushing back US influence within the country. It increasingly contradicted the US global power policy and – not least in view of the US termination of important arms control treaties – ensured a resurgence of Russian military capabilities. In terms of foreign policy, Russia has also expanded its relations and influence over the past 20 years: in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and also in the eastern part of Asia. Although the US government, and with it Islamists from various countries, was on the side of Russia's opponents in the two Chechen wars, the Russian government still supported the war of the USA and its allies against Afghanistan in 2001. But in the war of aggression of the USA and its “coalition of the willing” against Iraq in 2003, this was already different. At that time, the Russian position was still supported by the German and French governments.

The landmark for the open and fundamental Russian criticism of US foreign policy was the speech by Russian President *Putin* at the *Munich Security Conference* in 2007. Vladimir Putin spoke of the USA striving for “monopolar world domination” and found this “unacceptable to the world”. He criticised NATO's eastward expansion and warned NATO against “unbridled military use”. NATO had “failed to honour guarantees given to us [Russia] [...]”. The missile defence system planned by the USA in Europe threatened Russia.

At the same time, Russia's political leadership continued to strive for good relations with the other European states, with the EU and especially with Germany. The intensive expansion of economic relations was an essential part of good relations, which were also sought by the European states in the economic sphere. Russia's political leadership spoke of a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

#### 4. Colour revolutions, extreme nationalists and new NATO members

In 2008, NATO promised membership to two more states bordering directly on Russia – Ukraine and Georgia – even though direct accession negotiations did not take place for the time being because of German and French opposition. A few years earlier, the political leadership in Georgia (2003) and also in Ukraine in 2004 had been overthrown by so-called “colour revolutions”. The new governments were

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### “What happened before ...”

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pro-Western and hostile to Russia. The new president *Yushchenko*, who came to power in Ukraine, promoted extreme Ukrainian nationalism and even declared *Stepan Bandera* a “Hero of Ukraine” in 2010. Bandera had fought against the Soviet Union during World War II, at times alongside the German Wehrmacht, and his *Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists* (OUN) was actively involved in the murder of Ukrainian Jews.

Russia’s political leadership clearly signalled its opposition to NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine in particular. In the brief Georgian war in 2008, Russia showed – as it did later with its military support for the Syrian government – that it is prepared to use military means outside its national borders in a conflict with a US policy directed against Russia.

#### 5. Ukraine – an instrument of US policy

Already in the 1990s, Ukraine was an important instrument for the USA to weaken Russia. The theses of the former US secu-

rity advisor *Zbigniew Brzezinski* give an indication of this. As early as the 1990s, the USA tried to turn Ukraine into a country within its sphere of influence and invested a lot of money in this. The country itself, although actually rich in very good arable land and industrial potential, has not been able to recover economically after its statehood in 1991 – until today. Corruption in the country was and still is a big problem and – coupled with an economic decline – contributed significantly to a great dissatisfaction of the population with their political leadership, regardless of whether it was pro-Russian or pro-Western. This dissatisfaction was the starting point for Western policies of overthrow both in 2004 during the “Orange Revolution” (massive protests forced a rerun of the presidential elections, and instead of Viktor Yanukovich, who had been successful in the first round and was more pro-Russia, the more pro-US candidate Viktor Yushchenko was elected) and in 2013/2014 during the Maidan protests (which led to the violent overthrow of President Yanukovich, elected in 2010).

## Neocon Objectives

by *Oliver Stone*

I’ve been following the Ukraine situation since 2014 with *Robert Parry* leading the way as a teacher. I’ve followed the burnings in Odessa, the persecution without legal rights and murders of journalists, mayors, politicians, and citizens. I’ve followed the banning of the main opposition party, which had higher polls than the *Zelensky* government. I’ve been shocked by the sheer hatred expressed against the Russian-Ukrainian minority. It’s a long and sad story devolving from the 2014 coup, co-engineered by the US, which stripped Ukraine of its neutrality and made it vociferously anti-Russian; in the eight years since, some 14,000 innocent people in the Ukraine have been killed, none of which was seriously covered by our media.

I’ve watched with mounting fear these past weeks as *Victoria Nuland* once again emerged out of the blue, warning the Russians and us – the target audience – that if the Russians use a nuclear device of any kind, there’ll be hell to pay. This was quickly picked up by a host of Administration officials and TV channels in the following days, amplifying the same idea – Russia going nuclear. All this coming because of *Putin’s* restatement of Russia’s nuclear policy, which btw is not as aggressive as our nuclear posture. This made me wonder, why repeat this over and over? First, there were all the war crimes charges which came fast and furious and need serious investigation and evidence.

As a result, I wonder if the US is setting the stage for a low-yield nuclear ex-

plosion, of unknown origin, somewhere in the Donbass region, killing thousands of Ukrainians? Of course, if that happened, God forbid, all the world’s eyes would be trained, like a Pavlov dog, to blame Russia. That guilt has been set up already in advance, regardless of who launched the device. This usage would certainly impact the remaining 50% of world opinion, which isn’t in the Western camp. Russia would be the Satan, the Beelzebub. Keep in mind, it’s hard to know where a nuclear device is fired from, especially in a fast-moving situation like this war, in which it seems Russia can be accused of any behavior, no matter how preposterous. It would probably take a few days to find out the truth, but the truth isn’t important. The perception is, and the US is running a perception war with great skill and blunt force, saturating the *CNN/Fox* airwaves and our satellite countries in Europe and Asia as I’ve never seen before.

In doing this, we’d be one step closer to getting what we hope is another *Yeltsin*, who can create for our country another huge ideological and business opportunity. But, more important, in the bargain, isolate China from Russia. Of course, China would be the next target if Russia falls. This, I believe, is the dream scenario of the neoconservative anarchists in our government to make what they deem a better “rule-based world.” •

Source: Facebook-entry by *Oliver Stone* of 2 May 2022

Especially in 2014, the active participation of the USA and also the EU in the coup was unmistakable. The aim was to install a pro-Western and anti-Russian government. The EU’s planned “Eastern Partnership” with Ukraine was also aimed at excluding and thus weakening Russia. In the process, considerable use was made of extreme nationalist and all-Russian-hating forces in the country, and the new Ukrainian government even erected monuments to the Ukrainian nationalist *Stepan Bandera* and named streets after him.

The strongly anti-Russian basic line of the new government, discrimination, threats of violence and also real violent excesses against the large Russian-speaking part of the population, especially in the east and south of the country, led to the overwhelming majority of the Crimean inhabitants declaring themselves independent in a referendum and – successfully – applying for admission to the Russian Federation. In the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, protesters armed themselves after violently suppressed peaceful protests, and since spring 2014 there have been ongoing armed conflicts with around 14,000 civilian deaths. The vast majority of them died as a result of Ukrainian shelling of the areas seeking autonomy.

#### 6. Non-compliance with the Minsk agreements

Two agreements in the Belarusian capital *Minsk* (*Minsk I* in September 2014 and *Minsk II* in February 2015) were an attempt to reach a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and to grant autonomy to those parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts that were seeking it – within the state of Ukraine. However, both agreements were not implemented; the Ukrainian government refused to negotiate directly with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk, calling them “terrorists”. The agreed constitutional amendment and elections in the autonomous parts of the country were prevented by the government in Kiev. Ukrainian government representatives publicly stated that they did not want to comply with the *Minsk agreements* – although the United Nations Security Council had also adopted these agreements and thus declared them to be international law. Russia repeatedly demanded compliance with the *Minsk agreements*, while the governments of Germany and France – both of which were among the initiators of *Minsk II* – officially declared their support for the agreements – as did the US government – but did nothing or too little to persuade the government in Kiev to comply with the agreements. On the contrary, in autumn 2021 the Russian government pub-

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### “What happened before ...”

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lished correspondence showing that neither France nor Germany had any urgent interest to comply with these agreements. It is very likely that the US government in particular has actively supported the Ukrainian government's refusal to comply with the agreements.

#### 7. Ukraine becomes a de facto NATO member

Without formally being a NATO member, Ukraine has step by step become a quasi-NATO state since 2014. NATO training facilities for the Ukrainian army, NATO weapons for Ukraine, joint manoeuvres with NATO states, including in Ukraine itself, and Ukrainian participation in NATO war missions are clear indications of this. The US government also testified several times in 2021 to its ideal and material support for NATO membership for Ukraine and for a specifically close alliance between the USA and Ukraine. An example of this is the *US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership Charter* of 10 November 2021. Russia's December 2021 request for a written agreement that Ukraine would not become a NATO member was rejected by both the US and NATO.

#### 8. Russia, Ukraine and Russian Security Interests

With repeated and detailed contributions on the importance of Russian-Ukrainian relations in history and the present, with multiple references to the threats posed by Ukraine and in particular the extreme nationalist forces there to the Russian-born population of Ukraine, to Russian citizens and also to Russia itself, with multiple emphasis on “red lines”, with the presentation of two draft treaties and much more,

the Russian government was still trying to reach a diplomatic solution to the conflict until 21 February 2022. However, when it comes to the core of the draft treaties, which is essential for Russia, both the US government and NATO have shown no willingness to make concessions. Russia repeatedly stressed that with its treaty proposals it was striving for nothing more than the equal security for all OSCE member states guaranteed in OSCE treaties many years ago – as, incidentally, is also the case in the *United Nations Charter*. Instead, the US government and NATO insisted on the supposed right of every state to freely choose its alliance. The *Security Conference* in Munich on the weekend of 18-20 February 2022 reaffirmed the US and NATO position, the Ukrainian president was promised full support, and the Ukrainian president held out the prospect of rearming his country with nuclear weapons, which it had abandoned in 1994.

#### 9. Was there a threat of a Ukrainian attack on Crimea and Donbass?

Very likely with the strong support of the US government and the backing of other NATO states, for example the UK, the government of Ukraine planned a military attack on Crimea – i.e. an area that Russia considers part of its territory – and the two autonomy-seeking regions of Donetsk and Luhansk – where more than 500,000 Russian citizens live. A March 2021 decree even obliged Ukraine's government to reintegrate Crimea into the state of Ukraine. And although both French President *Macron* and German Chancellor *Scholz* publicly declared during their visits to Moscow in January and February 2022 that the Ukrainian government would now finally implement the *Minsk agreements*, in reality the op-

posite happened: the Ukrainian army had massed troops in the area of the line of contact with Donetsk and Luhansk; Russia speaks of more than 100,000 men. The always fragile ceasefire on the contact line between the territories striving for autonomy and the rest of Ukraine was broken massively, mainly by the Ukrainian side, only one day after the visit of the German Chancellor and his promise that the *Minsk agreements* would finally be respected. The figures of the OSCE Observer Mission prove this. The Donetsk and Luhansk authorities began evacuating the civilian population. And after Russia's recognition of the two territories as independent republics on 21 February, the shelling with heavy weapons in the direction of the new republics increased enormously once again.

#### Attack or defence?

In our countries, it is said almost unanimously that Russia is guilty of a war of aggression against Ukraine in violation of international law. This formulation is usually not alone: adjectives such as “brutal”, “cruel” or “delusional” are usually added. *Jochen Scholz*, a former lieutenant colonel in the German armed forces, asked the question in the 21 December issue of *Current Concerns* No. 28/29: “Who is the aggressor?” There are, considering the points listed above, quite reasons to call Russia's military action in Ukraine a defensive war. This is not just a Russian propaganda formula. But this important discussion cannot be held openly and thoroughly in our countries at the moment. It would, however, be important in order to take steps towards establishing the truth and to gradually move away from the propaganda typical of all wars. Above all, for the sake of peace. •

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## Michail Gorbatschow on war and peace



Michail Gorbatschow  
(picture Wikipedia)

Steve Rosenberg: [...] How dangerous is the current confrontation between Russia and the West? Mikhail Gorbachev: As long as weapons of mass destruction exist, primarily nuclear weapons, the danger is colossal. Irrespective of any political decisions that may be taken. Look at how many malicious people there are today, who go around blowing things up. They might seize control of some of these weapons. And if the weapons are fired, that will trigger retaliation. This cannot be allowed to happen. So, all nations should declare, all nations, that nuclear weapons must be destroyed. This is to save ourselves and our planet. I was in Japan. In Nagasaki. The place where the Americans dropped their first bombs is still affected. Why did the Americans do that? As a warning to everyone: Obey us, or we'll drop a little bomb on you, like we did on Japan. That's how I see it. Why else would they

drop a bomb? I fear that the people who act this way are still around. We're not free of them. And when this happens we react very strongly. In a country like ours, where war caused such destruction, in a country where millions died, millions of people, we feel this like no other country. [...] I still believe you need to change leaders, the Constitution says so. But there are times when a country is switching from one period to another when new people are not ready to assume the burden. [...] Our president inherited such chaos. And everyone saw he stopped the chaos and literally took everything on himself. From press reports we're hearing that the people want him to stay on and finish the job. There's still a lot to do. I am all for abiding by the law. But I will tell you, I would never oppose something if all the people are for it.

Source: Interview with Steve Rosenberg, BBC, with Mikhail Gorbachev of 8 November 2019; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYVsKoQXATY>

### About Putin, the Germans and America

Mikhail Gorbachev: For us Russians, Putin said nothing new at all [at the Munich Security Conference in 2007]. He

said what he has always said. Why were our partners so surprised? First and foremost: At that time, a survey was conducted among you in Germany. 78 per cent of the Germans surveyed were on Putin's side. [...]

Spiegel: During Gorbachev's perestroika, East and West disarmed, militarily and verbally. Who is to blame for the new confrontation?

In America, people have given in to the feeling that they are all winners. As if they could have achieved anything without us. We could only achieve that together. I have often, in lectures in America, been reminded of John F. Kennedy. He once said about the Soviet Union, about the Soviet people: You must not demonise them. They are just like us. They have children. They want to live a happy life. But America cannot live without an enemy. The US has to show why it needs a big military budget. Kennedy also said: If you assume that the coming world order will be a Pax Americana, then I must tell you: Either there is peace for all or there is no peace. •

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IipaGt9WmcE> of 14 January 2015

## Lula da Silva: EU and USA could have prevented war

by Vilma Guzmán



Lula da Silva  
(picture Wikipedia)

In an interview with the US weekly magazine *Time*, Brazil's former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) sharply criticised the European Union, the USA and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. They were all partly responsible for the war in Ukraine, the politician of the leftist Workers' Party (PT), who wants to run in the presidential elections in October, said.

He accused US President Joe Biden of having "done nothing to prevent the war". He firmly believed that differences could be resolved through talks. Neither Biden nor EU leaders had done this sufficiently in the run-up to the Russian invasion, he said.

"The US has great political weight. And Biden could have prevented [the war] instead of fuelling it. He could have spoken more, been more involved. Biden could have taken a plane to Moscow to talk to Putin. This is the kind of attitude you expect from a leader. Intervene to make sure things don't get out of hand."

Russia should not have invaded Ukraine, Lula stressed, "but it is not only Putin who is guilty. The US and the European Union are also to blame." They should have assured the Russian government that Ukraine would not join NATO, "that would have solved the problem," the PT politician said. He drew a comparison with the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, when the US and Russia agreed to remove missile sites from Turkey and Cuba to avoid an escalation with unforeseeable consequences for the world.

The head of the Ukrainian government was "just as responsible for the war as Putin, because not only one per-

son is guilty of the war", da Silva continued. Zelensky had "wanted the war", otherwise he would have "negotiated more" and proposed, for example, "to discuss NATO and EU membership further". He had not done this. Now he was receiving standing ovations in all European parliaments and could be seen constantly on television. It was irresponsible for Western politicians to "celebrate Zelensky" instead of focusing on negotiations.

War is not a solution, Lula affirmed. Western sanctions against the Russian Federation were unjustifiably affecting the economies of other regions. "Now we have to pay the bill for the war against Ukraine. Argentina and Bolivia will also have to pay. They are not punishing Putin. You are punishing many different countries; you are punishing humanity." [...] •

Source: <https://amerika21.de/2022/05/257924/lula-da-silva-eu-usa-ukraine-krieg> of 7 May 2022  
(Translation Current Concerns)

# Let us return to the importance of neutrality

Interview with National Councillor Franz Grüter, President of the Foreign Policy Committee of the National Council



Franz Grüter  
(picture ma)

*mw. Swiss sanctions against Russian assets abound. On 3 May 2022, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council (FAC-N) approved several amendments to the law that would, among other things, empower the*

*Federal Council, i.e., the executive branch, to “independently” impose far-reaching sanctions and coercive measures against individuals and companies. On 8 May, the Swiss Social Democrats even topped these – in terms of the rule of law questionable – demands, and announced a motion in the National Council: the daily press reported that, according to co-president Mattea Meyer, Switzerland was not only to freeze assets of sanctioned Russian individuals and companies, but to expropriate them and hand them over to Ukraine for the reconstruction of the country!*

*Today, when unfortunately some politicians and most media editors in Switzerland no longer align their compass with the principle of neutrality and are prepared to throw the principles of the rule of law to the wind, it is a blessing to be able to talk to a parliamentarian like Franz Grüter, who does not lose his grounding in the Swiss state model even in this day and age. Franz Grüter has been a member of the National Council (Swiss People’s Party Lucerne) and an entrepreneur in the IT sector since 2015.*

*Current Concerns: Mr National Councillor Grüter, you recently became president of the National Council’s Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC-N). What is your task as president of this commission? Is it not rather difficult to hold this office in today’s atmosphere?*

*Franz Grüter:* Yes, when I took over this function at the beginning of January, I assumed that the European dossier would continue to be at the centre of Swiss foreign policy. Six weeks later, something happened that no one expected: The Ukraine crisis escalated into a war. We have a completely new situation, and in my function as president of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I was virtually caught in the eye of the hurricane. To this day, I can feel how much the general mood has been stirred up, how questions of principle have been given different priorities overnight, how the neutrality issue has suddenly been thrust into the centre of a new discussion of principles. It is a very intense time for me, and probably

“It is actually an old leadership principle: when you are in an extremely emotionally charged mood, you should never make short-term decisions that have a long-term effect, because those are usually no-good decisions.”

will continue to be so. Now we are going to become a member of the UN Security Council, which is also a controversial issue. I will serve as FAC president for two years, i.e., until the end of 2023, so all this will happen during my term of office.

*At the committee meeting of 3 May 2022, one of the issues was the authorisation of the Federal Council to “impose sanctions autonomously”. The media release spoke of a “paradigm shift”. Can you briefly outline the proposals that the FAC-N adopted?*

We discussed the Embargo Act, which includes the regulation of the Federal Council’s powers when it comes to sanctions. Until now, the Federal Council was not allowed to order sanctions independently, unless Switzerland were in such an exceptional situation that ordering sanctions would have fallen under emergency law. But on 3 May, the Committee majority decided on a paradigm shift – paradigm shift is indeed the right word. Of course, Parliament will decide on this; in June, first the National Council will deal with it. The FAC wants the Federal Council to have the competency to order sanctions, not only against states, but also against persons and “entities”, i.e., companies. This raises many questions as to how this is compatible with the right of neutrality and how far it is affected. Because many citizens are aware of this, the Committee has also decided that we must put the issue of neutrality on the agenda as a priority. Hearings will be held on this after the summer break.

*Yet, when people’s property is confiscated, besides neutrality there are also fundamental rights affected.*

Yes, those are also questions concerning the rule of law, when expropriations are carried out virtually without court rulings. We have to be careful not to simply throw overboard our constitutional principles, our legal certainty as well as the guarantee of property.

*The Committee minority – I assume that you belong to this – has tried to oppose the disregard for the principle of neutrality. Are there also parliamentarians from other groups besides the Swiss People’s Party who want to take countermeasures?*

Unfortunately, as President of the Committee, I am bound by the secrecy of the Commission. We do not say who said what and who voted how.

## NATO: “Switzerland must not take part, otherwise it is simply no longer neutral”

*Some Swiss politicians and media are using the current situation to move closer to NATO, beyond the “Partnership for Peace”. As a Swiss officer, how do you see this?*

This question is of course also related to neutrality. Switzerland has been saved from bloody conflicts over the last 200 years in part thanks to its neutrality. In my view, neutrality is an important pillar of Swiss foreign policy. It has always enabled us, as a small state, not only to remain secure, but also to be a place which disputing parties could turn to, where mediation is to be had, on neutral ground. Of course, that is only possible if we do not take sides, if we do not enter into a conflict ourselves. NATO was a defensive alliance, but in the past it has also waged offensive wars, for example in Serbia. Switzerland must not take part in anything like this; otherwise, it is simply no longer neutral. The PfP programme is probably still acceptable; we have been involved in it for a long time, but anything beyond that is very, very thorny. As things stand today, a closer affiliation with NATO would certainly pose a massive threat to neutrality.

*Former ambassador Paul Widmer says that even Switzerland’s accession to the Pfp was questionable from the point of view of neutrality.*

In certain areas – when I think of cyber security or the intelligence service – there is an exchange today that may make sense. We have also bought armaments from Western countries, including the F-35. From a purely technological point of view, we might allow ourselves to be integrated into these systems, but we would have to draw very clear lines there. Entering into this alliance or coming so close that we even send troops abroad, that we participate in military exercises, that is going much, very much too far. That would be a nail in the coffin of neutrality, which is

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**“Let us get back to the importance ...”**

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why, in my view, we must not do it under any circumstances.

**“The question of neutrality invades the DNA of our country so deeply that we absolutely need to discuss all this”**

*Now the question is: what should we do? Recently you said that one should not make short-term decisions during a crisis. As FAC president, you have put neutrality on the Committee’s agenda as a key issue. In September, the two Foreign Affairs Committees of the National Council and the Council of States will discuss neutrality. What do you hope to gain from this?*

It is actually an old leadership principle: when you are in an extremely emotionally charged mood, you should never make short-term decisions that have a long-term effect, because those are usually no-good decisions.

The question of neutrality invades the DNA of our country so deeply that we need to discuss all this, we absolutely *have to* do so! So much has happened, with the sanctions that have been taken, with the efforts to join NATO or move closer to it, with membership in the UN Security Council. But I think we need to have this discussion when the dust has settled a little, when we can talk about these issues from a certain distance.

In the past, we have seen time and again that decisions made in the heat of the moment were wrong decisions in the medium and long term. After the Fukushima disaster, two or three days later, the Federal Council announced that it was phasing out nuclear power, but today, ten or twelve years later, we realise that there are new technologies. We are creating a bottleneck for energy supply security. Perhaps it would have been a good idea to ask the question at the time, but then to wait a little until the emotions had subsided.

Neutrality is very important for our country, which is why we will hold hearings in the autumn. You can look at this question in purely legal terms, we will also hear lawyers, but you can also look at the question in political terms. For example, the ICRC, has always helped people in this world, on both sides, has always spoken and negotiated with all warring parties, which is why ICRC head *Peter Maurer* has not only been to Ukraine, but also to Moscow. I would like to hear someone from the ICRC, for example: How important is neutrality for the Red Cross, which is, after all, also a Swiss tradition, in the field of humanitarian aid?

There will be a wide consultation. It must be possible to discuss the question of neutrality controversially. But of course, I hope that in the end the result will be that

we return to the importance of neutrality and that we will come to the conclusion that we must be prepared to hazard even disadvantages. Being neutral is of course unpleasant. It is much easier and much more comfortable not to be neutral: Then you simply declare your support for one side. If you say: we are neutral, then of course you are put under pressure by both sides, and it has been no different in the current war. Both foreign ministers have turned to Switzerland and asked which side we are on. It would have been up to the Federal Council to say: We are neutral and we shall remain neutral. They did not do so, and that is very regrettable. Switzerland has certainly weakened its traditional role of supplier of “good offices”.

**“It is good that at the very end, the Swiss people can decide on it”**

There will probably also be a popular initiative that wants to write into the Federal Constitution not only that Swiss neutrality is armed and perpetual. In the future, we will have to speak of integral [i.e., all-encompassing] neutrality and define the term more broadly and more deeply.

*Former Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher is planning such a popular initiative. What is the status here? And how can we initiate a broad discussion?*

There is a task force working on different versions. The initiative will come, and I think it is good that at the very end, the Swiss people can decide on it.

I am convinced that the importance of neutrality is much more widely supported among the population than is perceived here in Bern and especially in the media. There have been polls on whether Switzerland should supply weapons to Ukraine – which, by the way, is also demanded by politicians and media. Out of x-thousands of people who took part in online surveys – now you can say that this is not representative, but it is x-thousands of people – two-thirds said: No, that will not do, it violates our neutrality.

That is why I believe that it is necessary that in the end, the Swiss people decide at the ballot box: Do we want to continue to uphold neutrality? Do we even want to go so far as to consider “integral neutrality”? We will probably only be able to solve this by way of the people and not through parliament and the Federal Council.

**Self-sufficiency: Sanctions have an effect mainly on one’s own population**

*A motion of the FAC-N of 3 May demanded the renunciation of trade with Russian oil and gas. How will Switzerland deal with energy from Russia?*

Such demands may sound popular with certain people, but we must have the strength to see that the consequences are

**“A War only knows losers” – Franz Grüter**

In his “diary” *Franz Grüter* describes his two-day long visit with Federal President *Ignazio Cassis* at the Ukrainian border where they spoke with various people and offered humanitarian help.

“How can a brief statement be made after these two days? A war only knows losers. The suffering of the people is great. Switzerland’s humanitarian aid works well, is efficient and earns support. With that, the people can be helped just where they are. There is still hope that the fighting parties achieve an agreement in their peace negotiations even when this possibly could be wishful thinking. Switzerland will unfortunately no longer be seen as a country independent of both parties and as a neutral place of negotiation.

The visit has shown how awful too great a dependency on energy and food supply can be. Therefore, I am convinced that we in Switzerland as well must take care that the energy and food supply remain mostly independent.

*Source: Grüter, Franz “diary” (Excerpt). Weltwoche of 24 March 2022*

*(Translation Current Concerns)*

so extreme that we should not be overhasty in deciding something of this sort. Fortunately, this motion was rejected by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council on 3 May, by 13 votes to 12, with the main justification that trade could be transferred to other countries practically overnight.

Some related general background: the crisis once again shows how dependent we have become, not only in terms of energy – food safety is also at least at risk in certain countries. The sanctions against Russia are not actually having much effect there at the moment. This week it became known that the oil imports the EU are blocking are already being bought by India in the same quantity. More or less all Western countries have taken these sanctions – but the rest of the world, India, China, many Arab countries, Africa, the majority of countries, have not taken any sanctions. Russia is not selling less oil because of this; they are simply selling it to other countries.

Where the sanctions do have an effect, however, is on our own population. We have a massive increase in the price of energy, fuel prices are hardly affordable for many small earners, diesel 2.20, 2.30 francs. People who depend on cars are really suffering. We have to make sure that the sanctions do not become a tit-for-tat to our own population. In Switzerland, dependency is perhaps not so very bad, but in Germany, energy supply security is really no longer guaranteed. They are much more dependent on Russian gas; thousands of jobs are at stake there.

*Mr National Councillor Grüter, thank you very much for the interview.* •

# Humanitarian issues and individual fates in Mariupol and the Donbas

by Ralph Bosshard

*“The real world is just grey in grey and not black and white (i.e., West-East).” (R. B.)*

*zf. Ralph Bosshard knows the region from his own experience and in connection with his responsibilities at the OSCE, where he worked, among other things, as a special advisor to Switzerland’s permanent representative to this organisation. In the context of his current activities, he also prepares expert reports on the military situation regarding the conflict in Ukraine as well as in the post-Soviet region (cf. his articles in Current Concerns on Kazakhstan and Armenia). Due to the personal relationships that have developed over the years, he also receives direct reports from hot spots in the Ukraine conflict, which he provides here and thus gives the reader a very close impression of the real events.*



(picture Ivan L.)

This is a picture of the house at Ulitisa Georgievskaya 42 in the old city centre of Mariupol, the Tsentralnyi Rayon. It was my wife’s parents’ house and now belongs to our friend *Ivan L.* Ivan knew that members of the “Azov Regiment” were quartered in the building next to it [lightly framed]. It belongs to the Priazovskiy State Technical University, which was run by *Slava B.*, an acquaintance of mine. Ivan therefore decided to live at a dacha outside Mariupol, but he came back regularly to make sure that “Azov” did not take up residence in his house as well.



(picture Ivan L.)

This is what the massively built house from the Tsarist era looks like after a grenade or bomb exploded in the garden be-

hind it. Miraculously, our friends remained unharmed.

Elsewhere, however, is the grave of Ivan’s mother-in-law, who had been hit by shrapnel during the fighting and had bled to death because there were no more ambulances. It was not possible to bury her in the fighting, so Ivan and a relative wrapped the body in sheets and left it on the kitchen table. In the meantime, a neighbour found her and buried her.

Another friend of Ivan’s died when he tried to charge his mobile phone in the car. Ivan found him dead in the car. We suppose that he was shot by members of the Ukrainian armed forces who suspected him of trying to flee the city via a humanitarian corridor. Ivan and his friend later drove this car via Crimea to Georgia, where they boarded a plane to Norway, because Ivan has relatives there. As a man of military age, the Ukrainians would not have let Ivan leave the country, and the 3,000 to 5,000 euros bribe money demanded by Ukrainian border officials in such cases are unaffordable for a Ukrainian with a monthly salary of 100 euros.

Ivan’s son *Vjaceslav*, on the other hand, was able to travel normally to Norway via Warsaw, accompanied by his godmother.

Ivan’s wife *Oxana* is still in Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov with her father because he lost all his documents when his house was shelled. The Russian authorities want to issue him a Russian passport, but this may take some time, as the search for birth certificates has currently low priority.



(picture Hotel Spartak)

Another building used as accommodation for the Ukrainian army was the *Spartak* Hotel, 220 m as the crow flies from Ivan’s house. It had been one

of the best in Mariupol. Ivan believes that it too was inhabited by the “Azov regiment”. But I wonder who was housed here so comfortably so close to the “Azovstal” foundry. Perhaps it was indeed those NATO officers about whom rumours were circulating? They are said to have operated a secret military facility in the tunnels under the factory, possibly a radio reconnaissance facility. I don’t believe in a bio-weapons lab for the time being.



(picture Lena B.)

I could already get used to the sight of burnt-out buildings in 2014, because in May 2014 the “Azov Regiment” had locked up those police officers it considered “unpatriotic” in the police building and set it on fire. Fleeing police officers were shot dead.



(picture Alexej K.)

The picture shows our former flat at Prospekt Lenina (now Mira) 112 in Mariupol. When the Russians attacked along Prospekt Mira, the Ukrainian government troops took up positions on the upper floors of the apartment buildings because these solid prefabricated buildings offered good protection and a good field of fire. And it was exactly there that the Russians returned fire. Before the fighting broke out, our neighbour *Tamara S.* had to move in with her daughter in Manhush, west of Mariupol, which was less affected by the fighting. The low-built, old wooden

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houses on the outskirts of Mariupol and in the smaller villages around the city offer little protection from weapons fire and a poor field of fire. Therefore, many of them were spared from fighting.

The Mira prospect leads on to Mariupol airport. In autumn 2014, an OSCE staff member in Mariupol expressed suspicions that the Ukrainian domestic intelligence service SBU was running a secret prison at the airport. A Western journalist was arrested by mistake, beaten up and held for a night before the mistake was realised and he was released. He ran straight to the OSCE *Special Monitoring Mission*, which was then housed in the Reikartz Hotel on Prospekt Metalurgiv, right next to the SBU building, to complain. An acquaintance of ours was detained by the SBU for a year because he had made “unpatriotic” remarks. Afterwards he was released under the condition that he would not talk about his detention. The mass grave in Mariupol, which was mentioned a few days ago, is probably next to the airport and was created by the SBU. In the past, I was sometimes surprised that top Western politicians had the bad taste to travel to Mariupol via the airport. We did not hold official meetings at the airport for precisely this reason.

I know from a school friend of my wife, Larisa M., that employees of the hospital were actually held hostage and as living shields between the 16th and 17th Micro-rays when the Russian troops appeared on the outskirts of Mariupol. She managed to escape when chaos broke out after the first shells hit. A doctor who tried to stop Ukrainian soldiers from shooting escaping hostages was himself shot dead.



(picture Regiment Asov)

The schoolhouse where my wife went to school was very close to the Dramteatr, where the “Azov Regiment” is said to have set up a command post and in the cellar of which residents of the town had sought shelter when the massive building was hit. In the light rectangle: residence of her school friend Masha B. We have no connection with her so far.

In the Trudovskiy rayon of the city of Donesk lived an uncle of my wife, Nikolai V. In eight years of shelling his flat remained undamaged. A few days ago, his flat also went up in flames, because the Ukrainian government troops are still firing into the town of Donesk every day.



(picture Yandex.ru)

In recent years, Ukrainian government troops have been largely responsible for the shelling of schools and kindergartens, as an excerpt from the daily reports of the OSCE *Special Monitoring Mission* from 2020 and 2021 shows.

Bericht Nr.	Bericht Datum	Ort	Territorium	Ereignis Datum
42/2020	20.02.2020	Staromykhailivka	NGCA	14.02.2020
51/2020	02.03.2020	Oleksandrivka	NGCA	?
87/2020	13.04.2020	Donetsk, Kubyshevskiy Rayon	NGCA	?
68/2020	21.03.2020	Donetsk, ul. Lisova 1	NGCA	18./19.03.20
80/2020	04.04.2020	Novotoshkovske	NGCA	01.04.2020
109/2020	08.05.2020	Zolote-4 Rodina	NGCA	30.04.2020
103/2020	01.05.2020	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	?
153/2020	29.06.2020	Donetsk, Trudovskiy Rayon	NGCA	27.06.2020
171/2020	20.07.2020	Donetsk, Trudovskiy Rayon	NGCA	16.07.2020
31/2021	09.02.2021	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	07./08.02.21
72/2021	29.03.2021	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	25.03.2021
106/2021	10.05.2021	Donetsk, Trudovskiy Rayon	NGCA	08.05.2021
129/2021	05.06.2021	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	31.05 + 02.06.21
163/2021	15.07.2021	Holmivskiy	NGCA	12.06.2021
224/2021	24.09.2021	Yasyuzvatka	NGCA	21.09.2021
243/2021	16.10.2021	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	15.10.2021
271/2021	18.11.2021	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	15.11.2021
254/2021	29.10.2021	Hranitne	NGCA	27.10.2021
284/2021	03.12.2021	Zolote-5 Mykhailivka	NGCA	29.11.2021

(Table Ralph Bosshard; Source: Daily Report of the SMM, <https://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/reports>)

And the statistics on civilian victims kept by the Office of the UN Human Rights Representative show that since 2018, the majority of civilian victims have been on the side of the LNR and DNR (over 80%). When confronted with accusations of shelling of residential areas, the Ukrainian delegation to the OSCE in Vienna used to explain that the rebel soldiers had been used to shooting at their own population since Chechnya, or that a “third side” was at work.

Conclusion

I would feel much more regret for the far too many victims already claimed by the current conflict if I had ever felt a moment of regret in the West for the 14,000 people who lost their lives in 2014-2022 because the governments in Washington and Kiev thought the *Minsk agreements* were a bad deal.

I would feel even more sorry for the refugees from Vinnitsa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lvov, Zhitomir and other towns, who have suffered little harm so far, if I felt regret for what was done in their name for eight years in Donesk, Lugansk, Pervomaisk, Gorlovka/Horlivka and Stakhanov/Kadiivka.

However, I do not share the gloating of some Donesk residents about the destruc-

tion in Kiev, Chernigov and elsewhere.

Was Mariupol “bombed” by the Russians? *No*, many buildings were destroyed in the course of fighting, the behaviour of both sides corresponds to military logic.

Did the Ukrainian fighters use civilians as human shields? *Yes*, at least in individual cases.

Were the Ukrainian fighters hiding among the civilian population? *Yes*, and NATO apparently went along with it. Did the Ukrainian authorities violate human rights? *Yes*, massively and repeatedly.

Are the allied troops of the LNR, DNR and the Russian Federation free of human rights violations and war crimes? Certainly

not, but if I accuse them of such, I don’t have to cite evidence in the Western media: They believe me even without evidence.

Who is rebuilding Mariupol? The DNR allegedly wants to have 3,000 Ukrainian fighters in custody and already declared once that the members of the Ukrainian volunteer formations would not be treated as prisoners of war. I think a trial and a sentence of 20 to 25 years in a labour camp is quite possible.

How does the economy continue? After 2014, the number of Russian customers in the port of Mariupol decreased. Previously, many Russian ships were repaired or serviced in Mariupol. That can now start again. The metal combines, on the other hand, are probably so destroyed that they will have to be rebuilt from scratch. Their owners, above all *Rinat Akhmetov*, are probably not in a position to do this on their own.



(picture wp)

Ralph Bosshard studied General History, Eastern European History and Military History, completed the Military Command School of the ETH Zurich and the General Staff Training of the Swiss Army. This was followed by language training in Russian at the Moscow State University and training at the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Army. He is familiar with the situation in Eastern Europe from his six years at the OSCE, where he was, among other things, Special Advisor to the Swiss Permanent Representative.

# How to talk to children about the war?

by Renate Dünki



As a small child I myself have experienced the war, remembering pictures of nights in the cellar, of my then 23-year-old widowed mother fleeing from the city

with two children and fleeing from the bombs into a forester's lodge where we found shelter, of years in which every bit of food was a treasure. This young woman managed, within the framework of the extended family that stuck together, to give us children a feeling of security at that time, despite everything. How did that work?

Later, I asked myself that question again and again, also in view of the never-ending wars in the Middle East or in other regions of the world and the children who came to our schools from such war zones. We need to deal with this topic.

An important new publication now addresses the question of how adults can enter into an appropriate dialogue with children about the difficult issue of war and catastrophic events. The book by *Rüdiger Maas* and *Eliane Perret* addresses this urgent concern in a way that is easy to understand. It provides a guide for parents and educators, recording well-founded findings from science and school practice in a lively, empathetic and easy-to-read manner. It does not give tips, but encourages reflection and penetration of this issue.

In the first chapter, parents are addressed who have lived in our countries mainly in secure circumstances until now and are now confronted with a war on their doorstep. Many parents today are no longer clearly aware of their importance as role models. It is precisely the authors' concise, descriptive explanations of the research results of learning and developmental psychology that can bring this back to parents. Objectivity in the face of disturbing images and news, so that children find their footing and do not lose courage; having one's own informed, well-reasoned point of view; insisting on reputable sources: these are attitudes that parents are encouraged to adopt in the interest of their children.

The second chapter looks at the role of the media in such crises: Young people and adults usually use different sources. This makes it all the more important to remain in calm conversation, to take time out from the media once in a while and not to make sweeping judgements. Otherwise, there is a danger of "talking past" the children and young people. It is valu-

able here to refer back to the preface, in which the principles of war propaganda are presented to us readers. They were already researched 100 years ago, and their methods can also be seen in the modern media. In this way, parents and educators are given an instrument for the independent assessment of disaster reports, from which a more objective approach to such events can result.

After clarifying these prerequisites, the authors address the requirements of the different age groups of children: What level of talking does a preschool child need, a lower or middle school child, an adolescent from the age of 13? Of course, these age specifications are not absolute, because each child has its own individuality, which must be sensitively addressed. These explanations in particular seem to me to be central. Using examples, they paint a picture of how children's questions in the family can be answered in a way that is neither over- nor under-demanding. They paint a picture of how this can succeed by parents taking their time, not answering hastily, but grasping the meaning and scope of their children's questions.

Example: A pre-school child has seen crying women and a bombed house on television. She asks the mother what happened there. After asking what the child imagines, the mother is able to explain the situation in simple terms, but still convey confidence that there will be a solution:

"There has been a big dispute between the country where these women and children live and another country. Now the soldiers of the two countries are fighting each other. They are destroying many things; you saw that in the picture. That's why these women are sad, because they don't know what to do. But now many people in many countries have to think about how to end this dispute. Because all people want to be able to live in peace." (p. 29)

It is always a matter of accurately grasping the child's concern according to her age and not burdening her unnecessarily.

The concluding chapter expands the scope of the topic to include schools and other non-family care services. It gives insight into projects and themes that have proven successful in school practice but can also be transferred to other settings. These valuable examples are again divided into three age groups as a guideline, I would recommend their reading as a stimulus for own projects to every school house, every day care centre.



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The qualified psychologist and well-known generation researcher *Rüdiger Maas* studied in Germany and Japan. He researched and worked abroad for a long time. His book "Generation lebensunfähig" (Generation unlivable) became a bestseller.

Dr *Eliane Perret* has a broad background of experience as a teacher, curative teacher and psychologist. She studied psychology and special education at the University of Zurich and worked for many years as a teacher and head teacher at a special school for children with learning and behavioural problems. She is the author of articles on psychological topics, parenting and educational issues as well as violence and bullying prevention.

*Maas, Rüdiger; Perret, Eliane. Wie ich mit Kindern über Krieg und andere Katastrophen spreche. Ein Leitfaden für Eltern, Lehrpersonen und Pädagogen. (How to talk to children about war and other disasters. A guide for parents, teachers and educators). Kiedrich 2022*

For example, the authors describe young people's engagement with international humanitarian law. It is the result of the efforts of nations to live together peacefully in the world and to establish rules to protect the people concerned even in the event of war. This topic has been carefully elaborated in a Red Cross teaching aid for schools. It is thought-provoking with many examples. And it gives the young people hope that the future could become more peaceful despite all the threatening dangers and

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## “To lead the world towards peace”

*Urgent Letter to President Joseph Biden and to all members of the US Government as well as to all Members of the US Congress and the US-Senate*

*Dear Madams and Sirs,*

I would feel guilty, if I did not write this urgent letter to you – guilty before *God* and Mankind. [...]

I am an old man, who stems from a political family and who had to suffer the atrocities of the Second World War (including senseless US phosphorus-bombs on Easter Monday 1945) and the Russian Occupation.

But I also am witness of the deal with the Russians, which brought us freedom and wellbeing. The core of the deal was our permanent neutrality.

*The proxy-war you are just fostering in the Ukraine tends to trigger off a Third World war, since you are provoking*

*the Russian Atomic Power to the utmost.* There is an old political saying: Do not drive them to despair!

You still think, that you can take this risk, since so far in all the wars, who have waged under the pretext of humanity and democracy, death, destruction and suffering happened abroad (I think on Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya etc.).

But this will not be the case in the future!

Therefore, you will also be responsible for the lives of your fellow-citizens.

I also think that your short-sighted dependency on the military-industrial-financial ‘deep state’ will lead to a financial and military disaster, since you overstretch your economic abilities – based on money-printing and -borrowing. [...]

Therefore, I ask you all, to come to thoughts of peace instead of warmongering.

The way out of your present imperial engagement is simple and possible:

Approve for the Ukraine permanent neutrality, non-alignment (whether East nor West) and federal structure (giving the eastern oblasts autonomy according to the example of Switzerland).

The Russians could accept this, without losing face, if the Crimea and Sevastopol would stay under their dominance.

I do hope, that you will take responsibility and lead the World towards peace.

Yours,

*Professor Dr Heinrich Wohlmeyer, Austria*

## “No credibility”

*On 7 March 2022 the plenary session of the European Parliament dealt with the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and discussed how to deal with the growing number of refugees from Ukraine. Clare Daly from Ireland took the floor and expressed her indignation at the prevailing double standards and hypocrisy. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luuXoqtSPuk>)*

“There is no doubt: we are living in times of catastrophic crises where the lives of innocent civilians are sacrificed in the wars of their masters. Yes, in Ukraine, but not only. Since the last plenary tens of thousands of Afghani citizens have been forced to flee in search of food and safety. Five million children face famine and a painful death. A 500 per cent increase in child marriages and children being sold just so they can survive and not a mention of it, not here, not anywhere. No wall-to-wall tv coverage, no emergency humanitarian response. No special plenaries, not even a mention in this plenary. No Afghani delegation and no statements. My god! They must be wondering what makes their humanitarian crisis so unimportant. Is it the colour of their skin? Is it that they are not white, that they are not Europeans! That their problems come from a US gun from a US invasion? Is it, that the decision to rob their country’s wealth was taken by a despotic US President rather than a Russian one? And until we get on that page, we have no credibility whatsoever.” •

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luuXoqtSPuk>

## The revolt of Italian Generals: “It’s not our war, let’s say no to the USA”

“Neutrality? I completely agree. And I believe that before we carry out threats from both sides to escalate the conflict in NATO, we must ensure that this conflict ends. And from this point of view, I do not see the commitment of anyone, on the contrary I see a whole series of arsonists who do the exact opposite. [...]

First of all, our country should do everything, and I don’t see it doing it, for the conflict to end. When I say do everything, I mean to agree with the other European countries, in particular France and Germany, on a common position vis-à-vis the warmongering countries led by the United States, so that they stop, so that they promote a truce and negotiations, even at the risk of disrupting relations with the United States.”

*General Leonardo Tricarico, former Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force and current President of the ICSA Foundation (Fondazione ICSA, Intelligence Culture and Strategic Analysis)*

“So far Russia has not met with any NATO country, because Ukraine is not a member of the alliance, and even the hint of such a possibility only aggravates the spirits and reduces the chances of reconciliation, which I consider essential. I repeat: essential.”

*General Marco Bertolini, retired general in the Italian army and now head of the defense department of the Fratelli d’Italia*

Source: *VoxNews info* of 27 April 2022 – *The Paradise News*

### “How to talk to children ...”

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that they can make a contribution to this. After this discussion, for example, it was clear to the young people “that warfare must be stopped as quickly as possible by a ceasefire, followed by urgent humanitarian aid and an international conference to try to find a compromise that will contribute to lasting peace in the region.” (p. 71)

A bibliography provides titles that are suitable for a more in depth discussion of one of the topics dealt with.

This new publication, especially in times of great uncertainty, questionable decisions and a threatening arms race, is a guide with which many parents, but also educators, will find access to these challenging tasks.

“May guidebooks like this one someday no longer be necessary.” •