

UA: UKRAINE ANALYTICA

Issue 1 (27), 2022

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WAR

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Publisher:

Published by NGO "Promotion of Intercultural Cooperation" (Ukraine), Centre of International Studies (Ukraine), with the financial support of the Representation of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Ukraine and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation – a Project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

UA: Ukraine Analytica is the first Ukrainian analytical journal in English on International Relations, Politics and Economics. The journal is aimed at experts, diplomats, academics, students interested in the international relations and Ukraine in particular.

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ISSN 2518-7481

500 copies

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SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR IN 2014-2022

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Some ideas on the political nature, causes, motivations of the parties, and essence of the Russian-Ukrainian war are presented. The ideological preconditions, reasons for, and current consequences of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, as well as the evolution of the formation of political and security doctrines of the ruling political regime of Russia, from quasi-liberal views to the expansionist concept of the «restoration of historical Russia» and justification for an aggressive war against Ukraine, are considered. The theoretical discourse of the authors is based on the provisions of the classic military theory. These fundamental ideas are gaining new relevance in the context of this war. Conclusions are based on the analysis of a number of Russian conceptual documents over the past 15 years.

The Weaponisation of History as Justification for Russia`s Aims

“Nationalist leaders often weaponize the past to justify their present aims... V. Putin is not the only world leader who has harkened back to an ahistorical past to justify his decisions in the present”¹. The evolution of Putin’s historical revisionism can be seen throughout his public statements over more than 22 years of his authoritarian rule.

The principles and practical implications of Putin’s foreign policy towards the post-

Soviet states before the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, were presented earlier by one of the authors of this article². On the basis of Russia’s domestic legal and regulatory documents, as well as public statements by the leadership, it was concluded that the Kremlin has laid out a new foreign policy strategy and a corresponding foreign policy doctrine – “the new doctrine of limited sovereignty” (the “Putin Doctrine”), the main element of which is the concept of “limited sovereignty”. During the Cold War, that was also a major component of the

1. Y. Serhan . Who is Vladimir Putin’s Revisionist History For? The Atlantic. February 27, 2022, [<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/02/putin-russia-ukraine-revisionist-history/622936/>].
2. I. Lossovskiy Russia’s strategy toward post-Soviet states as implementation of the new doctrine of limited sovereignty (Putin doctrine) // Ukraine Analytica. № 4 (22). 2020. p.8-17, [<https://ukraine-analytica.org/wp-content/uploads/Lossovskiy1-1.pdf>].

“Brezhnev Doctrine” – the USSR’s foreign policy doctrine regarding the states of the so-called “People’s Democracies”. It was emphasised that for more than 20 years now, the form of government in Russia has been a personal dictatorship. Its aggressive military and international activity, especially regarding Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries, as well as other manifestations of foreign policy for at least 15 years testify to the conformity of its actions to the criteria defined in the article for the implementation of the “new doctrine of limited sovereignty.”



In his numerous interviews, President Putin liked to emphasise that the criminal St. Petersburg gateway played an essential role in his teenage upbringing. The political behaviour of the Kremlin dictator fits into the stereotype of the behaviour of the criminals of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union

In 2005, in his annual state of the nation address, Vladimir Putin called the collapse of the Soviet empire “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century”³. The first stage of escalation in Russia’s policy can be traced to Putin’s speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference⁴, which smacked of Cold War rhetoric. One year before the end of his second presidential term, already an ingrained politician but still a relative “democrat,”

although he may have already decided on the future scenario of his authoritarian transformations in Russia, Putin accused Washington of attempting to force its will on the world. He blamed the US for making the world a more dangerous place, by pursuing policies to make it unipolar. Demonstrating the ambitions of a resurgent energy superpower, Putin was making unfounded claims that Russia should be treated as a separate pole of power in world politics.

The reaction of the international political community to that speech was unambiguously negative and adverse. Some opinions were expressed that the speech was provocative and marked by rhetoric that made it sound more like a Cold War ultimatum⁵. At the same time, Kremlin spokesman Peskov denied the Russian president was trying to provoke Washington: “This is not about confrontation. It’s an invitation to think”⁶.

Although they made a negative impression on the West, such ultimatum statements by Putin were nevertheless ignored. The “trial bowl” for the current aggressive policy of the Russian Federation turned out to be the war in Georgia in August 2008, which led to human casualties, destruction, and the actual partition from Georgia of about 20% of its legitimate territories recognised by international law as an integral part of this country – Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region (so-called South Ossetia). Russia illegally recognised these Georgian territories as “independent states.” The continued sluggish reaction of the collective West and,

3 V. Putin: Soviet collapse a “genuine tragedy”. NBC NEWS. April 25, 2005, [<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna7632057>].

4 A speech delivered at the MSC 2007 by the President Vladimir Putin, [https://is.muni.cz/th/xlghl/DP_Fillinger_Speeches.pdf]

5 Transcript: 2007 Putin Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. Johnson’s Russia List. March 27, 2014, [<https://russialist.org/transcript-putin-speech-and-the-following-discussion-at-the-munich-conference-on-security-policy/>].

6 Charbonneau L. Putin says U.S. wants to dominate world. Reuters. February 10, 2007, [<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-idUSL1053774820070210>]

above all, the United States, as well as virtual impunity for the presumptuous aggressor allowed President Putin to raise the stakes of his external aggression further and “tighten the screws” to the bitter end, regarding the restriction of elementary human freedoms in Russia itself.

A further ideological escalation was reflected in a number of Putin’s official speeches, as well as programs and conceptual documents on foreign policy, security, and defence, published in 2014. Those were accompanied by occupation by Russian troops of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which began on February 20th, 2014, and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Russia’s ongoing hostilities in Donbas alone have resulted in the deaths of some 15,000 Ukrainians⁷, and massive destruction of this Ukrainian region’s infrastructure and residential sector, even before the start of a full-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine launched on February 24th, 2022.

In his numerous interviews, President Putin liked to emphasise that the criminal St. Petersburg gateway played an essential role in his teenage upbringing. The political behaviour of the Kremlin dictator fits into the stereotype of the behaviour of the criminals of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union of the 20th century, the so-called “gopniks.” Their basic principle is “If the fight is unavoidable, you gotta hit first.” It has become the ideology of the foreign

and security policy of Putin’s autocracy. He stated this during a speech at the Valdai International Discussion Club in Sochi in the autumn of 2015, at the height of Russia’s military operation in the Donbas⁸.

Further radicalisation of political rhetoric at the highest level began in the mid-summer of 2021, when Putin, following the traditions of Soviet leader Stalin, turned to the epistolary amateur-historical genre, publishing on July 12th in two languages, a rather lengthy article “On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians”⁹, which even then was seen as the declaration of a real war, or at least as a final ultimatum. Despite controversial and biased provisions, the article received considerable publicity in Ukraine and Russia, as well as further afield. It has become mandatory to read and study it, among the Russian Armed Forces (AF)¹⁰. However, it was not taken seriously by the academic community, even in Russia. As befits a KGB officer, Putin did not resort to scientific research methods. The Russian president formulated his conclusions without relying on a set of facts, so to say, *a priori*. He laid out his postulates in advance before conducting any research. Among them are the following: Russians and Ukrainians are “one people”; foreign and anti-Russian conspiracies of Western countries are to be blamed for the collapse of bilateral Russian-Ukrainian relations; a significant part of the modern territory of Ukraine covers “historically Russian lands”; even such an accusation was made that “Russia was robbed”. Claims

7 Conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine, United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, January 27, 2022, [https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Conflict-related%20civilian%20casualties%20as%20of%2031%20December%202021%20%28rev%2027%20January%202022%29%20corr%20EN_0.pdf]

8 Bender J. Putin: ‘The streets of Leningrad taught me one thing’. INSIDER. October 22, 2015, [https://www.businessinsider.com/putin-the-streets-of-leningrad-taught-me-one-thing-2015-10].

9 Domańska M. Putin’s article: ‘On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians’. OSW. Centre for Eastern Studies. Analysis. 13.07.2021, [https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2021-07-13/putins-article-historical-unity-russians-and-ukrainians]

10 Статья Путина “Об историческом единстве русских и украинцев” стала обязательной для изучения в российской армии [Putin’s article became he must to study in the Russian Army], Настоящее время, July 16, 2021, [https://www.currenttime.tv/a/statya-putina-stala-obyazatelnoy-dlya-izucheniya-v-armii/31361220.html]

were made for new territorial annexations: “I am becoming more and more convinced that Kyiv simply does not need Donbas”. Ukraine was denied the right to statehood independent of Moscow: “I am confident that the true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia.”¹¹

Speaking about Ukraine moving from the concept of «not Russia» to «anti-Russia», Putin actually declares war on Ukraine: «We will never allow our historical territories and people close to us living there to be used against Russia. And those who will make such an attempt, I want to say that in this way they will destroy their country»¹². By manipulating real historical facts, Putin pulled out only those that fit into his concept, completely ignoring the rest.

Another attempt but at a lower political level, was made in the article by the former President of Russia, and now Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council Dmitry Medvedev, entitled “Why Contacts with the Current Ukrainian Leadership Are Meaningless”, and published on October 11th, 2021 in the *Kommersant* newspaper¹³. “Ukraine is headed by weak people who only seek to line their pockets...There was no leader who could sacrifice himself for the sake of Ukraine, and it looks like there won’t be one yet... negotiations with such people are absolutely pointless”. Such a statement by a former leader of Russia is similar to actually threatening war. Because, if the need and possibility to negotiate with the

current democratically elected leadership of Ukraine are denied, only war is left. Real war or hybrid war, it is no longer of fundamental importance. A former professor at Leningrad University, Medvedev even allowed himself to make anti-Semitic statements in relation to the President of Ukraine.

Besides the series of belligerent and xenophobic political statements that appeared in the Russian media in the six-month period preceding February 24th, 2022, one cannot fail to mention the notorious article by T. Sergeytsev “What Russia Should Do with Ukraine”¹⁴ which was published on April 3rd on the website of the state agency RIA Novosti. It was on the same day as the whole world saw terrible evidence of the crimes of genocide by the Russian military against civilians in the town of Bucha near Kyiv¹⁵. The author describes how the “denazification” of Ukraine should be carried out. It should be imposed on “the Nazified mass of the population, which technically cannot be subjected to direct punishment as war criminals.” The servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine should be “destroyed to the maximum on the battlefield”. “Denazification” should be carried out with the help of “ideological repression and strict censorship.” The process of “denazification” should cover at least one generation of Ukrainians and last 30 years and would be “de-Ukrainization”, that is, the rejection of “artificial inflating of the ethnic composition of self-identification of the population of the territories of

11 Article by Vladimir Putin “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians”, The Kremlin, July 12, 2021, [<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>]

12 Dickinson P. Putin’s new Ukraine essay reveals imperial ambitions. Atlantic Council. Ukraine Alert, July 15, 2021, [<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-new-ukraine-essay-reflects-imperial-ambitions/>].

13 Medvedev wrote an article about Ukraine and said that negotiations with its leadership are “pointless”. Perild. October 11, 2021, [<https://www.perild.com/2021/10/11/medvedev-wrote-an-article-about-ukraine-and-said-that-negotiations-with-its-leadership-are-pointless/>]

14 Что Россия должна сделать с Украиной, RIA news, April 3, 2022 [<https://ria.ru/20220403/ukraina-1781469605.html>]

15 Manifesto published in Russian media reflects Putin regime’s ruthless plans in Ukraine. The Conversation. April 14, 2022, [<https://theconversation.com/manifesto-published-in-russian-media-reflects-putin-regimes-ruthless-plans-in-ukraine-181006>].


historical “Little Russia” and “New Russia.” The very name “Ukraine” should not be preserved. That is nothing but a clearly declared manifesto of the chauvinistic ideology of the “Russian world” and an action plan for the destruction of the entire Ukrainian nation, designed for the next 30 years. At the same time, the authors do not even bother to at least formally attempt to cover up their neo-Nazi ideology with at least some kinds of “argument”.

Putin’s claims of Nazis and the genocide of Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine are completely unfounded. They are part of a propagandistic false narrative repeated by the Russian media and politicians for years. Moscow even made allegations that Ukraine was building a plutonium-based dirty bomb, and possessing special NATO laboratories for producing chemical and biological weapons. But it is Russia that is now accused by the international community of carrying out atrocities in Ukraine. Several countries including the US and Canada go further and call it genocide.

Full-scale Total Warfare Versus “Special Military Operation”

However unjustified, this war is a pivotal and crucial moment. “Russia’s future and its future place in the world are at stake,” – stated Russian foreign intelligence chief Naryshkin¹⁶. After so much destruction and killings, Putin’s words spoken on February 24th, 2022, on the day of the full-fledged invasion in Ukraine sound cynical: “It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force.”¹⁷ The purpose of the so-

called “special military operation” was deceitfully declared as “to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime... We will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation”.¹⁸

 **Putin’s claims of Nazis and the genocide of Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine are completely unfounded. They are part of a propagandistic false narrative repeated by the Russian media and politicians for years**

Even more cynical are the following words of the Russian leader, addressing the citizens of Ukraine after the start of the invasion: “The current events have nothing to do with a desire to infringe on the interests of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people... I am asking you, however hard this may be, to understand this and to work together with us so as to turn this tragic page as soon as possible and to move forward together”.¹⁹

On the eve of the invasion, Putin made it clear that he believes Ukraine has no legal rights and historical claim to independent statehood; and that modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia. He has questioned the legitimacy of the former Soviet republics, claiming that Lenin planted a “time bomb” by allowing them self-determination in the early years of the USSR.

16 Why has Russia invaded Ukraine and what does Putin want? BBC, May 3, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>

17 Full text of Vladimir Putin’s speech announcing ‘special military operation’ in Ukraine. The Print, February 24, 2022, <https://theprint.in/world/full-text-of-vladimir-putins-speech-announcing-special-military-operation-in-ukraine/845714/>

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

The beginning of the full-scale phase of the war was in the early morning of February 24th, 2022. Putin announced the start of a “special military operation” on the territory of Ukraine, referring to Article 51 of the UN Charter, the permissive sanction of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the RF and the “treaties” of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between Russia and the so-called “DPR” and “LPR”. It is curious that the latter “came into force” only on February 25th and did not have any legal jurisdiction at the time of the outbreak of hostilities.

Is the Current Political Regime in Russia Fascist?

A discussion among political scientists and historians specialising in research on Russia and the USSR has recently unfolded around the following questions of whether the current political regime in Russia is Nazi, fascist, or totalitarian, and whether Russian culture is responsible for the acts of genocide and crimes against humanity that continue to be committed by the Russian military in Ukraine.²⁰ Putin’s regime has all the hallmarks of being Nazi, fascist, and totalitarian, as well as genocidal, chauvinistic and dictatorial. Differences are observed only in the individual terminology of some authors. But, as the famous saying goes: “If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck”.

In history, it is difficult to find exact precedents, exact copies of events and

regimes that have existed throughout human history. But if there are obvious parallels, coincidences, and similarities, why not call these events or regimes by similar terms. However, in the case of the current fascist regime in Russia, new terms, “Ruscism” (Russian fascism) and Putinism, are also gaining ground.

Since the answer to the second question seems to be more complex and ambiguous, and also goes beyond the scope of clear academic discussion, we will refrain from discussing it in detail here.

Postcolonial War for Ukrainian Identity and Future

This war is fundamentally a postcolonial war over Ukrainian identity²¹. It came about as the result of the inevitable clash of two opposing incompatible historical paradigms for the further development of Ukraine and the entire post-Soviet space. On the one hand, there is Putin’s paradigm of the revival of the Russian Empire, based on the “non-statehood” of young nations formed as a result of the second stage in the dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1991 (the first stage took place as a result of World War I), based on the inability of their independent existence. First of all, it concerned Ukraine and Belarus. According to Putin’s article, Russians and Ukrainians are one people, Ukraine never truly existed as a sovereign entity until the Bolsheviks mistakenly brought it into existence, and the territories of Ukraine are fundamentally Russian lands²².

20 E.g., 1) Shorten R. Putin's not a fascist, totalitarian or revolutionary - he's a reactionary tyrant. The Conversation. - March 17, 2022, [<https://theconversation.com/putins-not-a-fascist-totalitarian-or-revolutionary-hes-a-reactionary-tyrant-179256>]. 2) Motyl A.J. Is Putin's Russia Fascist? Atlantic Council. Ukrainian Alert. April 23, 2022, [<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/is-putin-s-russia-fascist/>].

21 Kasianov G. The War Over Ukrainian Identity. Foreign Affairs. May 4, 2022, [<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-05-04/war-over-ukrainian-identity>].

22 Dickinson P. Putin's new Ukraine essay reveals imperial ambitions. Atlantic Council. Ukraine Alert, July 15, 2021, [<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-new-ukraine-essay-reflects-imperial-ambitions/>].

On the other hand, there is modern Ukrainian political nationalism, which is growing in strength. It has undergone difficult tests of practical state-building over the past 30 years, building an extensive liberal-democratic system of government, regularly modifying elected bodies, law enforcement agencies of state security and defence, etc.



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In a clash of the two paradigms, Ukraine's stakes are much higher. Putin's understanding of history denies the very right to existence of a Ukrainian nation separate from Russia. "There is a fundamental difference in positions [of Russia and Ukraine]. Russia turns to the past to justify expansion, aggression, and domination, to resurrect an empire. Ukraine does it in self-defence and self-determination to preserve and nurture an independent republic. Russia fights for the past. Ukraine fights for the future"²³.

In looking into the formation of the ideology of Russian fascism, it would be mistaken to bypass the role of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was almost completely destroyed in the 1920-1930s by the totalitarian regime in the USSR, and then revived by

Stalin in 1943 as a structure accountable to the NKVD / KGB. For many years it has developed into an informer and conductor of the Kremlin's policy. Almost nothing has changed since the collapse of the USSR. Today, the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by Patriarch Kirill (Gundyaev), serves the Kremlin, supporting and blessing its aggressive policy towards Ukraine and the unleashed war. Sermons delivered by Kirill, calling for war and justifying it, were proclaimed at the beginning of the war in the new "military" temple of Russia – the Cathedral of the Armed Forces²⁴.

The views of Sergey Karaganov, one of the main ideologists and theorists of the concept of the "Russian world", can also be quoted: *"The war was inevitable. We made the very hard decision to strike first, before the threat becomes deadlier... Enlargement of the aggressive alliance... is a cancer and we wanted to stop this metastasis. We have to do it by a surgical operation... We are fighting a war of survival. This is a war with the West and people are regrouping around their leader. This is an authoritarian country... We have our doubts about the effectiveness of democracy... Kremlin decided to strike first. This military operation will be used to restructure the Russian elite and society. It will become a more militant-based and national-based society, pushing out non-patriotic elements from the elite... We are fighting an existential war... The war will be victorious... Demilitarization and denazification will be achieved. Like we did in Germany and in Chechnya. Ukrainians will become much more peaceful and friendlier to us... We know that article 5 of NATO, stating that an attack on a NATO member is an attack*

23 Snyder T. The war in Ukraine is a colonial war. The New Yorker. April 28, 2022, [<https://www.newyorker.com/news/essay/the-war-in-ukraine-is-a-colonial-war>].

24 Kelaidis K. The Russian patriarch just gave his most dangerous speech yet – and almost no one in the West has noticed. Religion Dispatches. April 4, 2022, [<https://religiondispatches.org/the-russian-patriarch-just-gave-his-most-dangerous-speech-yet-and-almost-no-one-in-the-west-has-noticed/>].

to all, doesn't work. There is no automatic guarantee that NATO would come to the defence of a member under attack"²⁵.

Peculiarities of the Modern Russian-Ukrainian War

In the Russian media and political narrative, the war, initially dubbed a "special military operation" eventually took on the form of a full-scale post-colonial war, which for Ukraine is an existential war. Ukraine is fighting for its right to exist, for its identity as a political and cultural nation. For Russia, Ukraine is "an inalienable part of our own history, culture, and spiritual space", whose independence was a product not of self-determination but rather "a mistake...It is a matter of life and death, of [Russia's] historical future as a nation."²⁶



In a clash of the two paradigms, Ukraine's stakes are much higher. Putin's understanding of history denies the very right to existence of a Ukrainian nation separate from Russia

For Putin's empire, Ukraine does not exist, since the very fact of its independent existence destroys the imperial myths about the "great and indivisible", about the "Russian civilization" and its "global mission". As the defeat of Russia in the war with Ukraine becomes more likely, the narrative that Russia as a "force for good" which is fighting against the "forces of world evil" in the guise of a coalition of the entire collective West is

increasingly being promoted. At the same time, Russia allegedly defends traditional Orthodox Christian values of the "Russian world", and "Russian civilization" against a worldwide conspiracy.

This war, covering the entire territory of Ukraine, has become the largest in Europe since World War II. The front line of the war exceeds 1000 km, the daily casualties of full-scale military operations involving all branches of the armed forces on both sides amount to hundreds of people. While the anti-Hitler military-political coalition of the mid-1940s included 53 states, the kind of anti-Putin coalition, which is actively forming today, has already grown to include 47 countries. This was evidenced by the summit of the ministers of defence of the countries concerned, who gathered for the first and second meeting of the coalition in Ramstein, Germany on April 26th and May 23rd, 2022. There is also a danger of the war spreading to neighbouring countries.

In terms of the level and depth of online and live coverage of the military operations on TV, Internet and in other media, this war differs from the recent much smaller-scale military operations of Israel and Azerbaijan in the variety of active participants in the information coverage of events, and number of foreign journalists on the ground. In fact, all the events of this war, and evidence of Russia's war crimes immediately become known to the world. With this level of media coverage and thanks to the latest electronic means of information warfare, Russian criminals, murderers, marauders, and officers and generals who give criminal orders, become known to the whole world. All these should contribute to enabling

25 Fubini F. Sergey Karaganov: "We are at war with the West. The European security order is illegitimate". Corriere Della Sera. L'Economia. April 8, 2022, [https://www.corriere.it/economia/aziende/22_aprile_08/we-are-at-war-with-the-west-the-european-security-order-is-illegitimate-c6b9fa5a-b6b7-11ec-b39d-8a197cc9b19a.shtml].

26 Kessler G. Fact-checking Putin's speech on Ukraine, Washington Post, February 23, 2022, [<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/02/23/fact-checking-putins-speech-ukraine/>]

thorough procedural investigations to bring about the appropriate verdicts in the international criminal courts.²⁷

Another feature of the modern Russian-Ukrainian war in the context of its conduct by the Russian side, concerns the methods of mobilisation and conscription. The Russian authorities carry out mainly covert mobilisation, as a rule, in backward depressed regions densely populated by national minorities, including Buryats, Dagestanis, Chechens, Tatars, etc. In the large, economically, and socially developed cities of Russia, where most of the population are ethnic Russians, military conscription is almost non-existent. By unleashing an unprovoked war against Ukraine, Russia destroyed the global security order that emerged after World War II, revealing the weakness and hopelessness of the leading international organisations designed to guarantee peace and security on the planet. This requires new collective efforts to create a new security system, which is equivalent to the tectonic processes in geopolitics that took place in the mid-1940s, which led to the creation of the UN. Today, the UN, OSCE, and other international security organisations will require fundamental changes and reforms.

A phenomenon unique in its danger to world peace and global consequences has been the outright nuclear blackmail and sabre-rattling of weapons of mass destruction, which Russia has resorted to. The world should no longer tolerate the fact that a nuclear state, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, openly threatens to turn the planet into “nuclear ashes.” This

nuclear blackmail by Russia has been going on since 2007. It is contrary to the norms of international law, primarily the NPT and an essential addition to it – the UN Security Council Resolution of June 19, 1968, and the Statement of the three nuclear powers (the USA, UK, and Russia) on issues of guarantees to non-nuclear states/participants of the NPT. The mere fact of such blackmail obliges the nuclear states to “immediately act in accordance with their obligations under the UN Charter ... provide immediate assistance to ... any non-nuclear weapon state”²⁸. This resolution recognised that aggression using nuclear weapons or the threat of such attack against a non-nuclear-weapon state creates a situation in which the SC and, above all, its nuclear-weapon state permanent members have to act immediately.

This war became the first war in the last 70 years which led politicians, the expert community, and the military to seriously discuss the danger and likelihood of using weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons, both tactical and strategic. The possibility of using such weapons eliminates the validity of the famous thesis of Clausewitz that “war is a continuation of politics by military means”²⁹. Since nuclear war is fraught with the complete annihilation of its parties and probably the whole of humanity, it loses any sense whatsoever to talk about the rationality of such a policy.

The fundamental ideas of Clausewitz are gaining new relevance in the context of this war, with the simultaneous presence of elements of military confrontation of yesterday’s third-generation war and factors of the future new type of sixth-generation

27 Ukrainian Parliament has recognized the actions of the Russian Federation as genocide against Ukrainians, [<https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/04/14/7339618/>], [[https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billinfo/%D0%94%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BA\(eng\).pdf](https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billinfo/%D0%94%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BA(eng).pdf)].

28 UN SC Resolution S/RES/255 of June 19, 1968, [<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Disarm%20SRES255.pdf>], [<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/248/72/PDF/NR024872.pdf?OpenElement>].

29 von Clausewitz C. *On War*. Oxford World’s Classics. Oxford University Press. 2008.

war. The Armed Forces of Ukraine actively use both a wide range of weapons that correspond to the latest military technology and modern NATO standards and modern tactical formations, and methods of conducting military operations. At the same time, the Russian Armed Forces continue to use mainly old Soviet weapons and the corresponding techniques and tactics of warfare from World War II. One should also consider the situation that is developing around the problem of the continued existence of Russia itself, as a result of its expected military defeat in the war against Ukraine with active assistance to the latter from the collective West. Russia is an existential threat to Ukraine and to the post-Soviet space and Central-Eastern Europe. A simple truce in this war without major consequences for Russia will only lead to a postponed war, which in future could become even more bloody and terrible than the current war.

The international community will have to provide for such a political solution regarding Russia's future political structure, which will guarantee the impossibility of a repetition of its aggression against its neighbours in the future. This is in line with the political statements of British Prime Minister Johnson and Foreign Secretary Truss, as well as US Secretary of Defence Austin, who stated that the United States wants "to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine."³⁰

This situation requires the application of all the necessary political, economic, military, and intellectual efforts of the world community to resolve this global problem,

to build a new, more secure world order that excludes future attempts at military aggression, and nuclear or any other blackmail of the planet with weapons of mass destruction.

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30 Mauldin W. U.S. Wants to See Russia Weakened, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin Says After Ukraine Visit, Wall Street Journal, April 25, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-to-return-embassy-to-ukraine-boost-military-aid-blinken-and-austin-tell-zelensky-in-visit-to-kyiv-11650859391>

UA: UKRAINE
ANALYTICA

Issue 1 (27), 2022

ISSN 2518-7481