EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE MODERN WAR

Ihor Lossovskyi – Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Envoy of Ukraine of the 1st Class, Ph. D. ORCID: 0000-0003-1870-843X

Iryna Prykhodko – Non-executive Director of the Mountain Seed Foundation, USA

Ideas on the political nature, causes, motivations of the parties and the very essence of the Russia-Ukraine hybrid war of 2014–2022 are presented. Ideological preconditions, reasons and current consequences of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, as well as the evolution of the formation of the political and security doctrines of the ruling regime of Russia from quasi-liberal views to the expansionist concept of “restoration of historical Russia” and justification of aggressive war against Ukraine are considered.

The authors’ theoretical framework for examining the political nature, essence and causes as well as specificities of this war is based on the provisions of classic military theory as well as their further development. These fundamental ideas are gaining new relevance in the context of hybrid war with the simultaneous presence of elements of military confrontation pertinent to third-generation war and factors pertinent to the new type of sixth-generation war. Conclusions are based on an analysis of a number of conceptual documents by Russia’s leadership over the past 15 years.

Keywords: hybrid war, Russia’s armed aggression, Ruscism, Russian world, military escalation.

Ігор Лоссовський, Ірина Приходько
ЕПІСТЕМОЛОГІЧНІ АСПЕКТИ СУЧАСНОЇ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Викладено думки про політичну природу, причини, мотивацію сторін і саму суть російсько-української гібридної війни 2014–2022 рр. Розглянуто ідеологічні передумови, причини та поточні наслідки російської збройної агресії проти України, а також еволюцію формування
In research publications on military affairs, the philosophical, historical and epistemological aspects of war, its tactics and strategy, two seminal works are mentioned most commonly. They were written in different historical eras, and on different continents; nevertheless, both are included in the world's scientific annals of military theoretical classics (MacDonald, 2018; Von Clausewitz, 2008). The fundamental ideas formulated in these works have been further developed in thousands of other specialized studies at various times, but they have not lost their significance. On the contrary, they have acquired new meanings and relevance in the context of modern wars with their significantly hybrid nature. In addition to its distinguishing hybrid elements, the current Russian-Ukrainian war is also characterized by nuclear blackmail used by the President and other high officials of Russia. In our opinion, it is these features that fundamentally distinguish this war from the wars of previous eras.

**Weaponization of history for the justification of modern Russia's aims**

As rightly noted in an article in *The Atlantic* (Serhan, 2022): “Nationalist leaders often weaponize the past to justify their present aims” and also: “Putin is not the only world leader who has harkened back to an historical past to justify his decisions in the present”. The evolution of Putin’s revisionism can be seen in his public statements throughout more than 22 years of his authoritarian rule.

In his previous articles (Lossosvskyi, 2018, 2020), one of the authors of this work presented the principles and practical implications of Putin’s Russian foreign policy toward the post-Soviet states before the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. On the basis of Russia’s domestic legal and regulatory documents, as well as public statements of its 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 “Brezhnev Doctrine”, the USSR’s foreign policy doctrine regarding the states of the so called “People’s Democracies”. The main provisions and characteristics of the Doctrine were provided. It was emphasized that for more than 20 years the de facto form of government in Russia has been a personal dictatorship that conducts aggressive international military and political activities, especially against Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. Such manifestations of Russia’s domestic and foreign policy, at least for the last 15 years, indicate that its actions meet the criteria set out in (Lossosvskyi, 2018, 2020) for the implementation of the “new doctrine of limited sovereignty”.


We trace the first stage of escalation of Russia’s policy to Putin’s speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference (“A speech delivered,” 2019; Charbonneau, 2007; “Transcript: 2007 Putin,” 2014), which some of its high participants said smacked of Cold War rhetoric. Exactly one year before the end of his second presidential term in power, already a seasoned politician but still a relative “democrat”, although he may have already had decided on the future scenario of his authoritarian transformations in Russia, Putin accused Washington of attempts to force its will on the world. He blamed the US of making the world a more dangerous place by pursuing policies aimed at making it unipolar. Demonstrating the ambitions of a resurgent energy superpower, Putin was actually making unfounded claims that Russia should be treated as a separate powerful pole of world politics.

Remarkably, the Kremlin had been hinting for weeks before that Putin, who would need to step down the following year after two terms in office, was preparing a major foreign policy speech that would point the way for his successor.
The reaction of the international political community to this speech was unambiguously negative and disapproving. An opinion was expressed that the speech was provocative and marked by rhetoric that sounded more like a Cold War ultimatum. At the same time, Kremlin spokesman D. Peskov denied that the Russian president was trying to provoke Washington: “This is not about confrontation. It’s an invitation to think” (“A speech delivered,” 2019; Charbonneau, 2007; “Transcript: 2007 Putin,” 2014). Such ultimatums by Putin, although they made a negative impression on the West, were nevertheless generally ignored in the West.

The “trial balloon” for the beginning of the modern aggressive policy of the Russian Federation was the war against Georgia in August 2008, which led to human casualties, destruction, and the actual expropriation of about 20% of Georgia’s territories recognized by international law as an integral part of this country – Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region (the so-called South Ossetia). These Georgian territories were illegally recognized by Russia as “independent states”.

The continued sluggish reaction of the collective West and, above all, the United States, which failed to check the virtual impunity of the presumptuous aggressor allowed the political “gopnik” (thug) Putin to further raise the stakes of his external aggression and “tighten the screws” to the bitter end regarding the restriction of elementary human freedoms in the internal Russian arena.

A further ideological escalation can be found in a number of Putin’s official speeches as well as framework and conceptual documents in the field of foreign policy, security and defence, published in 2014 and reviewed in detail in (Lossovskyi, 2018, 2020). All this was accompanied by the occupation by Russian troops of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which began on February 20, 2014, as well as certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Russia’s ongoing hostilities in Donbas alone have resulted in the deaths of some 15,000 Ukrainians and massive destruction of the infrastructure and the residential sector of this Ukrainian region even before the start of a full-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine launched on February 24, 2022.

Putin, in his numerous interviews, liked to emphasize that the criminal St. Petersburg gateway played an important role in his teenage upbringing. All the political behaviour of the Kremlin dictator fits into the stereotypical behaviour of the criminal elements in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union of the 20th century, the so-called “gopniks”. The basic principle of Russian street criminals: “If a fight is unavoidable you gotta hit first” has actually become the modern ideology of the foreign and security policy of Putin’s autocracy. He stated this in 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 Donbas (Bender, 2015).

The further escalation of the political rhetoric at the highest level began in mid-summer 2021, when V. Putin, following the traditions of his idol Josef Stalin, turned to the epistolary amateur historical genre on July 12 with a rather lengthy article “On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians” (published in both Russian and Ukrainian) (Dickinson, 2021; Domańska, 2021), which many analysts even then compared to the declaration of a real war, or at least as a final ultimatum. The article, despite the very controversial and biased nature of its provisions, received considerable publicity in Ukraine and Russia, as well as in the rest of the world. It has become mandatory reading for servicemen of the RF Armed Forces. However, the test of the “junior historian’s” pen was not taken seriously by the scientific community, even in Russia itself. As befits a KGB officer, Putin did not resort to truly scientific research methods in which a scientist studies numerous facts and events and formulates scientific conclusions and concepts based on their scientific analysis. This approach was not taught at the KGB school of the USSR. The Russian dictator, also known as the “junior historian-scientist”, formulated his “theoretical” conclusions without relying on any set of facts, so to speak, a priori. He formulated all his “theoretical” postulates in advance, without any research, among which are the following: Russians and Ukrainians are “one people”, anti-Russian conspiracies of Western countries are to blame for the collapse of bilateral Russian-Ukrainian relations. Putin also claimed that a significant part of the modern territory of Ukraine covers “historically Russian lands”, going as far as making the accusation that “Russia was robbed”. Justifications were made for new territorial annexations: “I am becoming more and more convinced that Kyiv simply does not need Donbas”. Ultimately, Putin denied Ukraine the right to statehood independent of Moscow by stating: “I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia”.

When speaking about the fact that Ukraine is moving from the concept of “not Russia” to “anti-Russia”, Putin actually declared 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” (Dickinson, 2021; Domańska, 2021).
Putin (or a group of people who wrote this essay on his orders) pulled out only those facts that fit into his pseudo concept, while completely ignoring those facts that do not fit into it. Here the authors of this article do not at all reject the legitimacy of a priori methods of scientific research. We only emphasize that historical science is more of an a posteriori science, based on a rigorous accumulation and analysis of historical data and facts.

There is a certain analogy with another “outstanding historian” and the inspirer of the incumbent Kremlin leader, J. Stalin’s infamous work “A Short Course in the History of the CPSU (b)” published in 1938 turned into a “new communist Bible”, which was a compulsory study for at least two generations of Soviet students. There was never any doubt that the university history textbook was “written” by a man with allegedly only four classes of a church school under his belt.

The subsequent attempt at an epistolary “blow” against Ukraine, this time even in a more boorish and disrespectful form but at a lower political level, was the article by D. Medvedev, the former President of Russia, and now Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council. It was titled “Why contacts with the current Ukrainian leadership are meaningless” and published in the Kommersant newspaper on October 11, 2021 (“Medvedev wrote,” 2021). “Ukraine is headed by weak people who only seek to line their pockets… There has been no leader who could sacrifice himself for the sake of Ukraine, and it looks like there won’t be any... Negotiations with such people are absolutely pointless”. Such a statement by a formerly important figure in Russia, who is now in a much less significant position, although he is trying to stay afloat, is similar to the actual war threat. If the need and possibility to negotiate with the current democratically elected leadership of Ukraine is denied, the only form of relations which remain with such a state are contacts only seek to line their pockets... There has been no leader who could sacrifice himself for the sake of Ukraine, and it looks like there won’t be any... Negotiations with such people are absolutely pointless. Such a statement by a formerly important figure in Russia, who is now in a much less significant position, although he is trying to stay afloat, is similar to the actual war threat. If the need and possibility to negotiate with the current democratically elected leadership of Ukraine is denied, the only form of relations which remain with such a state is war. Be it a real war or a hybrid war is no longer of fundamental importance. In his usual boorish manner D. Medvedev, the former professor of Leningrad University – in the terminology of Putin’s idols, the bandits of the Leningrad back alleys known as a bich, i.e. “byvshiy intelligentynyy chelovek” (“formerly intellectual person”) – even allowed himself certain anti-Semitic statements in relation to V. Zelensky, the President of Ukraine (“Medvedev wrote,” 2021).

Among the series of “iconic” belligerent and xenophobic political statements that appeared in the Russian media in the six-month period preceding February 24, 2022, one cannot fail to mention the notorious article by T. Sergeytsev What Russia should do with Ukraine, which was published on April 04 on the RIA Novosti state agency website, already after the beginning of the hot stage of the war. It was exactly on the day when the whole world saw terrible evidence of the genocidal crimes committed by the Russian military against civilians in the village of Bucha, Kyiv oblast (“Into the Heart,” 2022; Sternthal, 2022). The author describes how the denazification of Ukraine should be carried out. It should be cleansed of “the nazified mass of the population, which technically cannot be subjected to direct punishment as war criminals”. The servicemen of the Ukrainian Armed Forces should be “destroyed to the maximum on the battlefield”. Denazification should be carried out with the aid of “ideological repression and strict censorship”. The process of denazification should touch at least the last 30 years of Ukrainian history or more than a generation of the Ukrainians. In fact, it was meant to be the de-Ukrainization, the rejection of “artificial inflation of the ethnic component of self-identification of the population in the territories of historical Little Russia and New Russia”. The very name “Ukraine” should not exist.

It is a clearly declared manifesto of the revisionist and expansionist aggressive ideology of the “Russian world”, and an action plan for the destruction of the entire Ukrainian nation and everything Ukrainian, designed for the next 30 years. The authors of this “manifesto” do not even bother with at least formal attempts to cover up their unhuman and extremist ideology with some kind of quasi-democratic “arguments”.

Putin’s false claims of genocide of Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine are completely unfounded and are part and parcel of propagandistic narratives repeated by the Russian media and politicians for years. Moscow made wild and mendacious allegations that Ukraine was building a plutonium-based dirty bomb and was running special NATO laboratories to develop chemical and biological weapons. Some of the accusations were so beyond common sense to state that Ukraine was raising birds capable of contaminating exclusively Russians or Russian speakers.

In fact, Russia itself is now being accused by the international community of committing atrocities in Ukraine. Ireland, Lithuania, the US, and Canada have gone further and called it genocide.

The full-scale hot war versus “special military operation”

However unjustified, this war is a pivotal and a crucial moment. “Russia’s future and its future place in the world are at stake”, stated Russian foreign intelligence chief S. Naryshkin. After so much destruction and kill-
ings. Putin’s words said on February 24, 2022, the day of the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, sound so false and cynical: “It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force” (Motyl, 2022a).

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 Kiev regime... We will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, as well as against citizens of the Russian Federation” (Motyl, 2022a).

Even more cynical and beyond outright mockery are the following words of the “reset” dictator of Russia addressing the citizens of Ukraine after the start of 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”.

Putin’s appeal to the soldiers and officers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to stop resistance and lay down their arms looks the most grotesque and ridiculous. It indicated that among the tens of thousands of Putin’s lackeys and guardsmen, there were not even a few sane people who would dare to tell the dictator the truth about the real attitude of people in Ukraine towards him. He himself is not able to obtain this information, since he had failed to master the intricacies of the Internet and receives all his meagre bits of knowledge in folders promptly slipped to him by his retinue.

On the eve of the invasion Putin made it clear that he believes Ukraine has neither legal rights nor a historical claim to an independent statehood, and that modern Ukraine had been “entirely created by Russia”. More than once he has questioned the legitimacy of former Soviet republics, claiming that V. Lenin planted a “time bomb” by allowing them self-determination in the early years of the Soviet Union.

The Russia-Ukraine war stepped into its hot phase in the early hours of February 24, 2022, after V. Putin’s announcement of the special military operation (“Transcript: Vladimir,” 2022). He cynically referred to Article 51 of the UN Charter, the permissive sanction of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the so-called “treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance” between Russia and the puppet self-proclaimed “repub-

lics” in the east of Ukraine. Incidentally, those “treaties” were to “come into force” the day later, on February 25 and thus had no legal value either before or at the time of the outbreak of hostilities.

Is Russian culture responsible for Russia’s crimes in Ukraine?

Political scientists and historians specializing in research on Russia and the USSR are actively discussing the following questions:

- Is the current regime of political power in Russia Nazi, fascist, totalitarian?
- Is the “great” Russian culture responsible for the acts of genocide and crimes against humanity that are still being committed by the Russian military in Ukraine? (e.g. Motyl, 2022b; Shorten, 2022).

Most researchers are inclined to answer yes to the first question. Indeed, Putin’s regime has all the hallmarks of Nazism, fascism and totalitarianism, pertinent to all other genocidal, chauvinistic, and dictatorial political regimes that have existed in world history. Minor differences are observed only in the individual terminology of some authors. However, 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”.

Obviously, it is difficult to find exact repetitions, replicas of events and regimes that have existed throughout human history. However, if there are apparent parallels, coincidences, and similarities, why not use similar terminology for those events or regimes? In the case of the current fascist regime in Russia new terms, Russism (Russian fascism) and Putinism, have emerged in the lexicon of historical and political science literature.

The answer to the second question is more complicated. Some authors and public figures believe that the “great” Russian culture cannot be held responsible for the genocide and crimes against humanity committed by the Russian troops in Ukraine. This answer is chiefly based on a postulate that the criminals are allegedly uneducated people from the remote depressed outskirts of Russia, and belong to the marginalized strata of Russian society and therefore are in no way connected with the “great” Russian culture. In our opinion, such an argument does not stand up to criticism.

Firstly, the Russian army is composed of people from all walks of life, including a significant percentage of high school graduates who studied Pushkin, Lermontov,
Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Chekhov. Secondly, more than 70% of Russians ("Public support," 2022) are known to support Russia’s war in Ukraine and criminal actions by the Russian military. These actions are even supported by many Russians living in Western democracies and educated at Western universities. Is there any reason why this “great” culture did not have a positive effect on the totalitarian and chauvinistic worldview of these people? The answers to this question belong mainly in the field of psychology and deserve separate research and publications. From our side, we would like to remark here that without denying the literary and intellectual skills of these most famous Russian authors, one should not overestimate their moral virtues in all aspects of life as such. They should not be regarded as undisputed authorities in shaping the morals of the youth of the Russian nation. Moreover, at least two of them (M. Gogol and A. Chekhov) were rather Ukrainian than Russian writers by origin, although they wrote in Russian, which in their time was the only language allowed in the literature of the Russian Empire. As for F. Dostoevsky, he was known for his Great Russian Chauvinism. Leo Tolstoy, A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov vocally glorified the Empire with explicit imperial views. Much of their great literary success in Russia was achieved due to the privileges and opportunities of the “great” imperial nation of the Russian Empire against the background of humiliation and oppression of the cultures of other peoples of the empire. Let us thus allow ourselves the seemingly paradoxical conclusion that the “great” Russian culture has also made a certain contribution to the formation of fascist and chauvinistic views of modern Russians, which led to the tragic events that are unfolding these days in Ukraine.

**Postcolonial war for Ukrainian identity and the country’s future**

The Russian-Ukrainian war is fundamentally a postcolonial war over Ukrainian identity (Kasianov, 2022). This war is the result of the inevitable clash of two opposing incompatible historical paradigms over the further development of Ukraine and the entire post-Soviet space. On the one hand, this is Putin’s obsessive paradigm about the revival of the Russian Empire within the borders of the USSR, about the “non-statehood” of young nations formed as a result of the second dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1991 (the first collapse took place as a result of the 1st World War), about the inability and impossibility of their existence independent from Russia. First of all, that paradigm concerned Ukraine and Belarus. According to Putin (Dickinson, 2021; Domanska, 2021), 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 lands.

On the other hand, it is modern Ukrainian political nationalism that has existed for more than a hundred years and is still growing, which has undergone difficult tests of practical state-building over the last 30 years, building a liberal democratic system of government, regularly changing elected bodies, powerful law enforcement agencies of state security and defence, etc.

Regarding the uniqueness of the Ukrainian identity, it can be considered that in one form or another it has existed for almost a thousand years, although the first mention of the toponym “Ukraine” has been found in the chronicle of 1187. In this clash of two historical paradigms, Ukraine’s stakes are much higher as it is existential in nature, whereas Putin’s understanding of history denies the very right of 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, and the resurrection of its former empire. Ukraine does it in self-defence and self-determination to preserve and further develop an independent republic. Russia fights for the past. Ukraine fights for the future” (Snyder, 2022). Putin’s policy has actually weaponized history.

The influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on the formation of the Russian fascism (the ideology of Rusicism) should not be underestimated. The Church was almost completely destroyed in the 1920s–1930s by the USSR totalitarianism and “revived” by Stalin in 1943 as an entity accountable to the NKVD/KGB to become a mouthpiece and a conductor of the Kremlin’s policy for many years. Little has changed since the collapse of the USSR. The Russian Orthodox Church today, headed by Patriarch Kirill (Gundyaev) is a faithful servant of the Kremlin, supporting and blessing its aggressive policy towards Ukraine.

In the first days of the war, Kirill preached his war-mongering sermons in the recently built Cathedral of the Armed Forces, the cathedral intended to glorify the Russian military power rather than God (Kelaidis, 2022). In this regard, it is interesting to note the recent statement of Pope Francis, calling on Kirill “not to be Putin’s altar boy”.

It will also be instructive to analyse the views on this war of S. Karaganov, one of the principal ideologists and theorists of the Russian world and Rusicism (Fubi-
“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... I don't see real signs of opposition.... We have our doubts about the effectiveness of democracy... Kremlin decided to strike first. This military operation will be used to restructure 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 friendly to us... We know that Article 5 of NATO, stating that an attack on a NATO member is an attack to all, doesn't work. There is no automatic guarantee that NATO would come to the defence of a member under attack”.

Due to the absence of any notable Russian military successes at the end of the third month of the full-scale Russian intervention, which began on February 24, 2022, and in anticipation of a general military defeat, the Russian authorities demanded that their media change their propaganda rhetoric. Now, in order to neutralize the facts of the expected defeat from Ukraine and to downplay the shame, propaganda is being promulgated that the war is being waged not with Ukraine at all, but with the whole world, and above all, with NATO.

Specificities of the current Russian-Ukrainian war

While Russian media and politicians call this full-scale post-colonial war “a special military operation”, for Ukraine, it is an existential war for its identity as a political and cultural entity, and the continuation of the war for Ukrainian independence. For Russia, Ukraine is “an inalienable part of our own history, culture, and spiritual space” (Address by the President,” 2022), whose independence was a product not of self-determination but rather “a mistake... It is a matter of life and death, a matter of our [Russia’s] historical future as a nation” (“Transcript: Vladimir,” 2022).

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 and more obvious, the narrative that Russia as a “force of good” fighting against the “forces of world evil” in the guise of the entire collective West is increasingly being promoted. To add, Russia is allegedly defending the traditional universal, Orthodox Christian values of the “Russian world,” of “Russian civilization”, against a worldwide conspiracy.

This war covers the entire territory of Ukraine and is comparable in its scale to WWII as it already involves 50 states in an anti-Putin coalition compared to the mid-1940s’ anti-Hitler coalition of 53 countries. Proof of this new coalition was the Summit meetings of the Ministers of Defence of those countries in Rammstein, Germany, on April 26, May 23 and June 15, 2022 (the last was held in Brussels). Subsequent summits are planned to be held monthly, the number of coalition members is gradually increasing.

There is also a danger of the war spreading to neighbouring countries, following the armed provocations that took place in the Republic of Moldova’s breakaway Transnistria region, where a small group of Russian troops numbering about 2,000 people is stationed. According to some expert assessments, to this number one can add the Russian-controlled regular troops of the so-called unrecognized “Transnistrian Moldavian Republic” (about 2,000 troops) and about 8,000 local reservists. In addition, there is some danger of the covert deployment of forces of Russian private military companies in the region. Thus, the Transnistrian region still poses a certain military danger to Ukraine in the context of Russia’s possible opening of another military front (Lossovskyi, 2021). Such a development of events may require the transfer of some of the Ukrainian troops, who are fighting fierce battles with the Russian occupiers in the eastern and southern directions.

Unlike all other previous wars in the history of mankind, this war has become a truly unique phenomenon in terms of the level and depth of online coverage of military operations on TV, the Internet and other media. In fact, all the events of this war and evidence of Russia’s war crimes become known to the world and receive an immediate reaction and condemnation by the world community. With this level of media coverage and thanks to the latest electronic information warfare, all Russian criminals, murderers, marauders, as well as officers and generals who give criminal orders, become known to the whole world. All these factors should contribute to bringing thorough procedural investigations and appropriate verdicts of the criminal international courts.
Another criminal feature of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war concerns Russia's methods of mobilizing and conscripting the population for military service. The Russian authorities are carrying out a covert partial mobilization mainly in the backward depressed regions densely populated by such national minorities as Buryats, Dagestanis, Chechens, Tatars, etc. Military conscription is almost non-existent in large, more economically and socially developed cities in Russia, where the majority of the population are ethnic Russians. Thus, during the war, there are grounded reasons to conclude that in addition to the crime of genocide of the Ukrainian people (“Declaration of,” 2022; Tyshchenko, 2022), hidden ethnic segregation and ethnocide (“utilization”) of national minorities in Russia is also carried out. Frequent cases of abduction of the Ukrainian population including Ukrainian orphans from the occupied regions of Ukraine to Russia, the forced resettlement of Ukrainian citizens from the South-East of Ukraine to Russia also illegally work to artificially change the demographic composition of Russia, as well as the actual “utilization” of Russia's ethnic minorities in the war against Ukraine.

By unleashing an unprovoked war against Ukraine, Russia destroyed the global security order that emerged after the end of World War II, revealed the weakness and hopelessness of the world's leading international organizations designed to guarantee peace and security on the planet. This requires new collective efforts by the countries of the world 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 organizations require cardinal and fundamental changes and reforms.

A phenomenon unique in its danger to world peace and global consequences is the outright nuclear blackmail and saber-rattling of weapons of mass destruction, which Russia and its dictator resorted to. The world can 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, maintained by Russia since 2007 contrary to the norms of international law, first and foremost the NPT, and an important addition to it, the UN Security Council Resolution of June 19, 1968, and a subsequent statement of the three nuclear powers (USA, UK and Russia) on issues of guarantees to non-nuclear Participant States of the NPT. The mere fact of such blackmail obliges the nuclear states (in this case the US and the UK) to “immediately act in accordance with their obligations under the UN Charter ... provide immediate assistance to ... any non-nuclear-weapon state” (“Question Relating,” 1968). This Resolution recognized that aggression with nuclear weapons or the threat of such aggression against a non-nuclear-weapon state create 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, during which the politicians, the expert community, and the military seriously discuss the danger and likelihood of using the weapons of mass destruction, in particular, nuclear weapons, both tactical and strategic. The possibility of using such weapons completely eliminates the validity of the famous thesis of C. von Clausewitz that “war is a continuation of politics by military means” (Von Clausewitz, 2008), which has become a postulate of political science for almost 200 years. Since a nuclear war is fraught with the complete annihilation of its parties, and probably the entire human race, it loses any sense whatsoever to talk about the rationality of such a policy.

The fundamental ideas of von Clausewitz are gaining new relevance in the context of this war, which in many respects also has not only a traditional, but also a hybrid character. It should be noted that in the modern framework and guiding military documents of both NATO and Ukraine as well as the Russian Federation, the military information and generally speaking information fields are actually defined as direct areas of hostilities. At the same time, in accordance with the collective decision of the leadership of Ukraine, information is not used as a weapon, although Ukrainian legislation allows censorship of enemy attempts to promote propaganda.

The current war is also characterized by the simultaneous presence of elements of military confrontation of yesterday's third generation war and factors of the future new type of sixth generation 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, as well as modern tactical formations and methods of conducting military operations. Meanwhile, Russian Armed Forces continue to use mainly old Soviet weapons and the corresponding methods and tactics of warfare from the Second World War. According to information available in the media, some of the Russian troops still use the Mosin-Nagant rifle, which was in service in 1891–1960, as well as the Maxim machine gun (invented in 1883). In Western media, one can increasingly find evidence of the technological backwardness of Russian weapons compared to the weapons used by the Armed Forces of Ukraine (e.g. Bostock, 2022a; Bostock, 2022b). One of the fac-
tors and purposes of this war for the Russian side is the need for the combat “utilization” of the existing old weapons and the testing of new weapons in combat in order to determine further opportunities for improving these new weapons.

Separately, one should 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 the active assistance provided to the latter by the collective West. Russia is an existential threat to Ukraine and the post-Soviet space in Central and Eastern Europe. Should this war end with a simple truce, without cardinal consequences for Russia and its complete reformatting, it can only lead to a postponed war in the next 15–20 years, and the aggressor may become even more bloodthirsty in the future.

Since this war with the actual participation of the anti-Russian coalition of 50 allies has all the features of a world war, the international community of victors will have to provide for such a political solution regarding Russia’s future political structure, which will guarantee the impossibility of a repeated aggression against its neighbours in the future. And here you cannot do without a certain de-imperialization and demilitarization including denuclearization of Russia.

British Prime Minister B. Johnson and Foreign Secretary L. Truss, as well as US Secretary of Defence L. Austin stated that the United States want “to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can’t do the kind of things that it has done in invading Ukraine” (Murphy, 2022).

The current war 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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