

RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR –
CAUSES, PROSPECTS AND LESSONS*

ROSYJSKO-UKRAIŃSKA WOJNA –
PRZYCZYNY, PERSPEKTYWY I LEKCJE

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the Russian-Ukrainian war. The article gives several reasons for this war. The main reasons are imperial ambitions, boasting, and the desire to show the world that Russia can do anything with impunity. After the wars in Chechnya, Georgia and Syria, Russia decided to start a full-scale war in Ukraine. Russia has formed a special kind of fascism, called *Russizm*.

The consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war are not clear. Different scenarios are possible from the pessimistic ones, which envisage the use of nuclear weapons and the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war into the Third World War. There are moderate scenarios and there are optimistic ones. For example, the option of an internal coup in Russia and the disintegration of Russia into separate states.

The war shows us that the reality that surrounds us will not be the same, that we will not return to the state it was before February 24, 2022. We are united and our main task is to create a world without war.

* This article is followed by an Ukrainian version of the same article.

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war, Ukraine, Russia, reason, aggression

ABSTRAKT

Artykuł poświęcony jest przyczynom wybuchu wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej. Głównymi powodami wojny są ambicje imperialne, przechwałki oraz chęć pokazania światu, że Rosja może zrobić wszystko bezkarnie. Po wojnach w Czeczenii, Gruzji i Syrii Rosja zdecydowała się na rozpoczęcie wojny na pełną skalę na Ukrainie. Rosja utworzyła specjalny rodzaj faszyzmu, zwany *Rusizmem*.

Konsekwencje wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej nie są jasne. Możliwe są różne scenariusze od pesymistycznych, zakładających użycie broni jądrowej i eskalację wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej do wymiaru III wojny światowej, po umiarkowane i optymistyczne np. możliwość wewnętrznego zamachu stanu w Rosji i rozpadu Rosji na odrębne państwa.

Wojna pokazuje nam, że otaczająca nas rzeczywistość nie będzie już taka sama, że nie wrócimy już do stanu sprzed dnia 24 lutego 2022 roku. Zjednoczyliśmy się a naszym głównym zadaniem jest stworzenie świata bez wojny.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

wojna, Ukraina, Rosja, powód, agresja

INTRODUCTION

Of course, I would like to write a report. Describe current events and people's moods. Write how people perceived the war. But, it is better to look at the report in the news. Events change so quickly that at the time of publication, the information may be old. Therefore, this article will focus on several related topics. First, why did the war start? Secondly, what are the prospects for the end of this war? Third, what lessons should we learn?

WHY DID THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR BEGIN?

Today, analysts around the world are writing about the Russian-Ukrainian war. I will not write here all their thoughts.

In my opinion, there are several reasons for Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

First of all, it is the imperial ambitions of Putin personally and Russia's top leadership. Putin's desire to go down in world history. The first

historical figure to enter history in this way was Herostratus. Herostratus (Greek: Ηρόστρατος) was a resident of Ephesus who burned the temple of Artemis in his hometown on July 21, 356 BC, so that his name was remembered by descendants¹. The term “Herostratic fame”² means glory that is tantamount to eternal shame. This term characterizes people who are famous for destructive and destructive actions. There are many such people in the history of the world. For example, Hitler started World War II. Stalin, killed millions of people during repression and artificial famine.

Secondly, it is envy. The Russians envied the Ukrainians because the majority of Ukrainians lived better than the Russians. It should be noted here that we are considering the whole of Russia, not just successful cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. Russian oppositionists have repeatedly spoken to the Russian media about the poverty of the majority of the Russian people. Russia envied Ukraine because we were moving fast in our progress. They envied that Ukraine was beginning to integrate into Europe.

Thirdly is *Russizm* Bullying and mobbing at the state level. Bullying and mobbing are usually seen as negative behaviors directly between people. Often, bullying occurs in the school environment. This is when the stronger wants to oppress the weaker. We have a classic example of bullying at the interstate level. Such bullying at the interstate level can be equated with Nazism. The Russian version of Nazism was called *Rashism*. According to analysts, in particular O. Kryvdyk³. *Rashism* is Russian fascism. It is a political ideology based on supremacy (the elder brother of the Slavic peoples) and the “special mission of Russia.” This ideological doctrine is characterized by intolerance of the culture of other nations. Many authors have written about *Rashism*, in particular in 1998 Gregor, A. James wrote the work *Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism*⁴. The roots of *Russizm* are in the special Russian mentality. Prominent Russian writers and poets wrote about it. Mikhail Lermontov in 1841 wrote the poem “Farewell to Unwashed Russia”.

¹ W. Smith (red.), *Herostratus*, [w:] *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, vol. 2, Boston 1867, p. 439.

² J. H. Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances: Celebrity and Privacy, 1696–1801*, Ann Arbor 2016.

³ O. Kryvdyk, *Rashyzm*, „Ukrayinska Pravda”, 18.05.2010, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2010/05/18/5050708/> (accessed 12.03.2022).

⁴ A. J. Gregor, *Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism*, “Communist and Post-Communist Studies” 1998, vol. 31, nr 1, s. 1–15.

The idea of Russia's supremacy and its special mission in the development of civilization has been constantly cultivated in Russia since ancient times. False testimonies, false "revelations" of Russian clergymen (elders), false prophecies, etc. are used for this purpose. The Russian Orthodox Church has a significant influence on the formation of this ideology. The clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church say that it is their concession that has the greatest miracles of God.

Fourth, Russia seeks to seize Ukraine and carry out denazification to appropriate the history of Kievan Rus' and Ukraine. The destruction of one of the largest libraries in Moscow is one of the stages in rewriting history. On January 30, 2015, the library of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences caught fire in Moscow. The fire lasted 27 hours. 5.42 million copies of publications were lost⁵. Russia's modern ideology has been aimed at creating the misconception that Ukraine is a random country and that the history of Kyiv and Kievan Rus' is the history of Russia alone. This position required the capture of the "historical homeland" (Ukraine). After such a fascination, there are opportunities to ideologically talk about the unification of all Slavs: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, etc. There are grounds for further aggression. Putin and the Russian media have already expressed a desire to bring back the countries that were previously in the Warsaw Pact. The first stage is the withdrawal of these countries from the NATO bloc. The next stage will be carried out either according to the type of the Crimean scenario, or there will be a direct military invasion.

Fifth is the economy. Economic wars between Russia and Ukraine have been going on since the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet Union, many goods were exported from Ukraine to Russia. Personally, I remember the sugar that my mother brought from Moscow in the 1980s. This sugar was made in the Cherkasy region of Ukraine. The easy capture of Ukraine gave access to resources and enterprises located in Ukraine. Even though Russia has its resources and technologies, it is very eager to get some natural resources and ready-made Ukrainian enterprises. Russia is also interested in Ukraine's agricultural sector. Ukraine is a major food supplier. Most of Russia's territory lies in areas where it is impossible to conduct efficient agricultural production.

⁵ N. Goncharov, *Knigi INIONa budut sushit' v kriokamere gosarhiva nauchno-tekhniche-skoj dokumentacii*, "TASS" 20.02.2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150224165754/http://tass.ru/nauka/1782553> (accessed 14.03.2022).

Sixth, these are military-political interests. The reason for Russia's invasion of Ukraine is Russia's desire to prevent any cooperation between Ukraine and Europe, especially the NATO bloc. The annexation of Crimea was prompted primarily by a desire to control the Black Sea and to prevent the possible presence of NATO ships in the region. At the time, Putin was ambivalent about "NATO guys are good guys, but they will never be in Sevastopol". The demand for the demilitarization of Ukraine and non-membership in the NATO bloc are among the main demands for Ukraine and the justification of the war against Ukraine. Ukraine's accession to the European Community and the NATO bloc is, first and foremost, a political threat. Talks about the military threat from Ukraine are intended only to brainwash its own citizens. A precedent for Russia to join the European Community and NATO as a great power on Russia's border would be dangerous. This would be an example for other countries. Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO could be a boost to centrifugal movements in Russia itself. Analysts have been talking for a long time about Russia's possible conspiracy into separate states.

Seventh, divert the attention of their people from internal problems. Finding an external enemy and fighting this enemy is one of the classic examples of distracting one's own people. Neo-Nazi sentiments have been developing in Russia for a long time. The slogans "Put the Khokholians (Ukrainians) on their knees" are often heard in the neo-Nazi Russian environment. "Khokhol" is a nickname for Ukrainians used by Russians. In addition, within the framework of Great Russian chauvinism, the Russians use the name "Littlerus". "Littlerus" comes from the words little Russian. In Ukraine, nicknames are used for Russians "Katsap" and "Moskal".

The Russians constantly emphasize that Ukraine is ruled by Americans and Europeans. The doctrine of the struggle against Ukraine, as a satellite of America and Europe, is one of the leading topics in Russian politics. Therefore, Russia views the war against Ukraine from the angle of a struggle with America and Europe. Those readers who will not believe these lines are asked to listen to political programs in Russia. The policy of boasting is also one of the key factors in Russia. The main thesis of the boasting policy assumes that Russia is the strongest country and the whole world is afraid of Russia. Russia can do whatever it wants and no country will say or do anything to it. Sanctions against Russia, which are now applied by many countries around the world, have significantly shaken the policy of boasting. Russia was affected by the lack of lightning victory (*blitzkrieg*) in Ukraine.

Several analysts see the Ukrainian-Russian war as one of the links in the global transformation of the world. Various theories related to the global redistribution of power in the world are considered. Some believe that the Russian-Ukrainian war is the beginning of a reduction in the world's population within the framework of the Golden Billion theory.

A noteworthy theory is based on the weakening of the Slavic peoples. The union of Slavs, including Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, Slovaks, Czechs, Serbs, Croats, etc., could create one of the most powerful associations in the world. The very idea of uniting the Slavs is at the heart of Russia's desire today. But instead of uniting, Russia is destroying any possibility of such unification, even in the distant future. It seems that the idea of unification was successfully destroyed. Looking for someone who benefits from this is an ungrateful thing right now. Many countries have imposed sanctions on Russia and have suffered some economic losses. Large concerns have left the Russian market and have also suffered losses. However, the fact remains that the predictable Slavic union will not happen in the future. Was the unification of the Slavs possible at all? It is necessary to answer directly – such an alliance could not take place with Russia in the form in which it was and is. Russia is an aggressor. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia fought in Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, Ukraine, and so on.

PROSPECTS FOR THE END OF THIS WAR.

Analysts consider different scenarios for the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war. All scenarios can be divided into pessimistic, optimistic and moderate.

Let's start with pessimistic scenarios of the Ukrainian-Russian war.

One of the worst-case scenarios is the transformation of this war into World War III. The involvement of other countries in the war is a very real prospect. Russia has long stated its desire to return the Baltic states to its jurisdiction: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. These countries are members of the European Community and members of NATO. In the event of an invasion of these countries, the entire NATO bloc will be involved in the conflict.

Consider the borders of the Russian-Belarusian Empire. In the west, Belarus has a border with Poland. The Belarusian-Polish border is 398 km long. Today, the Belarusian army is not involved in an active war with Ukraine. But the Russian army is using the territory of Belarus to carry out aggression against Ukraine.

Today, NATO countries are cautious in their decisions for fear of escalating the conflict. That is why, at the time of writing, NATO countries have not handed over old MiG fighter jets to Ukraine and have not decided to close the skies over Ukraine. It should be noted that the actions of Putin and the Russian military leadership, although taking into account the tactical situation, are guided by their own plan. If there is a clause in this plan about invading the Baltic States or Poland and sooner or later such an invasion will take place. Russian media have repeatedly voiced the opinion that Russia should return to its jurisdiction the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. This can be done either by direct military invasion or by arguments that will motivate these countries to take such a step.

One such argument is Russia's use of nuclear weapons. So far, Russia is scaring the world by using nuclear weapons. The use of nuclear weapons can be both global and local. Russia's global use of nuclear weapons in Europe and America will lead to an adequate response. As a result, the world will be engulfed in a global nuclear catastrophe. It is very difficult to predict its consequences, but we can say that the survival of human civilization will be threatened.

In the event of a local nuclear conflict, it will almost 100% escalate into World War III.

Russia understands the dangers of using nuclear weapons. From the point of view of logic and humanity, the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. But nuclear weapons are there. This weapon is created and can be used. We must remember that Russia has imperial ambitions and a desire to close the door loudly. Russia has expressed the slogan: "Why do we have such a world where there will be no Russia". Therefore, the actions of European countries, America and NATO will have little effect on Russia's decision to use nuclear weapons. If Russia has a strategic use of nuclear weapons, it will use them. Russia may use only tactical nuclear weapons, but it can use powerful strategic nuclear weapons.

The nuclear threat during the Ukraine-Russia war may not be related to the use of nuclear weapons. There are five nuclear power plants in Ukraine. Four of them are operating: the South Ukrainian, Zaporizhia, Rivne, Khmelnytsky and Chornobyl power plants, which are preserved. In addition to nuclear power plants, there are scientific nuclear reactors in Kharkiv and Kyiv. Ukraine has storage facilities for low-level nuclear waste. At the time of writing, Russian occupation forces have seized the Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plants. The production process at

power plants is disrupted. An accident comparable to Chernobyl can happen at any moment. Given the impossibility of a quick elimination of the accident during the war, such a nuclear catastrophe will be much greater than the Chernobyl disaster. Let me remind you that only one unit crashed at the Chernobyl station. Six power units may crash at Zaporizhzhya station. In the event of a nuclear accident, radioactive contamination will spread across Europe, and possibly to Asia, depending on weather conditions and the magnitude of the accident. The consequences of such an accident, even analysts do not undertake to predict accurately.

Pessimistic options for Ukraine are the complete conquest of the country, the genocide of the Ukrainian people and the transformation of Ukraine into a region of the Russian Federation. Many Russian analysts and the military argue that Ukraine can only be defeated by completely capturing it and exterminating the entire population that will resist the Russian occupiers. All other options are considered by Russian analysts as not giving the desired result. Even the reduction of Ukrainian territory to 3–7 western regions, according to Russian analysts, will not solve the problem for Russia. Therefore, Russia will strive to implement its plan in full. The talks that Russia occasionally attends tend to have a political goal, namely to show that Russia seems to have offered quality peaceful steps. First of all, such negotiations are essential for Russia itself to create public opinion in Russia itself. One can predict that the slogans in Russia will sound like this: “We offered peace to Ukraine, but Ukraine did not accept our proposals”. This allows us to continue to justify the war in Ukraine in front of our own people.

Optimistic and relatively optimistic scenarios are based on two basic things. The first thing is the stability of the Ukrainian armed forces and the efforts of the Ukrainian people in the fight against the Russian occupiers. The second thing is to help the countries of the world. Probably no country has stayed away from this war. Many countries provide Ukraine with funds, weapons and humanitarian aid. Citizens around the world are trying to help individual citizens with money through a variety of services. Sanctions against Russia need to be mentioned separately. Not everyone in Ukraine, especially those who did not pay much attention to the economy and politics, had little faith in the effectiveness of sanctions against Russia. Today, we all see that sanctions against Russia are working. Sanctions will deplete Russia’s resources and reduce military aggression.

This will allow the Armed Forces of Ukraine to solve military problems and defeat the enemy. Many countries send weapons and equipment to Ukraine. A foreign unit is being formed in Ukraine to enrol foreigners who want to help Ukraine with weapons in hand. Ukrainians are very grateful to each of them.

Ukraine is quite realistic in its assessment of the situation. The war moved from the blitzkrieg phase to a more or less protracted war. It is ungrateful to predict the time of its end and the conditions of peace. This is especially difficult to do now.

The most optimistic scenarios for the end of the war are related to radical changes in Russia. The best solution for everyone at the present stage would be a change of government in Russia. What are the results of such a change of government in Russia? First, the new government could end the war immediately and withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine. Withdraw the decision to recognize the Luhansk and Donetsk self-proclaimed republics. Withdraw troops from these self-proclaimed republics. Withdraw Crimea from Russia. Resolve issues of other territories in which Russia directly or indirectly conducted aggression and military action. The new Russian government, in this case, would be able to ask the world to lift sanctions. I think that with sufficient democratic changes in Russia, it would be really fast.

Some analysts are considering the possibility of the collapse of the Russian Empire into separate independent states.

In addition to these scenarios, there are several scenarios that are related to China's influence on Russia's actions.

What lessons should we learn from the Ukrainian-Russian war?

The first lesson is that agreements with the aggressor are worthless if they are not confirmed by actions.

The war is being waged against the Geneva Conventions. Russia's tactic is to create a humanitarian crisis to change the social and political situation. Today, Russia is launching scorched earth tactics.

In a world where weapons still remain, one must always be ready for war. Ukraine once lost its nuclear weapons in exchange for international guarantees of security and integrity. Russia, as one of the guarantors, carried out aggression against Ukraine. Other guarantors are unable to provide full assistance to Ukraine for political and military reasons.

War in modern conditions is characterized by the extremely rapid dissemination of information and strong psychological pressure on the entire

population, not just a small part. On the one hand, quick awareness allows you to react quickly to events. On the other hand, psychological pressure allows you to sow panic much faster, spread misinformation and cause wrong decisions.

The preparation of the population for emergency situations, including military ones, needs to be given due attention in peacetime.

Effective international mechanisms for influencing countries that carry out military aggression, terror and genocide must be developed. Many decisions may need to be taken by NATO, the UN and other organizations.

It is necessary to introduce a global information policy for all countries aimed at reducing aggression and refraining from resolving any conflicts by military means.

CONCLUSIONS

Whatever the cause of the war, everything must be done so that in the future the world can live without warriors at all. No need to wait for decisions in high offices. Everyone should start with themselves. Start by raising your children. Children who will be able to live in a peaceful world.

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