

FOREWORD

Is the **comprehensive**, reasonably stable, and predictable development of a free society possible under conditions of external danger, especially during a full-scale act of aggression by one state against another? Clearly, it is not. This geopolitical dilemma constitutes the central research focus of the monograph titled “Tartu – Tartus as a Civilizational Frontier” authored by a collective of Ukrainian researchers.

The central theme of this book is Ukraine’s fundamentally new geostrategic positioning during and after the Russian-Ukrainian war within the region of Central and Eastern Europe and, more broadly, across Europe as a whole. The authors thoroughly analyze issues of Ukraine’s regional identity, the support strategy of partners within the Weimar Triangle, current dimensions of security policy, as well as the political positions of the Czech Republic, Romania, the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Republic of Serbia in the context of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. Furthermore, the researchers systematically examine the information-psychological and cultural dimensions of wartime confrontation. It should also be emphasized that the analytical and forecasting components of this research were primarily developed by political scientists at Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, with significant collaborative contributions from researchers based in Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk.

Methodologically, the study is grounded in the conceptual framework of a pulsating civilizational frontier structured along the Tartu – Tartus geostrategic axis. This axis conceptualizes the systemic clash between two divergent models of socio-political development that dictate European security: a democratic, open, and European-oriented model, versus an authoritarian, neo-imperial, force-based paradigm. Europe has an obvious weakness: it fears and expects the worst. Yet Europeans are unlikely to find lasting comfort on the edge of the Eurasian abyss while relying on Ukraine merely as an “iron porcupine.”

By resisting Putin’s aggression and firmly choosing the European path, Ukraine is today capable – without exaggeration – of breathing a spirit of dynamism and renewed values into the somewhat unbalanced, weakened, and at times illusory aspirations of the European Union. However, this will become a political reality only if our society preserves – and in some areas regains – the momentum of its difficult journey toward Democracy. The advance of Freedom cannot and must not be halted at the level of “wartime democracy” because of supposedly “objective” circumstances or the subjective will of political actors. Let us remain vigilant, remembering Friedrich von Hayek’s maxim: “Freedom, whatever its form, is lost gradually.”

Together to Victory!

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