

PUTIN’S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE FROM THE HYBRID AGGRESSION TO FULL-SCALE WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2014 the Russian Federation has been actively engaged in a campaign of hostile military aggression against Ukraine. Until 24 February 2022, almost 7% of Ukraine’s sovereign territory – including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Eastern Ukraine – have been illegally occupied by Russia.

The international community, including the EU, has condemned this flagrant and destabilizing act of aggression and imposed sanctions and other restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. Despite these sanctions, Russia on 24 February 2022 openly invaded into Ukraine. The invasion has been considered an act of aggression in violation of the UN Charter by the UN General Assembly and the most countries in the world. The Russian Federation in the wake of its activities in Ukraine became the largest terrorist organization in the world¹.

Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine in 2014 wasn’t random. It became a logical continuation of Russian policy in the post-Soviet space. The Kremlin’s effort to claim and subdue the interests of Ukraine had occurred since the beginning of the 2000s, after the government of V. Putin came to power. The confirmation of this thesis we’ll find further due analyzing of the Ukrainian-Russian relations since 1991. Ukraine as a state has managed to survive through the first months of Russian aggression even when its national machinery resembled a termite-eaten piece of furniture, and despite Ukraine not having sufficient military combat experience to face the audacious acts of well-trained saboteurs of direct Russian aggression. Perhaps this is not a David and Goliath story, rather, it is more of a modern version of the biblical story of Cain and Abel. Ukraine lost till 24 February 2022 Crimea and part of Donbas in addition to the destruction in the order of 20% of the national economy. These were major factors of destabilization, but Russia continued plans to build a barrier of so-called “people’s republics”, to cut off Ukraine from the Black Sea ports and destroy the export potential of the country. Ukrainians have become the first on the continent, to lay down their lives for

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Don’t end up being sanctioned: Learn-Check-Act. April, 13, 2021 // <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/information-campaigns/dont-end-being-sanctioned-learn-check-act>, Retrieved July, 8, 2021.

the values of the European Union under the European flag, even without having the prospect of membership in this international association. Such altruism is hard to imagine considering the living standard norms of Europe and its circle. It appears that no one dies for a dream. But it was the citizens of Ukraine who were able to spend millions of dollars to better equip and feed their armed forces and helping them during the most difficult period. In Ukraine, this applicable and well-known truth is literally understood: “Whoever doesn’t want to feed their army, will feed someone else’s”².

Despite Russia and the Soviet Union made significant contributions to the development of international law in the past, as the founders of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations, the Russian Federation’s approach has changed since 1991, following the dissolution of the USSR. The country appears to place great emphasis on the power dynamics underpinning international law, believing the law to be malleable in the interest of victors. This approach enables Russia under the presidency of V. Putin criticizes the so-called “rules-based order” which it considers promoting only Western interests. On the other hand, V. Putin uses this approach to try to legitimize its own actions in Ukraine (objectively in breach of international law) and evade responsibility under the law by denying the application of international humanitarian law in the context of its military operations³. Moreover, the UN Security Council has been paralysed due war in Ukraine because of the Russian veto. Thus, it’s necessary to reform the UN Security Council because we are dealing with a state that turns the right of veto in the UN Security Council into the right of death and undermines the entire architecture of global security. At the same time should be created the “Nuremberg-style” court to try war criminals, including V. Putin⁴.

1. Facts about russian military aggression against Ukraine within 2014–2020

Professional experts from the Ministry of foreign affairs of Ukraine officially emphasize that Russia planned military aggression against Ukraine in advance. Victory of the revolution of dignity was only a convenient pretext. Russia launched its well-planned armed aggression against Ukraine on 20 February 2014 with the military operation of its Armed Forces on seizing a part of the Ukrainian territory – Crimean peninsula. This date is not even denied by the Russian Ministry of Defense, as it is indicated on the

² Mahda Yevhen Russia’s hybrid aggression: lessons for the world. 2018. P. 271–272.

³ Russia’s war and the power of international law. URL: <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/qa-russias-war-and-power-international-law>

⁴ Виступ Президента України на засіданні Ради Безпеки ООН. URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-na-zasidanni-radi-bezpeki-oon-74121>

departmental medal “For the return of Crimea”. In fact, only the next day Viktor Yanukovich fled from Kyiv; and it was already 22 February 2014 that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Resolution “On the dissociation of the President of Ukraine from fulfillment of constitutional powers and appointment of early presidential elections in Ukraine”, used by Russia as a pretext for accusations of the alleged “unconstitutional coup in Ukraine”.

Illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol was just the first Russian step aimed at undermining independence and sovereignty of Ukraine. The Kremlin has always been firmly convinced that Russia will never become a world leader without control over Ukraine, meanwhile a democratic and prosperous Ukraine is a threat to the current authoritarian rule in Russia. That is why the next step of the Russian aggression was an attempt to destabilize the situation in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine in order to form a quasi-state “Novorossiya”. Russian president V. Putin announced this plan at the “Dialogue with the Russians” TV program on the First Channel on 17 April 2014. Ukraine succeeded to disrupt the full implementation of his plans, but Russian regular troops and its proxies occupied certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

Military aggression is just one element of the Russian hybrid warfare against Ukraine. Other elements encompass: propaganda based on lies and falsifications; trade and economic pressure; energy blockade; terror and intimidation of Ukrainian citizens; cyber attacks; a strong denial of the very fact of war against Ukraine despite large scope of irrefutable evidence; use of pro-Russian forces and satellite states in its own interests; blaming the other side for its own crimes.

A huge contribution to countering Russian aggression made by joint political and diplomatic efforts of the international community. On 27 March 2014 the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution 68/262 “Territorial Integrity of Ukraine” which confirmed the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and the absence of any legal basis to change the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The same stance was confirmed by the UN General Assembly resolution 71/205 “Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)” of 19 December 2016. Besides that, this resolution unambiguously defines Russia as an occupying power and places all the responsibility for human rights violation in Crimea upon Moscow. Numerous documents in support of Ukraine’s territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders were approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and other international organizations. Political and economic sanctions are the most effective tool of

pressure on the aggressor state. They significantly reduced the possibility of a large-scale invasion and forced russia to sit at the negotiating table, in particular within the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine and russia are parties to the conflict, the OSCE is a mediator) and Normandy Quartet (Ukraine and russia are parties to the conflict, France and Germany are mediators)⁵. The European Union has imposed sanctions and other restrictive measures against russia, including: a ban on goods from Crimea, a prohibition of the supply of tourism services in Crimea, restriction on trade and investment related to the certain economic sectors and infrastructure projects, an export ban for certain goods and technologies⁶.

Date to opened invasion, russian aggression against Ukraine has left about 9940 people killed and up to 23455 wounded (UN data). This number includes 298 passengers of MH17 flight, including 80 children, killed as a result of terrorist attack on 17 July 2014, when the Malaysian Airlines plane was shot down by the russian servicemen from BUK missile system that had been transferred to the occupied territory of Donbas from the russian federation. About 1.584.000 residents of Crimea and Donbas were internally displaced persons after being compelled to leave their homes⁷.

The Minsk Agreements (Protocol of 5 September 2014, Memorandum of 19 September 2014 and Package of measures of 12 February 2015) were basis for political resolution of the conflict in Donbas⁸. They have been violated by the russian federation on a regular basis. Signing of the first documents in September 2014 followed direct incursion of the russian regular troops in Donbas and intense hostilities near the city of Ilovaysk – the place of one of the most shameful crimes, committed by the russian Army in Donbas. At least 366 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 429 were wounded there while leaving the city in the so-called “green corridor” under the guarantees of commanders of russian troops.

In violation of the Minsk Memorandum, russian troops and russia-backed illegal armed formations seized 8 pieces of land 1696 km² in area, which had to be on the Ukrainian government-controlled territory according to the line of contact, defined by the Memorandum. Debaltseve is one of the most telling

⁵ 10 facts you should know about russian military aggression against Ukraine. URL: <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/10-facts-you-should-know-about-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine>

⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Don't end up being sanctioned: Learn-Check-Act. April, 13, 2021. URL: <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/information-campaigns/dont-end-being-sanctioned-learn-check-act>, Retrieved July, 8, 2021.

⁷ 10 facts you should know about russian military aggression against Ukraine. URL: <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/10-facts-you-should-know-about-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine>

⁸ Крупеня І. М. Дорога до миру: стратегії, угоди, формати, сценарії та формула миру Зеленського із 10 пунктів. *Вісник Національного технічного університету України «Київський політехнічний інститут»*. *Політологія. Соціологія. Право*. Випуск 1 (57). 2023. С. 43–49.

examples of how Russia violates the Minsk Agreements. Combined Russian-terrorist forces attacked and seized the city and the outskirts on 16–18 February 2015, immediately after the Minsk Package of measures, establishing the comprehensive ceasefire since 15 February, had been signed⁹.

Resorting to the military aggression against Ukraine, Russia violated fundamental norms and principles of international law, enshrined, in particular, in: UN Charter (1945)¹⁰, Helsinki Final Act (1975)¹¹, Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the UN Charter (1970)¹², UN GA Resolution 3314 “Definition of Aggression” (1974)¹³, Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty (1965)¹⁴, Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States (1981)¹⁵, Declaration on the Enhancement of the Effectiveness of the Principle of Refraining from the Threat or Use of Force in International Relations (1987)¹⁶.

Beside above mentioned Russia has also violated number of bilateral and multilateral agreements, namely: Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances related to the Ukraine’s accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1994)¹⁷, Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (1997)¹⁸, Agreement between Ukraine

⁹ 10 facts you should know about Russian military aggression against Ukraine. URL: <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/10-facts-you-should-know-about-russian-military-aggression-against-ukraine>

¹⁰ Charter of the United Nations. *United Nations*. URL: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

¹¹ Helsinki Final Act. *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. 1975. URL: <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?download=true>

¹² Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. *United Nations*. 1970. URL: <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/dpilfrscun/dpilfrscun.html>

¹³ Definition of Aggression, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX). *United Nations*. 1974. URL: <http://www.un-documents.net/a29r3314.htm>

¹⁴ Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty. *United Nations*. 1965. URL: <http://www.un-documents.net/a20r2131.htm>

¹⁵ Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States. *United Nations*. 1981. URL: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/36/a36r103.htm>

¹⁶ Declaration on the Enhancement of the Effectiveness of the Principle of Refraining from the Threat or Use of Force in International Relations. *United Nations*. 1987. URL: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/42/a42r022.htm>

¹⁷ Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances related to the Ukraine’s accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. *Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. 1994. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/998_158#Text

¹⁸ Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. *Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. 1997. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/643_006#Text

and the Russian Federation on the Ukrainian-Russian state border (2003)¹⁹, Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on cooperation in use of the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait (2003)²⁰, Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the status and conditions of Russian Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine (1999)²¹.

2. Periodization of russian-Ukrainian relations after Ukraine gained independence

The first period – 1991–1997 – the beginning with Ukraine’s independence to the signing of a major Russian-Ukrainian agreement on friendship and cooperation. This was a leftover policy regarding the ties and relations with the Soviet Union accompanied by latent manifestations of intense power on the part of Russia. Both countries were predominantly busy by internal problems, and hard-won interstate agreements laid the foundation for further cooperation.

The second period – 1997–2003 – this was the time of Ukraine’s borrowing political technology from Russia (during the second presidential campaign of 1999, between the then current President Leonid Kuchma and Communist Party leader Petro Symonenko as a convenient sparring partner) and finding its own foreign policy identity. Without the participation of any russian organization of the post-Soviet republics, GUAM created and signed the “Distinctive Partnership Charter” of Ukraine-NATO in 1997. The “cassette scandal”^{*} of 2000, and the subsequent retraction of Leonid Kuchma, is not so much about the importance of Ukraine being called back into the

¹⁹ Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the Ukrainian-Russian state border. *Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. 2003. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/643_157?lang=en#Text

²⁰ Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on cooperation in use of the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait. *Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. 2003. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/643_205#Text

²¹ Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the status and conditions of Russian Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine. *Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine*. 1999. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/643_076#Text

^{*} The cassette scandal is a political scandal that exploded in November-December 2000. Linked to the publication of talks in the office of President L. Kuchma, recorded by Major General Mykola Melnychenko, the tapes testified to Kuchma’s involvement in the disappearance and murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze.

^{**} Volodymyr V. Putin (born October 7, 1952, Leningrad) is a Russian state and political figure, the second (2000–2008) and the fourth (from May 7, 2012) president of the Russian Federation. He worked at the Committee on State Security of the USSR. In early 1992, he was transferred to the KGB’s “operating reserve” in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

^{***} The conflict around the island of Kos Tuzla is a Ukrainian-Russian territorial dispute over the identity of the island and the Russia imposed construction of the Kerch Strait dam to the island of Kos Tuzla.

Kremlin's orbit of influence for Russia, as was the change of the Kremlin's owner – the decrepit Democrat, Boris Yeltsin who virtually handed over the reins of inheritance to the “gray lieutenant colonel” Volodymyr Putin**.

The third period- 2003–2006 – this was the period of exacerbation of bilateral relations in which Russia allowed itself to “prank” the conflict over the island of Tuzla*** in autumn 2003 before the first “gas war” the turn of 2005–2006. This period of gradual increase of the Kremlin's pressure on Ukraine caused rising tensions, while also increasing the number of pain points in bilateral relations. Russia focused on testing Kyiv's official response to its aggressive manifestations, while scanning the Ukrainian political elite in search for collaborators in its midst.

The fourth period – 2006- February 2014 – during this time, Russia had done a lot to establish full control over Ukraine, its elite, and resources. The Kremlin was trying to build a relationship with Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, playing on her conflict with then President Viktor Yushchenko and in 2010, made Viktor Yanukovich the head of state. The sharp improvement in the Russian financial and economic situations due to the increase in energy prices in the early 2000s allowed valuable contributions when searching for allies and partners in Western Europe and ensuring the dominance of the Russian post-Soviet space. This period witnessed the refusal of NATO to allow Ukraine's and Georgia's Action Plans to achieve membership in the NATO (MAP) at the Bucharest summit*. The decision was probably made not without the influence of the Kremlin. The European aspiration of Ukraine regarding the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU were disrupted by the direct participation of Russia, but the Kremlin's victory was pyrrhic: the Euromaidan Revolution of Dignity not only caused the fall of Viktor Yanukovich's regime, but also ignited Russia's direct hostile actions against Ukraine. On February 27, 2014 was the appearance of the first “green men”** in the Crimea and the capture of their administrative buildings. On March 12, 2014, NATO acknowledged those “polite people” who were the soldiers of the Russian army. The full participation of the Russian army in the battle for Ilovaisk*** that started from August 22, 2014, can also become a kind of landmark²².

* The Bucharest Summit of NATO, April 2–4, 2008 in Bucharest, Romania. The agenda was the recognition of Kosovo, hostilities in Afghanistan, the expansion of the Alliance with the accession of Croatia, Albania and Macedonia, as well as accession to the MAP for Ukraine and Georgia.

** “Green men” (also in the Russian media known as the “polite people”) – a humorous and ironic name of the Russian military units with distinctive uniforms and technology, whose operations were secretly carried out in these special units at the first stage of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, often using non-military operations to capture and block the opposition.

The fifth period – 2015–2019 – low-intensity conflict – during this time Russia pivoted to a low-intensity military conflict in the east combined with hybrid attacks on the rest of Ukraine. Its moves served primarily to destabilize Ukraine and discredit Ukraine’s leaders in the eyes of their people and their Western partners. Russia’s policy changed due to the imposition of EU and U. S. sanctions as well as the signing of the Minsk agreements. Russia was interested in their implementation, as they would effectively allow Ukraine’s federalization. In addition, maintaining a low-intensity hybrid conflict is militarily cheaper than a full-scale one. The low-intensity military conflict in the “Normandy paradigm” dragged on until the next presidential elections in Ukraine and formally ended with the inauguration of Volodymyr Zelenskyi as the new head of state on May 20, 2019²³.

The sixth period – May 20, 2019 – February 23, 2022 – this period of the Russian-Ukrainian war began on May 20, 2019 – not so much because of the inauguration of the new President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyi on this day, but because of the search for new ways and formulas of appeasement on the part of the Ukrainian authorities. Instead, while Ukraine’s new president, V. Zelenskyi, adopted some different policies toward Russia, the Kremlin kept to relatively the same tactics. At the same time the Kremlin’s tactics, though, aim not so much to install a pro-Russia government in Kyiv as to destabilize Ukraine until it becomes the failed state that Russian propaganda has long claimed it to be. V. Zelenskyi persistently tried to renew the negotiations in the Normandy format and meet V. Putin in person. On October 1, 2019, the members of the Trilateral Contact Group signed the “Steinmeier formula” in Minsk. On December 9, 2019, a summit was held in Paris with the participation of representatives of Ukraine, France, Germany, and the Russian Federation. The purpose of the summit was to approve a new sequence of implementation of the Minsk agreements and to discuss the “Steinmeier formula”. According to the results of the summit, the final document “General agreed conclusions of the Paris Summit in Normandy format on December 9, 2019” was signed. These agreements included, in particular, the implementation of the “Steinmeier formula” into Ukrainian legislation in

*** The Battle of Ilovaisk, also known as the Ilovaisky Boiler, was deployed from the city of Ilovaisk in the Donetsk region during the war in eastern Ukraine on August 2014. On August 18, during the fierce battles, Ukrainian security forces, a large part of which consisted of volunteer battalions, entered Ilovaisk. They were able to take control of a portion of the city, but after the arrival on August 23–24 of significant forces by the regular Russian troops from the Russian Federation, the Ukrainian forces were surrounded.

²² Mahda Yevhen Russia’s hybrid aggression: lessons for the world. 2018. P. 77–82.

²³ Zarembo K., Solodky S. The Evolution of Russian Hybrid Warfare: Ukraine. CEPA. 2021. URL: <https://cepa.org/comprehensive-reports/the-evolution-of-russian-hybrid-warfare-ukraine/>

accordance with the version agreed by the “Normandy Four” and the Tripartite Contact Group, as well as the establishment of a “special order of local self-government” in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. On April 27, 2021, V. Zelenskiy publicly announced the expansion of the Normandy format by adding Great Britain, Canada and the USA to it, and at the same time called for a review of the Minsk agreements of 2015. Instead, at the end of March – the beginning of April 2021, russian troops transported a lot of weapons and equipment from western and central russia and Siberia to the occupied Crimea and the Pogonovo training center. In October 2021, the russian federation refused to participate in the planned Normandy Four summit at the level of heads of state. At the same time, on January 17, 2022, russian troops and weapons began to arrive at the border of Ukraine from the side of Belarus for the so-called joint russian-belarusian exercises. On January 19, 2022, US President J. Biden publicly stated that, in his opinion, russia will invade Ukraine.

On February 21, 2022, russia officially recognized the quasi-republics of the occupied Donbas, and signed the “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance” with them. A day later, during a press conference, the President of the russian federation frankly stated that the Minsk agreements no longer exist, and on the evening of February 23, 2022, the leaders of the terrorist organizations “DPR” and “LPR” appealed to Putin for military assistance. On February 24, 2022, at 5 o’clock in the morning, V. Putin officially announced the start of a “special operation” in Ukraine, which in fact was the beginning of a full-scale attack on a sovereign state.

The seventh period – February 24, 2022-present – full-scale war. On February 24, 2022, russia launched a massive missile attack on Ukraine and went on the offensive on land from the north (the territories of Belarus and the russian federation), the south (from Crimea), and from the east (from the occupied Donbass). On the first day of full-scale war, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine unanimously approved the introduction of martial law. Russia’s ally in the war against Ukraine is the Republic of Belarus, which provided the aggressor state with territory, military equipment and infrastructure to invade Ukraine and conduct further military operations on its territory. The blitzkrieg of russian troops was unsuccessful.

The war that began in 2022 is all-encompassing, devastating and civilization existential. The goal of the russia is the destruction of the state of Ukraine and the entire Ukrainian people, which is why the Ukrainian people rose up for a just national war for their statehood and their right for life. For Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, this war also is defensive. The russian-Ukrainian war is no longer a bilateral conflict. It has clear signs of a general crisis of the world security system, which will lead to global transformations.

This war also showed that the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations does not work. In addition, the beginning of a large-scale transformation of the Eurasian space has been laid²⁴.

3. Reasons for the hybrid aggression against Ukraine

The first evidence of Russia's foreign policy turning to confrontation with the West and restoration of its own imperial nature was V. Putin's "Munich speech" in 2007. During this speech, the President of the Russian Federation not only accused the U. S. and NATO of attempts to build a unipolar world and impose their own "legislative system" on other countries, but also openly demanded that Russia, as a country "with a thousand-years history", be given a leadership position in international policy making. He also emphasized that no matter how the unipolar world is decorated, it ultimately means only one thing in practice: it is one center of power, one center of decision-making. And this is ultimately destructive not only for everyone who is within the framework of this system, but also for the sovereign himself, because it destroys him from within. Also, it has nothing to do with democracy and the model itself is inoperative, since there is no and cannot be a moral and ethical basis of modern civilization²⁵.

The first implementation of these designs was a military attack by Russia on Georgia in 2008. This attack was not met by any appropriate and adequate reaction from the international community. Thus, Russia as violator of international law wasn't punished and continued moving in this direction in order to restore its geopolitical domination. The next victim of Russian hybrid aggression was Ukraine. Russia consciously created obstacles for Ukraine towards its Association with the European Union and intensification of cooperation with NATO.

The aim of Russian aggression against Ukraine and deployment of Russian forces around the world was to secure its own position by undermining the allure of the liberal traditions and democratic institutions that allow the Western world to dominate the global imagination. Unable to compete in a soft power contest for hearts and minds, Moscow has set out to drag the opposition down to its own level. This explains why Russia supports anti-

²⁴ Гай-Нижник П. Війна за життя. *Науковий щорічник «Україна дипломатична»*. Випуск XXIII. 2022. С. 31–52

²⁵ Выступление президента России Владимира Путина на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности 10 февраля 2007 года. *ИЗВЕСТИЯ*. 2007. URL: <http://izvestia.ru/news/321595>

establishment forces of all kinds throughout the West, regardless of whether they represent the far left or far right of the political spectrum²⁶.

One of the best Ukrainian experts on Russia's hybrid aggression against Europe Yevhen Magda emphasized the main reasons for the hybrid aggression against Ukraine, namely: explosive and critical views of the incompatibility of the Ukrainians and the Russian political elite regarding the future of Ukraine; the foreign policy ambitions of the Russian leadership, supported by the historical tradition of empire building and significant savings from the sale of energy. The Russian elite felt that the perfect moment had arrived – the desire coincided with the possibilities; the attractiveness of Ukraine as a victim and a trophy – an unreformed state with a weak army, an inefficient economy, and dubious corrupt elite at the helm but exhibited significant potential (natural, economic, geopolitical); the need for Russia's "small victorious war" that could unite Russian society around the political leadership of the country, the desire for unchanging leadership, the need for the war to be permanent and prolonged touting it as a war against its nation which is emblematic for the millions of Russian citizens²⁷.

Director of the National Institute for Strategic Studies, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Volodymyr Horbulin mentioned in 2017 that the Russian Federation is taking steps to achieve its objectives within Ukraine in order to replace the acting government of the country, to reverse the Ukrainian political course and win the support of the majority of society to view Russia favorably. The main purpose of these activities appears to be revenge aimed at raising a puppet regime to power and creating and preserving the political situation in its favor. The Russian authorities attempted to achieve their objectives through the following measures and steps: stimulating federalization of Ukraine with further development of a referendum to change the political order; applying moral pressure on Ukrainian society by demonstrating (with the help of the loyal mass media and agents of influence) the inability of the Ukrainian authorities to implement the statehood idea of Ukraine; supporting protests, and creating conditions to split the nation's integrity by the principle of regional egoism, and acting in the interests of, regional elites (business and local authorities); breaking the balance in the political system of the country and demoralizing state officials and state institutions in order to prevent them from carrying out their functions properly; revitalization of secret activities of pro-Russian lobby in the state structures and stimulation of various confrontations, arguments and conflicts

²⁶ Dickinson P. All roads lead to Ukraine in Putin's global hybrid war. *Atlantic Council*. 2021. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/all-roads-lead-to-ukraine-in-putins-global-hybrid-war/>

²⁷ Mahda Yevhen Russia's hybrid aggression: lessons for the world. 2018. P. 82.

within Ukraine with the help of this lobby; use of a special agent network to discredit the most effective and prominent Ukrainian politicians who support statehood and national positions of Ukraine.

Volodymyr Horbulin presumed that in case of failure, Russia will try to create “instability zones” in Ukraine, which will lead to a state of “managed chaos” that was often tested by the Soviet Union in the poorly developed countries of Africa and Latin America. Such instability will weaken the political system of the country and create conditions that, in the opinion of the Russian authorities, will grant Russia certain situational advantages and allow for blackmailing or bribing of Ukrainian officials in order to achieve objectives relating to issues of interest for the Russian Federation²⁸.

4. The transformation of Putin’s reasons for invasion into Ukraine

For years, the Russian president, V. Putin has denied Ukraine its own statehood. In article “On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians” he stated that modern Ukraine is entirely the product of the Soviet era and true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia²⁹. In the Russian information space, the following reasons were given for Russia’s attack on Ukraine: the need to oppose “Western” agents who want to destroy Russia; the desire to protect the Ukrainian people who are suffering from the Ukrainian government, which is run by “foreign” agents; the duty to protect people from the genocide carried out by “nationalists and Nazis” who seized power in Kyiv and are controlled by “foreign agents”³⁰. On 24 February 2022 Volodymyr Putin described the biggest European invasion since the end of World War Two as a “special military operation” rather than the full-scale war with two main goals to “demilitarise and de-Nazify Ukraine”³¹.

On March 17, 2022, the leader of the aggressor country in a telephone conversation with the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, listed the requirements for Ukraine, which he considers a condition for the withdrawal of Russian troops and the conclusion of a peace agreement: refusal to join NATO and Ukraine’s neutral status (Russia, which attacked Ukraine, is ready to become one of its guarantors); Russian is the second official language, repeal of all laws restricting it; Ukraine’s recognition of Crimea as Russian; Ukraine’s

²⁸ Horbulin Volodymyr *The World Hybrid War: Ukrainian Forefront*. Kharkiv : Folio, 2017. P. 27–28

²⁹ Putin V. V. On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians. *Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library*. URL: <https://www.prlib.ru/en/article-vladimir-putin-historical-unity-russians-and-ukrainians>

³⁰ Кривенко С. Привід, причина і призначення російсько-української війни. *Твоє місто*. 2022. URL: https://tvoemisto.tv/blogs/pryvid_prychyna_i_pryznachennya_rosiysko_ukrainskoi_viyny_138442.html

³¹ Kirby P. Why did Russia invade Ukraine and has Putin’s war failed? *BBC News*. 2022. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>

recognition of the independence of the DPR and LPR within the administrative boundaries of the regions (including the territories currently controlled by Ukraine); “denazification” (prohibition of activities of ultra-nationalist, Nazi and neo-Nazi parties and public organizations, repeal of current laws on the heroization of Nazis and neo-Nazis); “demilitarization of Ukraine” (complete rejection of offensive weapons, under which any types of weapons can be used if desired). Within the month we can observe the transformation of Putin’s reasons for invasion into Ukraine from two to six requirements. It means that the invasion did not have a clear reason according to declared goals on 24 February 2022³².

Later when the military pulled back from around Kyiv and Chernihiv and regrouped in the north-east, the main goal was the “liberation of Donbas”. The withdrawal from near Kyiv and from Chernihiv in March was followed by a dramatic retreat in early September from the north-eastern Kharkiv region, abandoning the big road and rail hub of Kupyansk and the strategic town of Izyum. By late September, Ukrainian forces had also liberated another big hub, Lyman, four months after Russia had captured it. Russia’s retreat from the southern city of Kherson on 11 November 2022 was also down to destroyed supply lines and disrupted command systems. At the beginning of November 2022 Russia switched its strategy: from battlefield to destroying Ukraine’s civilian infrastructure. The fails on the battlefield V. Putin wanted to compensate by attacking the civilians to undermine the morale spirits of Ukrainian. Cities across Ukraine have been hit.

It is NATO’s collective defence promise and NATO’s expansion eastwards that worries President V. Putin most as a new reason to justify the invasion into Ukraine. Before the war in Ukraine, V. Putin demanded NATO turn the clock back to 1997 and remove its forces and military infrastructure from Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Baltics. In his eyes the West promised back in 1990 that NATO would expand “not an inch to the east” but did so anyway. At the same time the promise made to then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev only referred to East Germany in the context of a reunified Germany. M. Gorbachev later said that “the topic of NATO expansion was never discussed” at the time. Also, we witnessed Russian forces first invaded Georgia in 2008 despite it wasn’t the NATO member and then sent troops into Ukraine six years later. Therefore, such Putin’s argument is only rhetoric to justify its criminal policy towards Ukraine³³.

³² Фаріон І. Війна і мова. *Українська правда*. 2022. URL: <https://yblogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/farion/6235e596d4cc3/>

³³ Kirby P. Why did Russia invade Ukraine and has Putin’s war failed? *BBC News*. 2022. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S. Lavrov, during a press conference in Moscow on the results of the activities of Russian diplomacy in 2022, on January 18, 2023, in his speech, citing the words of the President of Croatia Z. Milanovich, told that “this is a NATO war against Russia”. Lavrov also told: “What is happening now in Ukraine is the result of many years of preparations by the United States and its satellites for the start of a global hybrid war against the Russian Federation. Our Western partners are cunning when they deny that they are not at war with Russia, but only help Ukraine cope with “aggression”, restore territorial integrity”. But when he was asked by Russian journalist that there is an opinion among many Europeans that Russia did not show its best side by deciding to take military action against Ukraine, Minister Lavrov could only answer: “That’s an interesting wording”. According to the researcher, there are no further comments, only it is possible to state another lie, not only from V. Putin as the President of Russia who often changed reasons for invasion into Ukraine, but also from the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation³⁴.

5. Destruction of the international security system

The security and world order systems function in compliance with generally accepted rules and regulations based on the system of human values and principles of behaviour applied to international relations. The most world experts in the sphere of security assert that collective security is based on such principles: first, all members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered; second, all countries forswear the use of force except in self-defence; third, all agree that peace is indivisible, an attack on one is an attack on all; fourth, all pledge to unite to halt aggression and restore the peace; fifth, all agree to supply whatever material or personnel resources that are necessary to form a collective security force associated with the United Nations or some IGO to defeat aggressors and restore the peace. These principles of collective security are found in Article 2, 48 and 49 of the Charter of the United Nations³⁵.

The idea behind the collective security system is that members of the organization advancing the collective security system (this time, the United Nations) are bound to spring to each other’s defense in case of attack. The basic principle is that an attack on one is an attack on all. Any state

³⁴ Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С. В. Лаврова в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2022 году, Москва, 18 января 2023 года. *Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации*. 2023. URL: https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1848395/

³⁵ Charter of the United Nations. *United Nations*. URL: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

contemplating aggression would face the sure prospect of struggle not simply with the prospective victim, but with all other members of the system, who would make any necessary sacrifice to save the state attacked³⁶.

The current destruction of international security crisis was provoked by the behaviour of one of the key elements of the international and European security – the Russian Federation – which, despite rules of a civilized country, after assuming the responsibility for keeping peace and stability in the European region and worldwide as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, openly violated international law and the general principles of world order. The Russian invasion into Ukraine strengthened existing negative views and set new destructive trends in the international security environment. First using the unbound hybrid aggression then opened invasion into Ukraine the Russian president conducts his own “war” with Western leaders in Ukraine, which often called in social media as a Putin’s war against Ukraine. By maintaining a hybrid war, Russia tried to overcome its own inferiority complex in relation to the United States. The defeat in the Cold War left a mark on the modus operandi of the Russian political elite which is trying to prove that Russia is able to compete with the United States on an equal footing. Therefore, it is no coincidence that we often hear in the rhetoric of the top political leadership of Russia that this is a war of the USA against Russia by “the hands of Ukrainians”³⁷.

The invasion of the largest state in the world with one of Europe’s largest countries will have far-reaching consequences not only for the continent. It creates trends in the development of a new world order that will allow for the simulation of both new challenges and the responses to them. Based on the status of the nuclear state, the Russian Federation seeks a global revenge. At the beginning of XXI centuries the model of the world order is being replaced with a model of the world in chaos. European stability and security are possible only by providing a termination of Putin’s war against Ukraine and overcoming the consequences of war. Any other option, for example, appeasement on the terms of freezing the conflict, actual recognition of the Russian occupation, leaves space for destabilizing the situation in the future in the European region³⁸.

³⁶ Joseph C. Ebegbulem The Failure of Collective Security in the Post World Wars I and II International System. *TRANSCIENCE a journal of global studies*. Vol. 2, Is. 2. 2011. URL: https://www2.hu-berlin.de/transcience/Vol2_Issue2_2011_23_29.pdf

³⁷ Печенюк А. Готувалися до війни «руками українців»: у РФ зробили недолугу заяву про виведення військ США з Афганістану. УНІАН інформаційне агентство. 2023. URL: <https://www.unian.ua/russianworld/gotualisya-do-viyni-rukami-ukrajinciv-u-rf-zrobili-nedolugu-zayavu-pro-vivedennya-viysk-ssha-z-afganistanu-12104556.html>

³⁸ Horbulin Volodymyr The World Hybrid War: Ukrainian Forefront. Kharkiv : Folio, 2017. P. 127.

CONCLUSIONS

The war unleashed by Russia is nothing unprovoked and unjust. Russian opened invasion into Ukraine wasn't by accident. This fact is a challenge not only for Ukraine but also for all international community as was violated the principles of international law of the United Nations and destroyed the architecture of European security, including legal instruments designed after World War II to prevent future major international conflicts.

Russia's unlawful policies require the strengthening and consolidation of international community efforts to strongly respond on the Putin's war against Ukraine and punish the aggressor. Thus, Ukrainian President V. Zelenskyi, Ukrainian diplomats daily communicate with their counterparts from different countries in the world, appeal to international organisation such as UN, EU, European Council, G-7, G-20 etc., conducting bilateral meetings to update for the international partners on the situation in the battlefield to create pro-Ukrainian coalition to overcome this challenge. Also was used the mechanisms provided for by the international treaties to hold Russia accountable for its flagrant violations of and disregard for international law on the territory of Ukraine. 50 countries of the world were involved in the International Contact Group for the Defense of Ukraine – "Ramstein" coalition.

At the end of 2022, V. Zelenskyi's ten-point peace formula appeared, which was developed by the President's team through joint efforts. V. Zelenskyi constantly emphasizes both to the domestic audience and to international partners that the aggressive Russian war must end justly on the basis of the UN Charter and international law, and not "in any case", and every country in the world must become a co-creator of peace. Obviously, Russia's words cannot be trusted, and there will be no "Minsk-3" to give it the opportunity to wait, build up its forces, and then start a new series of terror and global destabilization.

V. Zelenskyi's peace formula consists of ten points, in particular: radiation and nuclear safety; food safety; energy security; the release of all prisoners and deportees, the implementation of the UN Charter and the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the world order; withdrawal of Russian troops and cessation of hostilities; justice, including the recognition by the world of a special tribunal for the crime of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the creation of an international mechanism to compensate for all the damages caused by this war; ecocide, the need for immediate protection of nature; preventing escalation; recording the end of the war. According to the patterns of this formula and thanks to the heroism and bravery of the Ukrainian people, the war in Ukraine should be end, and the sixth president of Ukraine,

Volodymyr Zelenskyi, should go down in history of Ukraine as a person who ended Putin's war against Ukraine and defeated the aggressor!

Many countries from the African and Asian continents, which until now have maintained a neutral position on the Russian-Ukrainian war, should get rid of the myth that the Russian Federation, as the successor of the USSR, is supposedly a "fighter against world imperialism", a "stronghold of the national liberation struggle" of the peoples of these regions for their state independence. This is another lie and propaganda.

SUMMARY

Ukraine became not only the object of Russia's aggression but also object of invasion. Russia's unfriendly actions against Ukraine were not deployed overnight. Several years before the annexation of Crimea and the fomenting conflict in Donbas, Ukraine under previous president Viktor Yanukovich was under remote control by the Kremlin. Russia's hybrid aggression against Ukraine was an unprecedented challenge that was thrown at Ukraine and accompanied by hostile actions in the military, informational, diplomatic, and economic spheres. Ukraine, paying little attention to either its own development or the formation of its positive image in the world while living with the illusions of a Ukrainian-centric environment of the world, is now paying the expensive price for the mistakes made – human's lives. However, the ability to survive in the face of a well-planned invasion surprised many people in the world. Ukrainians increase the resistance every day in order to resist Russia's constantly changing tactics on all possible fronts – from the emotional to the military. Russia's current unprovoked war against Ukraine is the confrontation between the two centres of gravity in the post-Soviet space. Ukraine as a nation will be able to hold out and win and is capable of not only convincing the citizens of their abilities in maintaining internal political stability, but also to enlist the support and help of the international community. Separately, it is worth noting that Putin's war against Ukraine goes beyond a bilateral conflict and has signs of a general crisis of the world security system, which will lead to global changes of planetary significance in the near future.

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