

Irish Foreign Affairs

Volume 15, Number 4

December 2022

“Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy”
—C.J. O’Donnell, *The Lordship of the World*, 1924, p.145

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Introduction to the Special Issue

Pat Walsh

This special edition of Irish Foreign Affairs is largely made up of speeches revealing the Russian perspective of events in Ukraine. This is entirely absent in the Western mainstream media which has been careful to present a narrative facilitating unquestioning support of the government in Kiev among the European masses. In some quarters this would be labelled ‘information terrorism.’ The main purpose of the totalitarian narrative that saturates Western consciousness is to elicit total support for a sanctions regime and the waging of a war against the Russian people of the Donbas and Ukraine in order to overthrow the functional administration that presently exists in Russia. To question this dubious and dangerous project of Washington ideologues is to be pro-Putin and to be a Russian stooge. Dissent is unacceptable.

When a great moral campaign of demonisation was launched in August 1914 against Germany to muster up support from liberal, and previously anti-war people, in Britain, the German view was still made available to the public. It was sometimes published under misleading titles to distort the meaning in English translations, but it was published all the same. Today Russian news agencies are suppressed by various means and there is almost a complete absence of criticism in the UK and Ireland of Western activities in Ukraine. There is a pretence that the whole world is in favour of the West’s actions in Ukraine, when, in fact, the vast majority of the world’s population is either opposed or not supportive. Moral outrage over Ukraine, is, in fact, confined to the White, privileged, former Imperialist and Colonialist sections of humanity which now dress their geopolitics in the colours of the rainbow. Like the disgraced anti-war liberals of 1914, who collapsed under pressure of war, they need to feel good about themselves in waging it, to make the sacrifices needed in their standards of living for the cause. As long as the Ukrainians do the fighting and dying, that is.

There are large numbers of people in the West who believe the war in Ukraine began with the Russian military intervention in February 2022. That is the seminal event in their understanding. Nothing before that matters. And that understanding is what is encouraged in the narrative to prevent any deeper thought that might be inconvenient to support for Kiev’s enthusiasm on the battlefield.

The all-prevailing narrative is produced by a network of the UK State’s military, intelligence and diplomatic bureaucracy that has suddenly appeared on the scene, having lay beneath the public consciousness for years.

Tom Stevenson, in reviewing a recent book written by one of the Ukraine analysts for the BBC, Lawrence Freedman, for the London Review of Books, 6 October 2022, described the people and networks who lie behind the construction of this narrative that the BBC presents to the public:

“Many countries find a special place for civilians who share the interests of the state’s military, intelligence and diplomatic bureaucracy but operate outside its hierarchy. In Britain they are spread among a network of security think tanks and academic departments that include the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) and the Department of War Studies at King’s College London. From fine old buildings in Whitehall, Temple, St James’s Square and the Strand, they shape much of the foreign and defence policy analysis produced in Britain. Each institution has its own flavour (the Chatham House sensibility is more mandarin than military), but they have a great deal in common. All have close connections with the intelligence services – after John Sawers retired as head of MI6 in 2014, he took up posts at King’s and RUSI – and an equally close relationship with the national security establishment of the United States.

Among the British defence intelligentsia, Atlanticism is a foundational assumption. A former director of policy planning at the US State Department and a former director at the US National Security Council are on the staff of the IISS. Until he stepped down in July, Chatham House was led by Robin Niblett, who spent time at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. RUSI’s director-general, Karin von Hippel, was once chief of staff to the four-star American general John Allen. In 2021, RUSI’s second largest donor was the US State Department. (The largest was the EU Commission; BAE Systems, the British army, the Foreign Office and some other friendly governments account for most of the remaining funding.) IISS’s main funders – aside from the EU Commission, the State Department and, notably, Bahrain – are mostly arms companies. Chatham House gets more money from the British government and oil companies than from arms sellers, but its list of backers is similar. Despite these US links, however, and despite the fervency of their commitment to American national security priorities, British security think tanks have next to no influence across the Atlantic. Staff from UK think tanks sometimes take temporary jobs in more prestigious offices in Washington, but they very rarely become insiders.”

So it is British Intelligence and its offshoots, acting for British and US State interests, that owns and forms the narrative about Ukraine that is presented to the British and Irish public and makes up its thoughts. What we hear about Ukraine is therefore neither objective, realistic or really informative. News management and control, along with misinformation and disinformation, also involves a process of deliberate omission and the suppression of information.

That is why the current edition of Irish Foreign Affairs publishes the Russian view of the events of Ukraine. Some day this will be needed, in order to explain events, which, if history is a guide, we can predict will be inexplicable within the current narrative.

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks
at a meeting of the UN Security Council on
Ukraine, New York, September 22, 2022**

Esteemed Ms Chairperson,
Your Excellences,
Colleagues,

As I understand it, today’s meeting was motivated by a striving to discuss the issue of “impunity” in Ukraine. I consider this to be timely. This term fully reflects what has been taking place in that country since 2014. At that time, nationalist radical forces, overt Russophobes and neo-Nazis came to power there because of an armed coup, with direct support from the Western countries. Immediately after this, they embarked on a path of lawlessness and complete neglect for basic human rights and freedoms – the right to life, freedom of speech, access to information, freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and the use of a native tongue.

The crimes committed in Maidan Square in February 2014 have gone unpunished to this day. Those guilty of the monstrous tragedy in Odessa on May 2, 2014 have not been found and punished. During this tragedy, about 50 people were burned alive and killed in the local House of Trade Unions. The political assassinations of Oles Buzina, Pavel Sheremet and other public figures and journalists are in the same category. Despite this, attempts are being made to impose on us a completely different narrative about Russian aggression as the prime cause for these problems.

In the process, people ignore the fact that for over eight years the Ukrainian army and militants from nationalist groups have been killing Donbass residents with impunity only because they refused to recognise the outcome of the criminal, bloody, anti-constitutional coup in Kiev and decided to uphold their rights as guaranteed by Ukraine’s constitution, including the right to freely use their native Russian tongue.

Then Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseny Yatsenyuk said in 2015 that sub-humans lived in Donbass. Current President Vladimir Zelensky has not moved too far from this. When

asked what he thought about the residents of Donbass in his interview in September 2021, he replied that some were people and others were creatures or animal species. This is a salient feature of the Ukrainian regime, both under Petr Poroshenko and Vladimir Zelensky.

They called all those who objected to the results of the coup terrorists. For eight years, the Kiev regime conducted a “military operation” against peaceful civilians in Donbass. For a long time now, Ukraine has been carrying out the total mobilisation of adults, including women, to recruit them into nationalist battalions and the Ukrainian armed forces.

Hypocritically declaring their commitment to the Minsk agreements, the Kiev authorities openly subverted the implementation of the agreements, and did so with impunity. A financial, transport and energy blockade was imposed on Donbass. Its residents were cut off from their social benefits, pensions, salaries, banking services, communications, education and healthcare. They were deprived of elementary civil rights that were guaranteed, in particular, by the 1966 international covenants on economic, social and cultural rights, as well as on civil and political rights.

At some point, when he got tired of pretending, Zelensky said that the only thing the Minsk Package of Measures was needed for was to keep the sanctions on Russia in place. His predecessor in office and co-author of the Minsk agreements, Poroshenko, was even more outspoken. A couple of months ago, he publicly and proudly stated that neither he nor anyone in Ukraine planned on fulfilling the agreements he had signed. They were needed only to buy time to receive weapons from the Western countries for war with the Russian Federation. Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council Secretary Aleksey Danilov spoke along the same lines.

The Kiev regime owes its impunity to its Western curators, primarily Germany and France, and of course, the United States. Instead of pressing Kiev into complying with the Minsk agreements, Berlin and Paris cynically turned a blind eye to Kiev’s open threats to resolve the “Donbass problem” forcefully, the so-called plan B.

In recent years, the Kiev regime has waged an all-out onslaught on the Russian language and infringed on the rights of the Russian and Russian-speaking people of Ukraine with impunity. Controversial language laws – On Education (2017), On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language (2019), On Complete General Secondary Education (2020), and On the Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine (2021) were adopted. All of them were aimed at severely limiting the Russian language and, in fact, completely banning it.

At the same time, laws were passed that encouraged Nazi theory and practice. Kiev completely ignored the half-hearted recommendations issued by the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission, the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities to improve the language related legislation. In turn, these multilateral entities were unable to muster the courage (or maybe they were simply not allowed to do so) to induce the Ukrainian authorities to fulfil their international obligations in human rights.

The Ministry of Education of Ukraine removed the Russian language and Russian literature from the school curriculum. Books in Russian are being banned and destroyed like in Nazi Germany, and monuments to Russian writers are being torn down.

With Ukrainian state support, the ideology of ethnic intolerance towards ethnic Russians is being imposed. The

Irish Foreign Affairs is a publication of
the *Irish Political Review* Group.
55 St Peter’s Tce., Howth, Dublin 13

Editor: Philip O’Connor
ISSN 2009-132X

Printers: Athol Books, Belfast
www.atholbooks.org
Price per issue: €4 (Sterling £3)
Annual postal subscription €16 (£14)
Annual electronic subscription €4 (£3)

All correspondence:
Philip@atholbooks.org
Orders to:
atholbooks-sales.org

country's officials are no longer ashamed of their Nazi-like nature, and openly and with impunity call for killing Russians.

I will cite a few examples. Ukraine's ambassador to Kazakhstan Petr Vrublevsky, now in Kiev, had the following to say in an August 22 interview: "We are trying to kill as many of them (Russians) as possible. The more Russians we kill now, the fewer Russians our children will have to kill. That's all." Has anyone noticed this?

Earlier, last spring, the mayor of the city of Dnepr Boris Filatov spoke along the same lines: "Now is the time for cold fury. We now have the full moral right to calmly and with a completely clear mind kill these non-humans around the world, for the foreseeable future and in the largest possible quantities."

On September 13, National Security and Defence Council Secretary Aleksey Danilov had the following to say: "People in the communities taken back by the Armed Forces of Ukraine will be Ukrainianised without asking for their opinion. This will apply not only to Russians, but people of other ethnic backgrounds as well. If you want to study additionally in another language, Romanian, Polish, or Hebrew, please do so, but not at the expense of our state. You can pursue your education [in these languages] at your own expense."

Should I even mention that all these Russophobic tricks went absolutely unpunished? It's not just about Russophobia. He spoke about people of other ethnicities living in Ukraine as well.

Zelensky's interview on August 5, 2021 was a high point in this regard. In it, he told everyone who feels Russian to leave for Russia for the good of their children and grandchildren.

I think that the decisions made by the people in a number of Ukrainian regions to hold referendums are a response to his wishes.

Ukraine is intensifying the persecution of dissidents under the pretext of countering "the Russian aggression" and "separatism." A ban on the activities of 11 political parties was imposed last March under the pretext that they were "tied to Russia." The leading opposition television channels that broadcasted in Russian were shut down long ago. Websites that the government finds objectionable are being blocked. Journalists are harassed for attempts to express an alternative view on what is happening. Prominent Ukrainian public figure Yelena Berezhnaya is in a Ukrainian Security Service dungeon. She repeatedly spoke at the UN and the OSCE about the growth of neo-Nazism in Ukraine.

We have no doubt that Ukraine has finally turned into a Nazi-style totalitarian state where standards of international humanitarian law are trampled underfoot with impunity. It is no surprise that the Ukrainian armed forces and nationalist battalions resort to terrorist tactics and use civilians as "living shields."

The position of the states that are pumping Ukraine with weapons and combat equipment and training its armed forces is particularly cynical against this backdrop. The goal is obvious (they declare it rather than hide it) – to drag out the hostilities as much as possible despite the human losses and destruction in order to exhaust and weaken Russia. This implies the direct involvement of Western countries in the Ukrainian conflict, which is turning them into its party. The deliberate fuelling of this conflict by the collective West also goes without consequence. Indeed, they won't punish themselves, will they?

We have no illusions that today the armed forces of Russia and the defenders of the DPR and the LPR are opposed not only by the neo-Nazi units of the Kiev regime but also by the war machine of the "collective West". NATO is supplying the Ukrainian armed forces with real-time intelligence information using modern systems, aircraft, ships, satellites and strategic drones. Ukraine is incited to defeat Russia on the battlefield (as EU officials openly say) and Russia must be deprived of any sovereignty by way of punishment. This is no longer latent racism. It is as overt as it can be.

Vladimir Zelensky is rejoicing at the efficiency of Western arms against the background of massive shelling of residential areas in Donbass. This is a quote: "Finally, we feel that Western artillery has become very powerful – these are weapons we received from our Western partners. This accuracy is exactly what we need," said the cynical leader of this state entity. Meanwhile, no military or strategic targets were hit during this shelling of residential areas. The suffering is befalling civilians in Donbass.

Since late July, the Ukrainian armed forces have scattered prohibited anti-personnel Petal mines over the centre of Donetsk and its suburbs. The use of these mines is a crude violation of the 1997 convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, which Ukraine ratified in 2005, as well as the second protocol to the Geneva Convention on conventional arms (that bans mines without a self-destruct device).

Such outrages have become possible and remain unpunished because the United States and its allies have consistently covered up the crimes of the Kiev regime for eight years with the connivance of international human rights institutions. They have built their policy on Zelensky based on the notorious American principle: "Sure, he is a son of a bitch, but he is our son of a bitch."

The uncomfortable truth, smearing Ukraine's luminous image as a victim of Russian aggression, is being meticulously hushed up and sometimes openly deleted. Even the Western human rights organisation Amnesty International that can hardly be suspected of sympathising with Russia, was subjected to severe criticism and blacklisted as a Kremlin agent. It was punished just for confirming in its report the commonly known facts about Kiev deploying artillery and heavy weapons at civilian facilities.

The criminal shelling of the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant by the Kiev regime militants, which creates the risk of a nuclear disaster, remains unpunished. The shelling continues despite the fact that the IAEA staff has been present at the station since September 1, and it is not hard to identify the party responsible for the shelling.

Let me remind you that the IAEA mission's visit to the Zaporozhye NPP was artificially delayed. The details of the visit were agreed upon on June 3, and the mission could have safely gone there. Later, an unseemly situation arose where the UN Secretariat's Department of Safety and Security refused to greenlight a particular route that had been agreed upon by Russia and the IAEA. Then it claimed that the IAEA would determine the mission's parameters on its own. These unseemly proceedings pushed the IAEA mission's visit to the Zaporozhye NPP back by three months.

The fate of the Russian troops who ended up in the hands of Ukrainian nationalists is something that is of great concern to us. There is ample evidence of abusive treatment, including out-of-court killings in violation of international humanitarian law. I'm sure that everyone who is interested in what is actually happening in Ukraine has seen videos of the Russian prisoners of war being killed by Ukrainian

Nazis. They threw the POWs to the ground with their hands tied behind their backs and shot them in the head. Have any of the countries represented here commented on this crime?

We have a great amount of evidence of these and other crimes regularly committed by the Kiev regime since 2014. In cooperation with their colleagues from the DPR and the LPR, Russian law enforcement agencies record and investigate these crimes. Over 220 individuals have been identified, including representatives of the high command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and military unit commanders, those who were involved in shooting civilians. Criminal cases are being investigated involving citizens of Great Britain, Canada, the United States, and the Netherlands regarding the facts of mercenary activities and the perpetration of criminal acts in Ukraine. Rest assured that all those responsible, regardless of their nationality, will be held accountable.

Once again, I would like you to take note of the following: Russian and Ukrainian negotiators almost agreed on the settlement terms proposed by Kiev in Istanbul in late March, but tragic events unfolded in Bucha a couple of days later. No one has any doubts that it was a staged performance. Right after this staged act became publicly known, our Western colleagues went hysterical and imposed another package of sanctions on the Russian Federation accusing us of killing civilians. No one has ever mentioned Bucha since the time this propagandistic effect was achieved. No one, but us. Once again, in the presence of the Secretary-General and esteemed ministers, I'm asking you to please get the Ukrainian authorities to take the elementary step of releasing the names of the people whose corpses were shown in Bucha. I've been asking for this for several months now. No one seems to hear me or is willing to respond.

Mr Secretary-General,

Please, use your authority to get this done. I think everyone will benefit from clearing up this episode.

The increased activity of international justice in relation to Ukraine has come to our attention. Obscure "efforts" to investigate crimes in Ukraine that are ascribed to the Russian military are being touted, which is undoubtedly a put-up job, which we clearly see.

No intelligible responses have been issued from the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the wake of the 2014 bloody coup in Kiev, the Odessa tragedy of May 2, 2014, the shelling of peaceful cities in Donbass, the bombing of Lugansk by warplanes on June 2, 2014, or multiple other incidents. Over 3,000 reports of crimes against residents of Donbass have been sent to the ICC. There was no response. Clearly, the senior officials from this "judicial body" have received a command from on high to step up their activities. This body has lost its credibility with us. For eight long years we have been hoping in vain for someone to start fighting the impunity in Ukraine. We are no longer counting on seeing justice from this or a number of other international agencies. We are finished waiting.

Everything I said goes to show once again that the decision to conduct a special military operation was unavoidable. We have said this more than once. We have presented volumes of factual evidence proving that Ukraine was preparing to play the role of the "anti-Russia" and was being used as a springboard for creating and implementing threats against Russia's security. I am here to assure you that we will not let this happen.

Advertisement

The Great Fraud Of 1914-18

By Pat Walsh Athol Books 2014

The Great War of 1914 was Britain's Great War. But it should also be called Britain's Great Fraud on Ireland and the world. When Britain encouraged and then entered the European war that was taking shape in August 1914 it made it into a Great War. It was Great Britain that put the Great in the Great War. That is to say that without Great Britain's participation in it there would have been no Great War. In entering the European war Britain stated its aims in grand universal terms that were idealistic in the extreme. These aims were not only idealistic and unachievable but they were fraudulent.

The objective of the Great Fraud was to show to the world that Britain was fighting a good war against an evil that had to be vanquished. The war was proclaimed as being for "civilisation against the Barbarian", for "democracy" against "Prussianism". And it was also supposedly a "war for small nations" for "poor little Belgium" or for "gallant Serbia" and for a host of other long forgotten things.

But what it came down to was a pulverising of Germany and the taking of its trade and markets in what was a traditional Balance of Power war catastrophically invested with a great moral mission. The Fraud that was perpetrated on Ireland and the world, concerning the character of the war Britain proclaimed itself to be fighting, was produced in order to convince any doubters, at home and abroad, about the rightfulness of it.

These reasons were also later useful in enlisting the cannon fodder necessary to see the job through. And when Britain's Great War did not prove great enough to achieve its objectives and the United States had to be procured as an ally to complete the job the Great Fraud was both perpetuated and enhanced. A massive propaganda effort was launched that not only coloured the settlement of the war to the detriment of Europe and beyond but also created the myths that mystify understanding of it to this day.

And so vast armies were recruited for the waging of the war and millions of people were killed in it, including tens of thousands of Irishmen who enlisted in the British Army to fight, inspired by the professed ideals of establishing 'Democracy' and the 'Rights of Small Nations' universally, and especially in Ireland.

Britain's Great War and the Home Rulers decision to take part in it had momentous consequences for Ireland. Out of it came the fall of the Home Rule Party and of 'Imperial Ireland' as a result of Britain failing to win the quick victory that was expected. As well, in revulsion against the murderous British swindle, there came the rise of the Irish democracy and the Irish Republic.

The book is available at <http://www.atholbooks.org>

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's news conference following the High-Level Week of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, September 24, 2022

Sergey Lavrov: There will be no opening remarks. I have just made a statement at the UN General Assembly, in which I set forth our position.

I would like to comment without any delay on some statements that were made in Washington, London, Brussels, and other Western capitals regarding the referendums that are being held these days in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and in the liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions of Ukraine.

The hysterics we are witnessing are highly indicative. A direct expression of will by the people has long ceased to be a way of establishing control over this or that territory the West can accept or support. I would like to remind you about Vladimir Zelensky's interview in August 2021, during which he stated that these were not people who were living in eastern Ukraine, but rather "creatures", and that those of its residents who regarded themselves as Russians, wanted to speak Russian and wanted their children and grandchildren to have a future, should ship out to Russia. It was Vladimir Zelensky who started the process that made life of ethnic Russians in Ukraine intolerable and has ultimately led to referendums on the accession of these territories to the Russian Federation. As President Vladimir Putin said, we will certainly respect the results of these democratic processes.

Question: When the referendums are completed, will Moscow consider the areas that are controlled by Ukraine as occupied territories?

Sergey Lavrov: The referendums are being held by decision of local governments. The terms of these referendums have been made public. Based on their outcome, Russia will respect the will expressed by the people who have suffered for years from the neo-Nazi regime's atrocities.

Question: Would you clarify your government's position on the use of nuclear weapons, since President Putin's comments on the use of "everything at our disposal" has led to a lot of interpretation. And would that defence be applicable to the new territories that may be incorporated into Russia after the referendums?

Sergey Lavrov: As you know, it has become fashionable to use methods that have come to be known as cancel culture. Our Western colleagues are actively using them not only against any country, politicians, or public figures, but also against historical facts and events. For example, in 2014 our Western colleagues told us that they would never accept the "annexation" of Crimea and asked us why we did that. We replied, "Let's recall how it all began." With a government coup and very many people killed. The putschists showed complete disregard for the guarantees provided by Germany, France, and Poland, seized government buildings, and hounded the President. They physically chased after him trying to catch him. The first statements made by the putschists were: cancel the regional status of the Russian language and get Russians in Crimea packing. Armed groups of people were headed to the peninsula to storm its Supreme Council. Only after that did the people in Crimea respond by holding a referendum, while the eastern regions of Ukraine reacted by refusing to recognise the results of the government coup. But our Western colleagues' analysis begins with those events in Crimea. There was no other option for us by that

time but to support the sincere expression of the will of the Crimeans, 95 percent of whom voted unequivocally for returning to Russia where they had lived for centuries.

We also see this cancel culture in the current narrative regarding nuclear weapons. Nobody remembers any more that in February 2022, before the start of the special military operation, Vladimir Zelensky said in one of his statements (he made and continues to make many statements) that Ukraine's renunciation of nuclear weapons following the split of the Soviet Union was a big mistake. He said this in connection with a settlement of the problem in Ukraine. After the special military operation began, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said publicly that Russia must remember that France has nuclear weapons too. That statement was not provoked in any way. We never as much as mentioned this subject. It was Vladimir Zelensky who started speaking about it. All of you remember what Liz Truss said when asked if she would be ready to push the nuclear button.

As for Russia, President Vladimir Putin and other Kremlin officials have said on numerous occasions that we have a doctrine on the Basic Principles of the State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence. It is a public document and clearly sets out everything in this connection. I suggest that you take another look at circumstances under which we would use nuclear weapons, which are absolutely clearly outlined.

Question: In your remarks at a meeting of the UN Security Council you, for the first time, openly said that the Western countries are parties to the conflict in Ukraine. Does this mean that we now regard them as potential enemies? Will this change the structure of relations with these countries? Josep Borrell has said that, so far, the EU is not considering sending troops there.

My second question has to do with the doctrine you mentioned. According to it, if the accession referendums are successful, Russia will have grounds to use nuclear weapons in case of attacks at its territory. The United States has warned of an unavoidable – but so far unspecified – strike in this event. Does Moscow regard such threats seriously? Is the conflict in Ukraine moving towards a third world war, as President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic fears?

Sergey Lavrov: I would not like to make gloomy forecasts now. The entire state territory of Russia that has already been or can additionally be formalised in the constitution of our country will certainly benefit from full protection. How can it be otherwise? All the laws, doctrines, concepts, and strategies of the Russian Federation are applicable throughout its territory.

I haven't heard that the United States is threatening to carry out a strike of any kind. I know that US President Joe Biden has said that Russia can expect new "sanctions from hell" or from any other place if the referendums are held and their results are accepted. If they really threatened an inevitable strike against Russia, I would like to see the text. I didn't know that the United States and Ukraine have become allies linked by this dangerous "chain."

As for the legal aspects of Western involvement in this war, anyone who at least sometimes reads the news knows what is

happening. Weapons are being openly pumped into Ukraine. Zelensky demands more weapons every day from either Germany or Israel. He has also criticised Israel for sending fewer weapons than Ukraine has asked for or arguing that it is short on weapons it needs by itself. Kiev is being supplied with satellite intelligence. The West is using approximately 70 military satellites and 200 private satellites to support the Ukrainian armed forces and nationalist battalions. A Ukrainian commander has said recently when commenting on the use of US-made weapons on the battlefield that the Americans have the right of veto regarding targets. What is this if not direct involvement when they target us with lethal weapons and participate in the war?

Getting back to the legal aspect, the United States, NATO, and the EU say that they are not parties to the conflict, which brings us to a certain convention. There are the 1907 Hague Conventions – Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and Convention Relating to the Legal Status of Enemy Merchant Ships at the Outbreak of Hostilities. They have not been terminated and are still effective. They have to do with neutral powers' obligations during wars on sea and land. These conventions read that the term "neutral states" applies not only to the states that have declared their neutrality for all times, like Switzerland, but any states that are not party to an armed conflict. I would like to remind everyone that the United States and Europe have not declared themselves parties to the developments in Ukraine. In this case, they should act in accordance with Article 6 of the sea convention, which says that the supply by a neutral power to a belligerent power of warships, ammunition, or war material of any kind whatever is forbidden. In other words, the United States, the EU, and NATO, which are sending weapons to Kiev, cannot be regarded as neutral powers that are not involved in the conflict. In addition, one of the conventions says that recruiting agencies cannot be opened on the territory of a neutral power to assist the belligerents. As you know, Ukrainian embassies and consulates general in European and other countries openly posted invitations on their websites to join in the "holy war" against Russia, which can be defined as recruiting mercenaries. Western countries that allowed these activities in their territories violated the convention on neutral states and thereby showed that they are not passive onlookers but rather are directly involved in the conflict. One of the articles forbids the use of communications for military purposes. As I have mentioned, 200 private satellites, including Starlink, of course, are being directly used by the authorities in this war. Starlink has satellites and ground infrastructure. The use of this resource in the war also means that the United States is not a neutral power but a party to this conflict.

Question: Could you please explain why so many Russians are leaving the country?

Sergey Lavrov: Didn't Germany ratify the EU Convention on Human Rights, which has a clause on the freedom of movement?

Question: The joint communique that was issued this week after your BRICS ministerial on Thursday says the following: "The ministers reiterated their commitment to multilateralism, to upholding international law, including the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter as its indispensable cornerstone, and to the central role of the UN in an international system in which sovereign states cooperate to maintain peace and security and advance sustainable development." Why have you signed on to a communique that so obviously contradicts the Russian Federation's actions on the ground as it relates to Ukraine.

And you also just said in the UN General Assembly that you support Brazil's and India's permanent status in the UN Security Council. Why did you not mention South Africa?

Sergey Lavrov: Can you say what exactly from the communique, from the language you believe contradicts our behaviour?

Question: I'll quote the Secretary-General. He says: "Any annexation of a state's territory by another state resulting from the threat or use of force..."

Sergey Lavrov: You are quoting the Secretary-General. I can only be responsible for what I subscribed to.

Question: You have said that you have signed up to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. The Secretary-General says you are not.

Sergey Lavrov: The Secretary-General says many things in this regard, and he is commenting the situation around Ukraine on an almost daily basis, while I don't remember that he was active enough to promote the Minsk agreements' implementation.

I will explain: the principles of the UN Charter provide for respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. At the same time, they provide for respecting the right of people to self-determination. And the apparent conflict between these two concepts has been subject to many negotiations quite a long time. Soon after the UN was established, a process was started to develop the understanding of all the principles of the Charter. And lastly, the General Assembly's Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the UN Charter was adopted by consensus. It included sections on equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and on territorial integrity. The General Assembly came to the following conclusion regarding the interpretation of the UN Charter. Every state must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any state whose government respects the principle of self-determination of peoples and represents all ethnicities living in its territory. I will laugh if anyone here tells me that after the 2014 coup in Ukraine, after the bans on the Russian language, Russian education, and Russian media, after the putschists bombed the territories where people refused to recognise the results of the coup, if anyone tells me that the Kiev junta, the neo-Nazi regime that adopted laws to legalise the Nazi theory and practices in Ukraine, represents the interests of people in eastern Ukraine. It is obvious to any unbiased observer that this regime does not represent people who regard themselves as native Russian speakers and share Russian culture. I have already quoted Zelensky. He said, anyone who wants to be Russia can head off to Russia. Does this mean he represents the interests of these people?

The Secretary-General has a right to make statements. This is his statement. I signed on to the document that was adopted at the BRICS ministerial. Indeed, it has a paragraph saying that the ministers took note of national positions concerning the situation in Ukraine as expressed at the appropriate forums, namely the UNSC and UNGA. This is what being honest means. We are not speaking in unison; there are different views and nuances. But we respect what each of the five countries says on the international stage.

This is yet another element of cancel culture. You have not cited what I said in full. And I said that we consider India and Brazil as strong international players and to be strong candidates for permanent seats at the UN Security Council, provided Africa's profile is upgraded accordingly. I mentioned India and Brazil for one reason only: they have

long nominated themselves. South Africa has not done this. African countries, the member states of African Union are committed to the Ezulwini Consensus, which was adopted many years ago as their collective stand. It is impossible to settle the issue of the UNSC's enlargement without taking Africa's interests into account. I pointed out that the issue concerns exclusively the enlargement of the UNSC through the addition of Asian, African, and Latin American representatives. It would be ridiculous to speak about adding more Western countries for several reasons. Aside from the fact that all of them are hostile towards Russia and China, can any Western country, if made a permanent UNSC member, add anything new to its work? No. They are all acting on the instructions of the US, including Germany and Japan, which have officially announced their aspiration to become permanent members. Just take a look at what they say and do.

Even leaving political positions aside, it is a fact that six of the 15 members of the UN Security Council represent the West. There will be seven of them next year when Japan takes its seat. As you know, its policy is no different from the positions of the United States and NATO.

Question: Allow me to draw some parallels. On the one hand, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, in fact, has openly threatened Italy with consequences if the election outcomes there are unfavourable for Brussels. On the other hand, the referendums in Donbass. When they were announced, practically all overseas and European politicians called these referendums illegitimate and began to compete with each other on describing them in unfavourable terms. This is the attitude to the expression of will of the people. What kind of approach is this? What reaction should follow?

Sergey Lavrov: This is arrogance, the feeling of all-permissiveness, of one's superiority, and exceptionalism. As if only they are entitled to make judgements. What Ursula von der Leyen said about the Italian elections was marvellous. I cannot recall if any EU leader sunk so low as to make threats of this kind. The EU, in principle, becomes an authoritarian, rigid, dictatorial institution.

Every year we hold many bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the General Assembly. And this year, like in the previous years, we were set to have a meeting with President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades. We included the meeting in our schedule at his request and at a time that was convenient for him. The schedules of Russia and Cyprus were published. One hour prior to the meeting, the protocol of Mr Anastasiades reported to our protocol that the European Union will not allow him to go to a meeting with me. I believe this is not a secret anymore. After all, the office of Mr Anastasiades announced in Nicosia on the same day that the meeting had been cancelled due to a necessity to adhere to some EU regulations.

Another three (two countries from the European Union and one NATO member country) wanted to hold meetings with me. They asked to hold these meetings in private, without publicising the very fact that they were taking place. I agreed. We never reject any contacts. We will always be ready to accept any format that would be comfortable for our partners. After receiving our reaction, they fell off the radar. We never heard anything from them afterwards.

President of France Emmanuel Macron said in his remarks that *"this is not the time for war; it is not the time for revenge against the West or for the West to oppose the East."* We have never placed the West in opposition to the East. All of a sudden, the West declared that it does not want

to cooperate with us. *"It is a collective time for our sovereign equal states to work together to solve the challenges we face,"* Macron said further. These are excellent words. But there is an illustration to this statement. Permanent members of the UN Security Council in New York and, accordingly, in their respective capitals, established a rotation schedule for coordinating functions. From January 1, one country executes the coordinating function for three months, then this role goes to another country for three months. Now, in September, Russia is the coordinator among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Each time when the UN General Assembly takes place, the coordinating country holds a meeting of ministers of five permanent members with the Secretary General. We, as polite people, have also come forward with the corresponding proposal. We received consent from the Chinese side. The Anglo-Saxons told us that they were not going to talk with us. You can judge for yourself.

Does the West have an interest? You cannot offer mediating services (some parties propose such ideas), while refusing to have any contacts. This is so disgraceful from the standpoint of elementary human decency. We never avoid any contacts. Everything has collapsed and continues to be ruined by, in particular, Washington, London (more actively), and Brussels.

Question: And on the subject of the referendums?

Sergey Lavrov: You have practically said everything. A double standard. We can long recall how the West formalised exceptions out of international principles for Kosovo. Then the International Court said that this is not an exception at all. After Kosovo it was proclaimed that any part of any country is entitled to define its future without the consent of central authorities. *"My way or the highway"*. I will be making specific actions when they are beneficial for me, where they are not – I will act differently.

Question: You just mentioned the participation of Western countries in this conflict. We know that the biggest arms dealer here is actually the United States, which passed several packages to send weapons to Ukraine. Even the foreign policy of the US says that US politicians are now trying to play the "long game." What do you think is the intention of the United States, and is Russia ready for a long game with the United States in Ukraine?

Sergey Lavrov: The Ukrainian "game" has been going on for a long time. Let me remind you that back in 2003, when preparations were underway for the forthcoming elections in Ukraine, Western politicians, officials, foreign ministers, in particular Belgian minister Louis Michel, stated bluntly that Ukrainians should decide whom they side with – Russia or Europe – in the election. This "either-or" mentality, the philosophy has not vanished. Now Russophobic trends are ramping up all over Europe. Europeans and Americans are trying to pull the whole world into their disgraceful policies. Look at the West's actions. In a moment, as if at the snap of their fingers, they started banning everything Russian and encouraging domestic Russophobia. All of this shows that this is racism, which, as it turns out, has not disappeared. It is no longer latent, but blatant. It's being imposed. It all started with slogans urging Ukrainians to choose a side. A few years later there was another election. The winner was not the candidate the West wanted. And everything was done to raise a hue and cry in Ukraine and force submissive Ukrainian officials to take the issue to the Constitutional Court, which is supposed to protect the constitution. The court ordered a third round of elections, which is not enshrined in the

constitution. They subsequently elected the candidate the US wanted.

In December 2013, a leaked telephone conversation was published between US Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland and US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt, who reported to her which politicians should be groomed for the new government although the elections were still more than a year away. So, they admitted the possibility of an unusual change of power. Victoria Nuland named a couple names that she considered necessary to include among Ukraine's leaders. To which the US Ambassador in Kiev said that one of the named persons was not supported by the EU. Do you remember what she told him? "Fuck the EU." That's the attitude. That's the truth. The attitude is the same now.

Germany, France and Poland had their foreign ministers sign guarantees on establishing a government of national unity, which would prepare for early elections in five to six months. In these elections, the opposition would certainly have won. Rather than respecting the agreements or at least respecting the authority of the European countries that put their reputation on the line, in the morning (they did not even wait very long), they seized the administration building and announced in the square that they could be congratulated, that they had created a "government of victors" (not national unity). There is a big difference. I have seen this many times.

The fact that the US views the current situation around Ukraine as a "yardstick" with which to measure its ability to remain a hegemon is obvious to me. The US carried out its aggressive misadventures in Yugoslavia, in Iraq, in Libya, invaded Syria without any right to do so and Afghanistan. They declared territories over 10,000 miles from US shores as a zone of their interests and wreaked havoc everywhere to "catch" the American "fish" in this "troubled water." At the same time, they were moving NATO eastward.

NATO is a "defensive alliance." When there was the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, when there was the Berlin Wall (concrete and imaginary between the two blocs), it is clear that they were defending themselves, as they thought, against the "aggressive" Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. But then there was neither the Soviet Union nor the Warsaw Pact, and they were already defending themselves hundreds and thousands of kilometres from that line, which was clear to everyone. They simply decided that they would now defend themselves here. They announced that NATO is now, as a defensive alliance, responsible for the security of the Indo-Pacific region. That is NATO's next defence line, the defence line will be the South China Sea. I have no doubts whatsoever. I talked about this in my remarks to the General Assembly today.

I will not venture to guess how long this situation might last. President Putin was asked about this. He replied that we are working to achieve the stated objectives.

Question: We've heard Russia's explanation for its invasion of Ukraine. But could you tell us what the endgame is? Is the endgame to overthrow the government in Kiev? And how much pressure is Russia coming under from China to end this war?

Sergey Lavrov: The goals of the operation have been set in President Putin's statement on the 24th of February.

Imagine for a second that Ireland prohibited English in schools, in communications, in movie theatres, or that Belgium did the same to the French language, or Finland to the Swedish language. Can you imagine any of these developments? I can't. But it would have been considered outrageous immediately, and there would have been a

scandal and action – I have not the slightest doubt – not to allow this to happen.

But in the case of Ukraine, for long, long years, the policy to eliminate anything Russian never drew any attention from media outlets in the West, and not only media outlets. We have been presenting these cases and calling for some action in the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN, in relations between Russia and NATO, which at that time existed, and in our contacts with the EU. Zero. Just like in the previous decades after the Soviet Union disappeared, our insistence that the EU must end the discrimination of Russians in Latvia and Estonia, was not heeded at all. We have a very deep conviction that our Western neighbours have racist instincts vis-à-vis Russia as a country and Russia as a nation. If you have any fact which will disprove what I am saying about the discrimination of Russians in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine, where legislation was passed prohibiting everything, then, of course, we can discuss what analysis you might offer.

You call it aggression. You call it annexation. It's your right. My answer is very simple: Don't try to judge from your office or from New York. Go to Crimea, talk to the people. Nobody does it except for some brave politicians who are not in the system's elite. Go to the east. Any of you, did you go to Donbass during the eight years of the war, when the Minsk agreements were raped every day? No. The Russian television was broadcasting the situation on the Donbass side of the line of contact. The daily life, and the damage to the civilian infrastructure, the killing of the peaceful population was broadcast daily. And we have been asking why Western journalists don't do the same on the Ukrainian side of the line of contact. Because on the Ukrainian side of the line of contact the damage was inflicted only by return fire. And it would be seen immediately.

I understand that you want to ask a question that would allow you to write that I couldn't answer your question. I was just asked by our Chinese friend about the military endgame and the goals of the operation. You should read Putin more often and more carefully. He announced everything on the 24th of February.

Question: And what about China, pressure from China to end the war? Your president said last week that President Xi raised concerns about the war with President Putin.

Sergey Lavrov: Did he say, "pressure from China?"

Question: He said "concern." Are you coming under any pressure?

Sergey Lavrov: You asked me how we feel under pressure from China. You may tell your readers, listeners, viewers that I avoided answering your question. You mean you don't understand Russian? High time to learn.

Question: You have had numerous meetings with your African colleagues on the sidelines of the UNGA. Have you discussed the situation around exports of Ukrainian grain and Russian fertilisers from European ports that our Western ex-partners have been refusing to give to other nations, including poor countries? Have any new tracks or directions opened during your discussions with our African friends? What was your dialogue like today?

Sergey Lavrov: Yes, we have spoken with many of our African colleagues. We talked first and foremost about our bilateral relations. With each and every African nation, our trade and investment have been steadily growing, although the numbers still lag far behind European and Chinese companies in absolute terms. But the prospects look promising. There are many projects and plans. We are

preparing a large package of agreements for the 2nd Russia-Africa Summit, which we plan to hold in mid-2023.

Naturally, food security is everybody's concern. Everyone supports efforts to eliminate the barriers in the way of Russian fertiliser and grain exports put up by the EU, London and Washington. Everyone welcomed the package deal struck at the initiative of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in Istanbul on July 22 of this year. It forced Zelensky to finally demine Ukrainian ports, which he had been refusing to do since March, when Russia and Türkiye proposed he let through the vessels he was holding hostage in exchange for Moscow and Ankara ensuring security over the international waters up to the Bosphorus Strait. On July 22, this arrangement was approved, and the grain was released. Only a fraction made its way to the poorest nations on the UN World Food Programme list, however, and, at that, just to Burkina Faso and one other country. We drew the Europeans' attention to the fact that almost half of this grain was going to them, and they told us they would later redirect the grain to African countries. Still, the scheme is operational, more or less.

As for the Russian part of the deal, neither food nor fertilisers are subject to US and EU sanctions. There are other things there, however, including a ban on Russian vessels entering European ports and foreign vessels entering Russia's. Sanctions have been imposed on Russian Agricultural Bank, which is Russia's largest agricultural bank servicing the lion's share of all deals with fertilisers and food. As the West dishes out all kinds of threats, the insurance rate on Russia's vessels has increased fourfold. In the part of the July 22 agreement pertaining to Russian grain, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pledged to get the EU and the US to remove these hurdles. I met with him on September 22, and he confirmed that there was still a lot to be done in this respect. He said publicly that obstacles remain, but some promises had been made.

It's all the choice of the hegemonic powers, who are trying to shift their responsibility on us. There was no famine when the US was bombing Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya for years and Syria now, and when a war is going on in Yemen. Did it have any impact on the markets? Not at all. Back then, it was the "generals" who revelled in their sense of supremacy without accountability. This time, someone has risen to prevent these same Americans from putting their boots at our borders, destroying Russian culture and language, and chasing Russians away. This is the difference here. This time, they responded with sanctions like none seen before, used with no consideration for whether developing countries would be impacted by the actions of the US and their satellites in the manner that they now are.

Question: Can you please elaborate on the role of the Saudis and the Turks in easing this crisis? They showed the will to join forces to help solve this crisis happening between the two nations? Can you tell us if they are communicating with each other before trying to give any help to the Russians.

Sergey Lavrov: We have many offers of mediation services. Türkiye played a crucial role when it invited representatives of Ukraine, Russia, and the UN to Istanbul after which the deal I referred to was concluded.

We are now expecting the Secretary-General and the Turkish side (since they are parties to the agreement) to make the Europeans and the Americans lift the impediment I mentioned for us to implement our part of the deal.

Russian grain occupies an immeasurably larger share on world markets and plays an immeasurably more important role than Ukrainian grain. I have not yet mentioned that 300,000 tonnes of our fertiliser are held up in European ports.

A month and a half ago we said that our companies were ready to forego the rights to this fertiliser so that it could be quickly sent to the developing countries who need it. A lot of people want it. The EU has been thinking for a month and a half and cannot decide anything. The fertiliser is no longer our property, it belongs to the European Union. They should give it to the countries that are on the World Food Programme list.

As for Saudi Arabia, it was announced that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was involved in negotiating the details of the exchange. Many people offer us mediation services, but we want to see what will grow out of this. We agreed with the Ukrainian delegation at the end of March this year, without any intermediaries, on the principles of the settlement that they themselves had formulated. We accepted them without any changes. And a day later, "amendments" began. They said that this was not the case here, but that it was different. Then there was the provocation in Bucha. When Russian troops withdrew from there as a goodwill gesture, the mayor returned there. For two days he appeared on TV, telling how life was getting back to normal there. And on the third day they showed a wide street with dead bodies. For the mayor and his team to be in their city for two days and to find this on the main street only on the third day is outright ridiculous.

I would like you to also "influence" the Ukrainians and their friends. We have been asking for months, since everyone insisted on a thorough investigation of the events in Bucha, to tell us the names of the people whose bodies were shown on television and the Internet. There is silence in response. I said so at the UN Security Council meeting and asked UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in a personal meeting, to look into it. How can you explain it? They created a scandal, used it for another package of anti-Russian sanctions, and demanded an investigation. The first step of the investigation is to at least identify the people who were allegedly brutally murdered there by the Russian army.

Recently there was a case in the city of Izyum, with reports of graves, mass graves of "tortured" Ukrainian residents. They showed a cemetery, where there really were graves, but not mass graves. Each grave had a Christian Orthodox cross. People were buried. The Ukrainians began to dig them up. Several foreign journalists found an interest to go there and see for themselves. The Ukrainian leadership wouldn't let them in and no one writes anything about Izyum anymore. Please, pay attention to this. Now is the time when people are avid sensation seekers, but the responsibility of those who distribute them without thoroughly checking the facts increases manifold under the conditions we are currently experiencing.

Question: You have spoken in detail about NATO encroachment. Do you see perhaps after this war ends (whether you call it a war or not it seems to be one) any kind of talks with the United States to make Russia feel more secure about what you call NATO encroachment?

Sergey Lavrov: I have already spoken about this today, and I'll repeat it once more. We are not saying no to talks. When such proposals come in, we agree. If our partners wish to meet quietly so that no one finds out about it, then fine. It's always better to talk than not to talk. But in the situation we are in today, Russia is not going to take the first step.

Everything was destroyed back in 2014 after the EU severed all contacts, demolishing the extensive architecture of our relations. We have let them know they can get in touch if they have something to discuss. If we are interested in discussing this, we'll see. Just as we were discussing

the future security architecture in Europe, NATO expelled almost all of our staff at Russia's mission to NATO except eight people including a driver and other support staff. This is just not serious. We closed down that office. Or, at the very least, suspended work there.

Over these past few days, I've told all prospective mediators who have offered their services (there were numerous proposals): listen to Vladimir Zelensky. He said Ukraine will finish Russia off, liberate all territories and that his peace plan does not provide for a neutrality status. Which is a hint that his country must become part of NATO.

Do you know what the US thinks of Europe? Ukrainian nationalists have long chanted "Ukraina – tse Evropa," (Ukraine is Europe). I think the United States is ready to start another chant: "Evropa – tse Ukraina," that is Europe is Ukraine. When asked if Ukraine wanted to join NATO after Vladimir Zelensky said there was no place for neutrality in his peace plan, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmitry Kuleba responded by saying that it was NATO which would be joining Ukraine, not the other way around. I think it opened a lot of room for interesting political satire.

Still, if they get in touch, we'll look into it. We won't initiate contacts. We've learnt our lesson. They are absolutely untrustworthy and selfish to the bone. They always put themselves and their interests first, and won't look for a balance of interests or keep it.

Journalists from Reuters, a journalist from Germany asked me questions, and the nature of these questions, their wording show that the Western elites are intent on continuing to demonise Russia. Their questions showed no interest in what you asked about, namely, if there can be dialogue. If they get in touch, we'll see.

Question: This week we have listened to heads of state and heads of government repeatedly call for an end to this conflict in Ukraine, which had global ramifications. We also heard military experts saying that there seems to be no desire on either side to negotiate because they believe that they can win militarily. How would you respond to both those views?

Sergey Lavrov: I have already responded. But I will repeat. Soon after the beginning of our special military operation, the Ukrainian side proposed holding talks to find a way to settle the situation. We agreed to do this. Several rounds of talks have been held, first in Belarus and later online. The Ukrainians couldn't explain their proposals. On March 29, a meeting was held in Istanbul, where they presented a document with principles for a settlement. We accepted

it without changing any of those principles. We put those arrangements on paper and forwarded it to Ukraine. And then there was Bucha, which I mentioned. We still demand to know the names of the victims, and we will continue demanding this. And then the Americans told Ukraine that they shouldn't accept any agreements with Russia, that they must win more victories on the battlefield. Josep Borrell, the chief EU diplomat who should act diplomatically, said the conflict must end on the battlefield with Ukraine's victory. In the past, you listened to Boris Johnson. Now you are listening to Liz Truss. All of them are saying approximately the same, both NATO and all others, that Crimea must be taken back. What talks can you speak about in this situation? The last contact we had with the Ukrainians ended with our acceptance of their principles for a settlement. After that, they entered a completely different path. Just listen to Vladimir Zelensky, who said here on September 21 that there would be no compromises, that their peace is war, and so on. I don't know what there is to talk about.

A group of mediators from a respected international regional organisation, with whom I had a meeting here, said they would go to Kiev and asked what message we would give them. I replied that Ukrainians know everything, that I have told them everything, and that they themselves had broken off the talks. President Putin was asked in the middle of last summer why Russia refused to negotiate. He replied that we don't refuse to talk, but those who refuse should know that the longer they do so the more difficult it will be to negotiate. We showed goodwill once again, but the other side doesn't want to act likewise.

I asked the mediators who were planning to visit Kiev soon if they are talking with the Americans in terms of their mediation efforts. This stopped them in their tracks, and they said that their mandate only covers Russia-Ukraine talks. Why? This is not serious. Doesn't any reasonable person see that Ukraine is controlled by the United States and, increasingly more, by London. Everyone knows this. Journalists from Europe, Britain and the United States ask why we are not ready for contacts. But they themselves have prohibited them. I have told you how the President of Cyprus was not allowed to hold talks with me. A representative of one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and a representative of another respected country have asked timidly and even surreptitiously for a secret meeting with me. I said they would be welcome. And they just disappeared from the radar, just as one more prime minister did. So, don't paint us as the evaders.

(Continued from p. 28)

Dugin, promoting his multipolar world, doesn't talk about a 'Russian' pole, even if he sees the pole as situated in Russia, but a 'Eurasian' pole. 'Eurasia' might ideally and eventually incorporate Western Europe but under present circumstances it represents a decisive turning away from Europe towards the East - another thought that has now become very central to government policy.

Russia's fate, if it loses the current confrontation with NATO, may well be the breakup of the Russian Federation into its constituent parts, or at least, as in the case of Ukraine and Georgia, its constituent parts within the boundaries established by the organisers of the Soviet Union. That is certainly what is envisaged in powerful circles in the US. If it survives, however, it may be that Russia is fated soon to become, to those of us living in Europe or the United States, a very strange and alien (and perhaps interesting) place indeed.

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Presidential address on the occasion of signing the treaties on the accessiof the DPR, LPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions to Russia, September 29, 2022, The Kremlin, Moscow

President of Russia Vladimir Putin:

Citizens of Russia, citizens of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, residents of the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, deputies of the State Duma, senators of the Russian Federation.

As you know, referendums have been held in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions. The ballots have been counted and the results have been announced. The people have made their unequivocal choice.

Today we will sign treaties on the accession of the Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic, Zaporozhye Region and Kherson Region to the Russian Federation. I have no doubt that the Federal Assembly will support the constitutional laws on the accession to Russia and the establishment of four new regions, our new constituent entities of the Russian Federation, because this is the will of millions of people.

(Applause.)

It is undoubtedly their right, an inherent right sealed in Article 1 of the UN Charter, which directly states the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

I repeat, it is an inherent right of the people. It is based on our historical affinity, and it is that right that led generations of our predecessors, those who built and defended Russia for centuries since the period of Ancient Rus, to victory.

Here in Novorossiia, [Pyotr] Rumyantsev, [Alexander] Suvorov and [Fyodor] Ushakov fought their battles, and Catherine the Great and [Grigory] Potyomkin founded new cities. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought here to the bitter end during the Great Patriotic War.

We will always remember the heroes of the Russian Spring, those who refused to accept the neo-Nazi coup d'état in Ukraine in 2014, all those who died for the right to speak their native language, to preserve their culture, traditions and religion, and for the very right to live. We remember the soldiers of Donbass, the martyrs of the "Odessa Khatyn," the victims of inhuman terrorist attacks carried out by the Kiev regime. We commemorate volunteers and militiamen, civilians, children, women, senior citizens, Russians, Ukrainians, people of various nationalities; popular leader of Donetsk Alexander Zakharchenko; military commanders Arsen Pavlov and Vladimir Zhoga, Olga Kochura and Alexei Mozgovoy; prosecutor of the Lugansk Republic Sergei Gorenko; paratrooper Nurmagomed Gadzhimagomedov and all our soldiers and officers who died a hero's death during the special military operation. They are heroes. (Applause.)

Heroes of great Russia. Please join me in a minute of silence to honour their memory.

(Minute of silence.)

Thank you.

Behind the choice of millions of residents in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, in the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, is our common destiny and thousand-year history. People have passed this spiritual connection on to their children and grandchildren. Despite all the trials they endured, they carried the love for Russia through the years. This is something no one can destroy. That is why both older generations and young people – those who were born after

the tragic collapse of the Soviet Union – have voted for our unity, for our common future.

In 1991 in Belovezhskaya Pushcha, representatives of the party elite of that time made a decision to terminate the Soviet Union, without asking ordinary citizens what they wanted, and people suddenly found themselves cut off from their homeland. This tore apart and dismembered our national community and triggered a national catastrophe. Just like the government quietly demarcated the borders of Soviet republics, acting behind the scenes after the 1917 revolution, the last leaders of the Soviet Union, contrary to the direct expression of the will of the majority of people in the referendum of 1991, destroyed our great country, and simply made the people in the former republics face this as an accomplished fact.

I can admit that they didn't even know what they were doing and what consequences their actions would have in the end. But it doesn't matter now. There is no Soviet Union anymore; we cannot return to the past. Actually, Russia no longer needs it today; this isn't our ambition. But there is nothing stronger than the determination of millions of people who, by their culture, religion, traditions, and language, consider themselves part of Russia, whose ancestors lived in a single country for centuries. There is nothing stronger than their determination to return to their true historical homeland.

For eight long years, people in Donbass were subjected to genocide, shelling and blockades; in Kherson and Zaporozhye, a criminal policy was pursued to cultivate hatred for Russia, for everything Russian. Now too, during the referendums, the Kiev regime threatened schoolteachers, women who worked in election commissions with reprisals and death. Kiev threatened millions of people who came to express their will with repression. But the people of Donbass, Zaporozhye and Kherson weren't broken, and they had their say.

I want the Kiev authorities and their true handlers in the West to hear me now, and I want everyone to remember this: the people living in Lugansk and Donetsk, in Kherson and Zaporozhye have become our citizens, forever.

(Applause.)

We call on the Kiev regime to immediately cease fire and all hostilities; to end the war it unleashed back in 2014 and return to the negotiating table. We are ready for this, as we have said more than once. But the choice of the people in Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporozhye and Kherson will not be discussed. The decision has been made, and Russia will not betray it. (Applause.)

Kiev's current authorities should respect this free expression of the people's will; there is no other way. This is the only way to peace.

We will defend our land with all the forces and resources we have, and we will do everything we can to ensure the safety of our people. This is the great liberating mission of our nation.

We will definitely rebuild the destroyed cities and towns, the residential buildings, schools, hospitals, theatres and museums. We will restore and develop industrial enterprises, factories, infrastructure, as well as the social security, pension, healthcare and education systems.

We will certainly work to improve the level of security. Together we will make sure that citizens in the new regions can feel the support of all the people of Russia, of the entire nation, all the republics, territories and regions of our vast Motherland.

(Applause.)

Friends, colleagues,

Today I would like to address our soldiers and officers who are taking part in the special military operation, the fighters of Donbass and Novorossiya, those who went to military recruitment offices after receiving a call-up paper under the executive order on partial mobilisation, and those who did this voluntarily, answering the call of their hearts. I would like to address their parents, wives and children, to tell them what our people are fighting for, what kind of enemy we are up against, and who is pushing the world into new wars and crises and deriving blood-stained benefits from this tragedy.

Our compatriots, our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who are part of our united people have seen with their own eyes what the ruling class of the so-called West have prepared for humanity as a whole. They have dropped their masks and shown what they are really made of.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the West decided that the world and all of us would permanently accede to its dictates. In 1991, the West thought that Russia would never rise after such shocks and would fall to pieces on its own. This almost happened. We remember the horrible 1990s, hungry, cold and hopeless. But Russia remained standing, came alive, grew stronger and occupied its rightful place in the world.

Meanwhile, the West continued and continues looking for another chance to strike a blow at us, to weaken and break up Russia, which they have always dreamed about, to divide our state and set our peoples against each other, and to condemn them to poverty and extinction. They cannot rest easy knowing that there is such a great country with this huge territory in the world, with its natural wealth, resources and people who cannot and will not do someone else's bidding.

The West is ready to cross every line to preserve the neo-colonial system which allows it to live off the world, to plunder it thanks to the domination of the dollar and technology, to collect an actual tribute from humanity, to extract its primary source of unearned prosperity, the rent paid to the hegemon. The preservation of this annuity is their main, real and absolutely self-serving motivation. This is why total de-sovereignisation is in their interest. This explains their aggression towards independent states, traditional values and authentic cultures, their attempts to undermine international and integration processes, new global currencies and technological development centres they cannot control. It is critically important for them to force all countries to surrender their sovereignty to the United States.

In certain countries, the ruling elites voluntarily agree to do this, voluntarily agree to become vassals; others are bribed or intimidated. And if this does not work, they destroy entire states, leaving behind humanitarian disasters, devastation, ruins, millions of wrecked and mangled human lives, terrorist enclaves, social disaster zones, protectorates, colonies and semi-colonies. They don't care. All they care about is their own benefit.

I want to underscore again that their insatiability and determination to preserve their unfettered dominance are the real causes of the hybrid war that the collective West is

waging against Russia. They do not want us to be free; they want us to be a colony. They do not want equal cooperation; they want to loot. They do not want to see us a free society, but a mass of soulless slaves.

They see our thought and our philosophy as a direct threat. That is why they target our philosophers for assassination. Our culture and art present a danger to them, so they are trying to ban them. Our development and prosperity are also a threat to them because competition is growing. They do not want or need Russia, but we do.

(Applause.)

I would like to remind you that in the past, ambitions of world domination have repeatedly shattered against the courage and resilience of our people. Russia will always be Russia. We will continue to defend our values and our Motherland.

The West is counting on impunity, on being able to get away with anything. As a matter of fact, this was actually the case until recently. Strategic security agreements have been trashed; agreements reached at the highest political level have been declared tall tales; firm promises not to expand NATO to the east gave way to dirty deception as soon as our former leaders bought into them; missile defence, intermediate-range and shorter-range missile treaties have been unilaterally dismantled under far-fetched pretexts.

And all we hear is, the West is insisting on a rules-based order. Where did that come from anyway? Who has ever seen these rules? Who agreed or approved them? Listen, this is just a lot of nonsense, utter deceit, double standards, or even triple standards! They must think we're stupid.

Russia is a great thousand-year-old power, a whole civilisation, and it is not going to live by such makeshift, false rules.

(Applause.)

It was the so-called West that trampled on the principle of the inviolability of borders, and now it is deciding, at its own discretion, who has the right to self-determination and who does not, who is unworthy of it. It is unclear what their decisions are based on or who gave them the right to decide in the first place. They just assumed it.

That is why the choice of the people in Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporozhye and Kherson makes them so furiously angry. The West does not have any moral right to weigh in, or even utter a word about freedom of democracy. It does not and it never did.

Western elites not only deny national sovereignty and international law. Their hegemony has pronounced features of totalitarianism, despotism and apartheid. They brazenly divide the world into their vassals – the so-called civilised countries – and all the rest, who, according to the designs of today's Western racists, should be added to the list of barbarians and savages. False labels like "rogue country" or "authoritarian regime" are already available, and are used to stigmatise entire nations and states, which is nothing new. There is nothing new in this: deep down, the Western elites have remained the same colonisers. They discriminate and divide peoples into the top tier and the rest.

We have never agreed to and will never agree to such political nationalism and racism. What else, if not racism, is the Russophobia being spread around the world? What, if not racism, is the West's dogmatic conviction that its civilisation and neoliberal culture is an indisputable model for the entire world to follow? "You're either with us or against us." It even sounds strange.

Western elites are even shifting repentance for their own historical crimes on everyone else, demanding that the citizens of their countries and other peoples confess to things they have nothing to do with at all, for example, the period of colonial conquests.

It is worth reminding the West that it began its colonial policy back in the Middle Ages, followed by the worldwide slave trade, the genocide of Indian tribes in America, the plunder of India and Africa, the wars of England and France against China, as a result of which it was forced to open its ports to the opium trade. What they did was get entire nations hooked on drugs and purposefully exterminated entire ethnic groups for the sake of grabbing land and resources, hunting people like animals. This is contrary to human nature, truth, freedom and justice.

While we – we are proud that in the 20th century our country led the anti-colonial movement, which opened up opportunities for many peoples around the world to make progress, reduce poverty and inequality, and defeat hunger and disease.

To emphasise, one of the reasons for the centuries-old Russophobia, the Western elites' unconcealed animosity toward Russia is precisely the fact that we did not allow them to rob us during the period of colonial conquests and forced the Europeans to trade with us on mutually beneficial terms. This was achieved by creating a strong centralised state in Russia, which grew and got stronger based on the great moral values of Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, as well as Russian culture and the Russian word that were open to all.

There were numerous plans to invade Russia. Such attempts were made during the Time of Troubles in the 17th century and in the period of ordeals after the 1917 revolution. All of them failed. The West managed to grab hold of Russia's wealth only in the late 20th century, when the state had been destroyed. They called us friends and partners, but they treated us like a colony, using various schemes to pump trillions of dollars out of the country. We remember. We have not forgotten anything.

A few days ago, people in Donetsk and Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporozhye declared their support for restoring our historical unity. Thank you!

(Applause.)

Western countries have been saying for centuries that they bring freedom and democracy to other nations. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead of bringing democracy they suppressed and exploited, and instead of giving freedom they enslaved and oppressed. The unipolar world is inherently anti-democratic and unfree; it is false and hypocritical through and through.

The United States is the only country in the world that has used nuclear weapons twice, destroying the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. And they created a precedent.

Recall that during WWII the United States and Britain reduced Dresden, Hamburg, Cologne and many other German cities to rubble, without the least military necessity. It was done ostentatiously and, to repeat, without any military necessity. They had only one goal, as with the nuclear bombing of Japanese cities: to intimidate our country and the rest of the world.

The United States left a deep scar in the memory of the people of Korea and Vietnam with their carpet bombings and use of napalm and chemical weapons.

It actually continues to occupy Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea and other countries, which they cynically refer to as equals and allies. Look now, what kind of alliance is that? The whole world knows that the top officials in these countries are being spied on and that their offices and homes are bugged. It is a disgrace, a disgrace for those who do this and for those who, like slaves, silently and meekly swallow this arrogant behaviour.

They call the orders and threats they make to their vassals Euro-Atlantic solidarity, and the creation of biological weapons and the use of human test subjects, including in Ukraine, noble medical research.

It is their destructive policies, wars and plunder that have unleashed today's massive wave of migrants. Millions of people endure hardships and humiliation or die by the thousands trying to reach Europe.

They are exporting grain from Ukraine now. Where are they taking it under the guise of ensuring the food security of the poorest countries? Where is it going? They are taking it to the self-same European countries. Only five percent has been delivered to the poorest countries. More cheating and naked deception again.

In effect, the American elite is using the tragedy of these people to weaken its rivals, to destroy nation states. This goes for Europe and for the identities of France, Italy, Spain and other countries with centuries-long histories.

Washington demands more and more sanctions against Russia and the majority of European politicians obediently go along with it. They clearly understand that by pressuring the EU to completely give up Russian energy and other resources, the United States is practically pushing Europe toward deindustrialisation in a bid to get its hands on the entire European market. These European elites understand everything – they do, but they prefer to serve the interests of others. This is no longer servility but direct betrayal of their own peoples. God bless, it is up to them.

But the Anglo-Saxons believe sanctions are no longer enough and now they have turned to subversion. It seems incredible but it is a fact – by causing explosions on Nord Stream's international gas pipelines passing along the bottom of the Baltic Sea, they have actually embarked on the destruction of Europe's entire energy infrastructure. It is clear to everyone who stands to gain. Those who benefit are responsible, of course.

The dictates of the US are backed up by crude force, on the law of the fist. Sometimes it is beautifully wrapped sometimes there is no wrapping at all but the gist is the same – the law of the fist. Hence, the deployment and maintenance of hundreds of military bases in all corners of the world, NATO expansion, and attempts to cobble together new military alliances, such as AUKUS and the like. Much is being done to create a Washington-Seoul-Tokyo military-political chain. All states that possess or aspire to genuine strategic sovereignty and are capable of challenging Western hegemony, are automatically declared enemies.

These are the principles that underlie US and NATO military doctrines that require total domination. Western elites are presenting their neo-colonialist plans with the same hypocrisy, claiming peaceful intentions, talking about some kind of deterrence. This evasive word migrates from one strategy to another but really only means one thing – undermining any and all sovereign centres of power.

We have already heard about the deterrence of Russia, China and Iran. I believe next in line are other countries of Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, as well as

current US partners and allies. After all, we know that when they are displeased, they introduce sanctions against their allies as well – against this or that bank or company. This is their practice and they will expand it. They have everything in their sights, including our next-door neighbours – the CIS countries.

At the same time, the West has clearly been engaged in wishful thinking for a long time. In launching the sanctions blitzkrieg against Russia, for example, they thought that they could once again line up the whole world at their command. As it turns out, however, such a bright prospect does not excite everyone – other than complete political masochists and admirers of other unconventional forms of international relations. Most states refuse to “snap a salute” and instead choose the sensible path of cooperation with Russia.

The West clearly did not expect such insubordination. They simply got used to acting according to a template, to grab whatever they please, by blackmail, bribery, intimidation, and convinced themselves that these methods would work forever, as if they had fossilised in the past.

Such self-confidence is a direct product not only of the notorious concept of exceptionalism – although it never ceases to amaze – but also of the real “information hunger” in the West. The truth has been drowned in an ocean of myths, illusions and fakes, using extremely aggressive propaganda, lying like Goebbels. The more unbelievable the lie, the quicker people will believe it – that is how they operate, according to this principle.

But people cannot be fed with printed dollars and euros. You can't feed them with those pieces of paper, and the virtual, inflated capitalisation of western social media companies can't heat their homes. Everything I am saying is important. And what I just said is no less so: you can't feed anyone with paper – you need food; and you can't heat anyone's home with these inflated capitalisations – you need energy.

That is why politicians in Europe have to convince their fellow citizens to eat less, take a shower less often and dress warmer at home. And those who start asking fair questions like “Why is that, in fact?” are immediately declared enemies, extremists and radicals. They point back at Russia and say: that is the source of all your troubles. More lies.

I want to make special note of the fact that there is every reason to believe that the Western elites are not going to look for constructive ways out of the global food and energy crisis that they and they alone are to blame for, as a result of their long-term policy, dating back long before our special military operation in Ukraine, in Donbass. They have no intention of solving the problems of injustice and inequality. I am afraid they would rather use other formulas they are more comfortable with.

And here it is important to recall that the West bailed itself out of its early 20th century challenges with World War I. Profits from World War II helped the United States finally overcome the Great Depression and become the largest economy in the world, and to impose on the planet the power of the dollar as a global reserve currency. And the 1980s crisis – things came to a head in the 1980s again – the West emerged from it unscathed largely by appropriating the inheritance and resources of the collapsed and defunct Soviet Union. That's a fact.

Now, in order to free itself from the latest web of challenges, they need to dismantle Russia as well as other states that choose a sovereign path of development, at all costs, to be able to further plunder other nations' wealth and use it to patch their own holes. If this does not happen, I

cannot rule out that they will try to trigger a collapse of the entire system, and blame everything on that, or, God forbid, decide to use the old formula of economic growth through war.

Russia is aware of its responsibility to the international community and will make every effort to ensure that cooler heads prevail.

The current neo-colonial model is ultimately doomed; this much is obvious. But I repeat that its real masters will cling to it to the end. They simply have nothing to offer the world except to maintain the same system of plundering and racketeering.

They do not give a damn about the natural right of billions of people, the majority of humanity, to freedom and justice, the right to determine their own future. They have already moved on to the radical denial of moral, religious, and family values.

Let's answer some very simple questions for ourselves. Now I would like to return to what I said and want to address also all citizens of the country – not just the colleagues that are in the hall – but all citizens of Russia: do we want to have here, in our country, in Russia, “parent number one, parent number two and parent number three” (they have completely lost it!) instead of mother and father? Do we want our schools to impose on our children, from their earliest days in school, perversions that lead to degradation and extinction? Do we want to drum into their heads the ideas that certain other genders exist along with women and men and to offer them gender reassignment surgery? Is that what we want for our country and our children? This is all unacceptable to us. We have a different future of our own.

Let me repeat that the dictatorship of the Western elites targets all societies, including the citizens of Western countries themselves. This is a challenge to all. This complete renunciation of what it means to be human, the overthrow of faith and traditional values, and the suppression of freedom are coming to resemble a “religion in reverse” – pure Satanism. Exposing false messiahs, Jesus Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount: “By their fruits ye shall know them.” These poisonous fruits are already obvious to people, and not only in our country but also in all countries, including many people in the West itself.

The world has entered a period of a fundamental, revolutionary transformation. New centres of power are emerging. They represent the majority – the majority! – of the international community. They are ready not only to declare their interests but also to protect them. They see in multipolarity an opportunity to strengthen their sovereignty, which means gaining genuine freedom, historical prospects, and the right to their own independent, creative and distinctive forms of development, to a harmonious process.

As I have already said, we have many like-minded people in Europe and the United States, and we feel and see their support. An essentially emancipatory, anti-colonial movement against unipolar hegemony is taking shape in the most diverse countries and societies. Its power will only grow with time. It is this force that will determine our future geopolitical reality.

Friends,

Today, we are fighting for a just and free path, first of all for ourselves, for Russia, in order to leave dictators and despotism in the past. I am convinced that countries and peoples understand that a policy based on the exceptionalism of whoever it may be and the suppression of other cultures and peoples is inherently criminal, and that we must close

this shameful chapter. The ongoing collapse of Western hegemony is irreversible. And I repeat: things will never be the same.

The battlefield to which destiny and history have called us is a battlefield for our people, for the great historical Russia. (Applause.)

For the great historical Russia, for future generations, our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We must protect them against enslavement and monstrous experiments that are designed to cripple their minds and souls.

Today, we are fighting so that it would never occur to anyone that Russia, our people, our language, or our culture can be erased from history. Today, we need a consolidated society, and this consolidation can only be based on sovereignty, freedom, creation, and justice. Our values are humanity, mercy and compassion.

And I want to close with the words of a true patriot Ivan Ilyin: “If I consider Russia my Motherland, which means that I love as a Russian, contemplate and think, sing and speak as a Russian; that I believe in the spiritual strength of the Russian people. Its spirit is my spirit; its destiny is my destiny; its suffering is my grief; and its prosperity is my joy.”

Behind these words stands a glorious spiritual choice, which, for more than a thousand years of Russian statehood, was followed by many generations of our ancestors. Today, we are making this choice; the citizens of the Donetsk and Lugansk people’s republics and the residents of the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions have made this choice. They made the choice to be with their people, to be with their Motherland, to share in its destiny, and to be victorious together with it.

The truth is with us, and behind us is Russia!
(Applause.)

Advertisement

Ireland’s Great War On Turkey, 1914 - 24

By Pat Walsh Athol Books 2009

Ireland’s Great War on Turkey is largely a forgotten event in Irish history, even though it was probably the most significant thing Ireland ever did in the world. That war lasted from 1914 until 1924—when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally, along with the rest of the British Empire, made peace with the Turks. It made the Middle East (including Palestine and Iraq) what it is today, and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

Ireland’s part in the Great War on Turkey was an embarrassment to Republican Ireland and its historians and the details of the War became forgotten. The more recent historians of a revisionist disposition and the Remembrance commemorators have also refrained from remembering it, for other reasons.

This book, the first history of Ireland’s War on Turkey, explains why the British Empire really made war on the Ottoman Empire and why Irishmen found themselves part of the invasion force it sent to Gallipoli. It describes the forgotten political and military assault launched on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor. It explains the reasons for the establishment of Palestine and Iraq and why the United States was repelled from the League of Nations by the behaviour of the British Empire in the conquered Ottoman territories after the War.

It concludes on a positive note, describing the great achievement of Ataturk in leading the Turkish nation to independence from the Imperialist Powers. This was an event that Republican Ireland could only marvel at, from the confines of the Treaty and the British Empire—an Empire whose demise Ataturk set in motion through the successful Turkish War of Independence.

Lord Hankey: How We Planned The Great War

By Pat Walsh

Published by Problems Of Communism Committee 2015

Lord Maurice Hankey gave unparalleled service to the State he served over more than three decades. He was much more than just an Imperial Senior Civil Servant. It would be no exaggeration to say that he kept the British State together over a generation. *The Supreme Command* (1961) by Hankey, though largely ignored today, is the most complete inside description of Britain’s Great War on Germany. It contains details of the planning for that war by the person who oversaw it, coordinated it and put it into operation from August 1914.

Quo Vadis Pax Caucasia?

By Pat Walsh

Two years after the Second Karabakh War how is the peace process proceeding in the South Caucasus? Quo Vadis Pax Caucasia?

To assess this we should first look at the current positions of the respective parties to the Trilateral Agreement of November 2020.

Armenian and Azerbaijani Positions

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made a significant statement to the Armenian Parliament on 14 September 2022:

“We want to sign a document because of which many people will criticize us, scold us, call us traitors, they may even decide to remove us from power, but we will be grateful if as a result Armenia will have lasting peace and security in an area of 29,800 square kilometres. I clearly state that I will sign a document that will ensure that. I am not interested in what will happen to me, I am interested in what will happen to Armenia. I am ready to make tough decisions for the sake of peace.”

The Armenian Prime Minister’s reference to the “29,800 kilometres” is important because it is the size of the present Republic of Armenia. It therefore excludes claim over the old Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and surrounding territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenian forces after the First Karabakh War of the early 1990s.

In an interview on Armenian state TV broadcast the day before the Geneva bilateral peace meeting of 2 October, Pashinyan stated further that “no one is ready to recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, just as no one is ready to recognize Karabakh as part of Armenia. And we need to recognize this fact.”

Pashinyan was emphasizing to his critics within Armenia and Karabakh that the region was universally recognised as a sovereign part of Azerbaijan and this was backed up firmly by international law. The only way this could be overcome was through military means and that was impossible for Armenia, which had lost a war only 2 years previous leading to the end of its occupation of Karabakh.

Pashinyan’s statement implied a recognition that the Karabakh Armenians are not part of Armenia. However, at the Sochi meeting the Armenian Prime Minister attempted to have a reference to a “future status” for Karabakh included in the statement, meaning something different was possible than the region being restored fully as an integral part of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The Azerbaijani position in the ongoing peace negotiations is contained in the Five Principles put forward in February 2022 and stated on 14 March 2022 at the Antalya (Turkiye) Diplomacy Forum by Baku’s Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov. These are:

- mutual recognition of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of internationally recognized borders and political independence of each other;
- mutual confirmation of the absence of territorial claims against each other and the acceptance of legally-binding obligations not to raise such a claim in future;

- obligation to refrain in their inter-state relations from undermining the security of each other, from the threat or use of force both against political independence and territorial integrity, and in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the UN Charter;

- delimitation and demarcation of the state border and the establishment of diplomatic relations;

- unblocking of transportation and other communications, building other communications as appropriate, and the establishment of cooperation in other fields of mutual interest.

Speaking at the Congress of World Azerbaijanis, on 22 April in Shusha, President Aliyev reiterated that in the event negotiations do not result in a treaty based on the Five Principles Baku will respond forcefully against Yerevan: “If they refuse,” he stated, “we will not recognize the territorial integrity of Armenia either and will officially declare that.”

Quite evidently, Yerevan’s failure to implement 2 important parts of the Trilateral Agreement of November 2020 – the withdrawal of all Armenian military forces from Azerbaijan’s sovereign territory and the opening of all transport and communications corridors – has begun to exhaust Baku’s patience. Military activity seems to be the only thing which focuses attention on Yerevan’s obstructionism.

Aliyev’s statement is a warning to Yerevan that Armenian military border actions against Azerbaijan would be responded to by operations that would take and hold strategic positions the Armenians regard as inside their territory – as recently happened in September 2022, when nearly 100 Azerbaijanis and over 200 Armenians were killed in clashes on the border. It also more significantly raises the historic issue of Azerbaijani-populated, but ethnically-cleansed, Western Zangezur, which was placed in the Soviet settlement of the 1920s within Armenia, but which Baku would view as a reopened territorial issue if Karabakh was not accepted as part of Azerbaijan by Yerevan.

Prime Minister Pashinyan knows Armenia is incapable of challenging Azerbaijan over Karabakh in the current circumstances and for the foreseeable future. He has therefore presumably opted to settle for the secondary aim of preventing Azerbaijan from achieving the victory of re-absorbing Karabakh. One way to do this is by offloading the Karabakh Armenians to “Russian protection” in order to deny Baku de facto its de jure territory. This possibility has the advantage for Pashinyan that he can wash his hands of the more intransigent Karabakh Armenians and remove them as an opposition and antagonistic element within the Armenian body politic. Pashinyan would then be able to concentrate his efforts on building an Armenian state on its current territory, without the Karabakh problem.

Failing that Pashinyan is probably aiming for achieving some form of autonomous status for the Karabakh Armenians – although that seems very unlikely given Baku’s strong opposition to recreating Nagorno Karabakh with an ethnic character in the post-Soviet era of nationalisms.

Azerbaijan’s position regarding territory is immensely reasonable. The Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was a Soviet construction aimed at solving the national

problem between Armenians and Azerbaijanis within the Socialist context of the USSR. It's resurrection in a world of capitalist nation states is wholly inappropriate. The Armenians by forcing 2 wars over the territory in a generation have emphasized the failure of the Socialist project of autonomous development, quite apart from the demise of the USSR. There is no going back to a construct that regenerates national antagonism, irredentism and war on a continual basis. Its place on the map is over.

The Zangezur Corridor Imbrolio

An imbrolio is a complex dispute, argument and entanglement of interests.

If the Armenians do not accept the established state borders and the settlement of the 1920s, which is recognised in international law, as the foundation of a settlement, then we are unfortunately back in the sphere of force. And that, as has been mentioned, opens the question of Zangezur which has not been on the agenda. That is not a welcome development as it will introduce a further destabilising factor into the existing conflict, sharpening it by implicating Iran which has a "red line" on the removal of its border with Armenia. Tehran interestingly asserts a red line on this geopolitical issue but failed to assert a similar "red line" on the 3 decade Armenian occupation of Karabakh and surrounding regions of Azerbaijan, with the accompanying ethnic cleansing of its Shia Muslim and Kurdish populations.

It should be said that Iranian opposition to the Zangezur corridor is not entirely to do with the fear of blocking its access to Armenia.

The Serbian political analyst Nikola Mikovich argues that:

"Iran understands that the corridor will connect Azerbaijan not only with its exclave Nakhchivan, but also with Turkiye, a regional rival of Tehran. If the corridor is built, it will give Turkiye a new land route into the South Caucasus, which the Turkish leadership is likely to use to boost its presence in the energy-rich region. In addition, Turkiye will get a shorter and faster route to Central Asian markets. Acquiring a transport platform to achieve a number of ambitious goals will definitely be a major geopolitical victory for Ankara. All of these events could seriously undermine Iran's position in the region as they would end Baku's transit dependence on Tehran, deprive the Islamic Republic of its monopoly on transit services in the South Caucasus region..."

Michael Doran, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Peace and Security in the Middle East at the influential Hudson Institute, recently described Azerbaijan as the number one security threat to the Islamic Republic of Iran (as opposed to the US or Israel). This is because Tehran fears a growing ethnic awakening among its 25 million or so Azerbaijani population in the North of the state. Tehran's policy has been to use Armenia and the Karabakh issue as an instrument to divert the Republic of Azerbaijan's resources and prevent its development. Iran is particularly fearful of the Zangezur corridor metamorphosing, in the event of an Armenian collapse, from a merely economic transit zone into a Turkic political belt of expansion, on the old Azerbaijani territory of Western Zangezur.

With the border between Russia and Europe effectively closed, the South Caucasus route to Turkey, Iran, and beyond has gained a new significance. Article 9 of the Trilateral Agreement that ended the war in 2020, and was signed by Armenia, stated that:

"All economic and transport links in the region shall be restored. The Republic of Armenia guarantees the safety of transport links between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to organize an unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles, and goods in both directions. Control over transport shall be exercised by the bodies of the Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service (FSB) of Russia."

Baku interprets this as meaning that the road from western Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, which will run through the southern Armenian region of Syunik should have the same status as the Lachin Corridor from Armenia to Mountainous Karabakh. That is to say that it should be extraterritorial and shouldn't be controlled by the Armenian authorities, with, Russian FSB/border guards performing this function instead. For Russia, this is an entirely acceptable option, as it would give Moscow control over the road linking Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkiye: a convenient alternative to the current communication links through pro-Western Georgia.

Armenia, however, sees this interpretation of the issue as a threat to the country's sovereignty, especially as the corridor could impede Armenia's transport links with Iran, which pass through the Syunik/Western Zangezur region. It is therefore obstructing what it signed up to. Yerevan is supported on this issue not only by Tehran, which doesn't want to lose control of its links with Armenia, but also, it seems, by the West, which would prefer not to hand over important communication links to the Russians. However, the West has a problem in that if it opposes Russian control it could bring about increased Iranian influence in Armenia, aimed at counter-acting Baku's presence along the corridor.

Michael Doran cuttingly commented in the Hudson Institute's roundtable Azerbaijan-Armenian Conflict and the American Interest that Armenia is a satellite of Russia and an ally of Iran, the US Congress and the current administration in Washington (Biden/Pelosi).

Interestingly, the Zangezur Corridor is a potential source of friction between Russia, Turkiye and Iran. All have different interests in it with only Iran's seemingly paralleling Yerevan's hostility.

The problem Pashinyan has is: can he achieve better relations with Turkiye in a society saturated with anti-Turkish sentiment? That is the great paradox: Armenia can only cease to be a military, economic and political dependency of Moscow by normalising relations with the state that it has demonised for a century. The independence that Armenia declared in 1991 can only be made into a reality through Turkish assistance, opening the road to Europe. And that can only be accomplished by an ending of territorial revanchism and a building of a functional independent state of Armenia composed only of its existing territory.

Geopolitical Competition

The momentum in the peace process has been undoubtedly generated by the intensifying geopolitical competition brought about by events in Ukraine.

Recently there has been the 2 October meeting in Geneva between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the 5 October meeting in Prague between President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, the 14 October 2022 meeting in Astana between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the Sochi meeting between the heads of both states presided over by the Russian President on 31 October.

Türkiye- Azerbaijan route through Zangezur Corridor



Source: Anadolu Agency

Significantly, the meetings have taken place under the auspices of international states on both sides of the geopolitical divide, with the President of Russia still mediating the main process but with events facilitated by the President of the European Council, and supported by the US Secretary of State and the U.S. National Security Advisor augmenting (or competing with?) the process.

Before Sochi, the last time the Armenian and Azerbaijani heads of state and Putin had met was on November 26, 2021 to discuss the realisation of the November 10, 2020, and January 11, 2021, Trilateral statements. At that time, Russia was holding a tight grip over the Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiation process, and it seemed that no one could challenge the Russian position which had been gained by Putin’s successful management of the ending of the War in November 2020.

However, since then, came the Russian Special Military Operation in Ukraine and the West has seized its chance to recover influence in the process lost by the years of failure by the OSCE Minsk group. The European Union, and recently the US, have re-engaged in active involvement in the Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiations. European Council President Charles Michel has organised 4 Armenia–Azerbaijan summits in Brussels (December 2021, April, May and August 2022). The next talks in this format are preliminarily scheduled to take place in Brussels later this month.

The US evidently believes that Russia has recently become distracted from the Southern Caucasus and the Ukraine conflict has diverted its focus and energy elsewhere. The Kremlin’s difficulty is Washington’s opportunity. Luke Coffey has argued that Ukraine is the continuation, and indeed culmination, of the Soviet Union’s collapse with the result that there is a huge question mark lying against the future of Russian influence in the South Caucasus. Washington perceives that Russian power is in decline on its periphery through its failure to suppress Kiev in short order.

The US entered the South Caucasus peace process in mid-September 2022, bringing Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers to New York and the Secretary of the Armenian Security Council and top foreign policy aide to President Aliyev to the White House during late September 2022. As a result of the EU and the US mediation efforts, the sides approved the Prague statement on October 6, 2022, which recognised mutual territorial integrity, reinforcing the UN Charter and Alma-Ata declaration of 1991 (The UN Charter established the principle of territorial integrity of states, while the Alma-Ata protocols stated that communist-era administrative boundaries became state borders after the Soviet Union’s collapse).

Simultaneously, the US ambitiously proposed a signing of an Armenia–Azerbaijan peace treaty by the end of 2022. According to the Secretary of the Armenian Security Council, Armenia and Azerbaijan had agreed to sign a peace agreement and finish the border delimitation process by the end of the year during the September 27, 2022, meeting in the White House.

The active re-involvement of the US in Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiations while generating a competition that has injected momentum into the process has also potential to bring the South Caucasus peace process within the framework of the US–Russia geopolitical confrontation.

The renewed US involvement in the South Caucasus has undoubtedly concerned the Kremlin which believes that the primary goal of the US is to use influence over the Armenia–Azerbaijan peace agreement to push Russian peacekeepers

out of the remaining Armenian rump of Karabakh as a part of the a global strategy against Russian interests. The Russian logic is that if Armenia and Azerbaijan were to sign a peace treaty, Azerbaijan would be influenced not to extend the mandate of the Russian peacekeepers beyond the initial five-year term, which ends in November 2025. Moscow is concerned that an Armenia–Azerbaijan peace treaty and withdrawal of the Russian peacekeepers from Karabakh would be the first step to push Russia out of the region and increase Western influence in the South Caucasus, on the borderlands of the Russian Federation.

The West would undoubtedly like to encourage the demand for the withdrawal of the Russian military base and border troops from Armenia itself. But to achieve this it would have to bring about the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Türkiye. President Erdogan has reiterated that Türkiye would normalise its relations with Armenia immediately after the signature of an Armenia–Azerbaijan peace treaty.

Russia’s failure to assert its will against Kiev has made many nervous about Armenia’s traditional dependence on Moscow for its security.

Within Armenia itself, some political forces and intellectuals are already demanding the withdrawal of the Russian military base at Gyumri from Armenia and argue that Armenia should leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization. The normalization of Armenia–Azerbaijan and Armenia–Turkey relations will undoubtedly strengthen these pro-Western voices in Yerevan. In August, Azerbaijani military action forced the handing back of the Lachin corridor between Armenia and Karabakh to Azerbaijan. This demonstrated to the Armenians that the Russian were not prepared to militarily intervene on their behalf and sounded alarm bells in Yerevan and among the Armenians of Karabakh, who see the Russians as their guarantors of security. These alarm bells rang again in September, when Azerbaijani forces crossed the state border between Armenia and Azerbaijan in some places after a military confrontation with Yerevan’s forces.

At the CSTO Summit held in Yerevan in mid-November Pashinyan proposed that the organisation support a statement demanding the “*immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Azerbaijani troops from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia to their original positions as of May 11, 2021.*” The other members (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) rejected Yerevan’s proposal in the CSTO statement, leading to an Armenian refusal to sign the document. Pashinyan complained that the CSTO’s inaction would give Baku “*the green light to continue the aggression against Armenia.*”

Two days before the CSTO summit in Yerevan the President of Azerbaijan had remarked that within this organisation “*Azerbaijan has more friends than Armenia.*” It seems that the new geopolitical reality, both in the region following the 2020 War, and globally, as a result of the events in Ukraine, was making the Türkiye/Azerbaijan axis an even more important relationship than that within the CSTO between Russia/Belarus and Armenia. Lukashenko was particularly dismissive of Armenia’s demands of action against Baku.

The most important thing about the September military escalation for Yerevan was who stopped it. The war of 2020 was stopped by Moscow and its ending carefully managed by the Kremlin. But in September the Armenians certainly

believe that calls from Washington to Baku were sufficient in rescuing them from defeat while the Russians stood idly by.

The West's diplomatic offensive in the South Caucasus reached its peak at the European Political Community summit held in Prague in early October, where the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders met in person and agreed to allow an EU observer mission to the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. This was something that would have been difficult to imagine a few months ago, before the events in Ukraine. Yerevan's decision to involve the European Union in the border delimitation process on the ground, and the EU's agreement to do so, was probably the immediate cause of Moscow's dissatisfaction with what it perceived to be an EU attempt to enhance its role from facilitator of the peace process to one akin to that of a mediator, like Russia. Azerbaijan has subsequently blocked the EU observers from appearing on its side of the border.

The most striking statement to come out of this summit, however, was the aforementioned declaration that the signing of a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia was expected by the end of the year.

The United States Strategic Interest

The Hudson Institute's roundtable Azerbaijan-Armenian Conflict and the American Interest produced in late September and involving several important figures in the US with long-standing dealings in the South Caucasus is a very enlightening webcast.

It should be pointed out that it contains the views of those who are critical of the current US administration's pro-Armenian policy with regard to the Southern Caucasus. They regard this as self-defeating in relation to the interests of the United States. However, recent turn of events suggests that a powerful case is now being made for Washington engaging more deeply within the region on a more balanced basis to advance US Eurasian strategic interests.

James Carafano, West Point and former Lt. Colonel US Army, a leading expert in US national security and foreign policy and Vice-President of the Heritage Foundation, argues that the United States must assert its influence in the South Caucasus because there are important opportunities for the West there. Having visited the liberated territories he notes that Armenia destruction created "a Carthage of these lands" and Azerbaijan needed to be supported in their redevelopment of them. There was an opportunity for Washington because Azerbaijan wanted security and stability in the region to promote economic development and the US could provide this. Michael Doran of the Hudson Institute suggested that the US had 3 major strategic objectives regarding the Southern Caucasus: Containing Russia, containing Iran and unlocking the natural resources of Central Asia for the West, particularly Kazakhstan's and Turkmenistan's vast energy deposits.

Doran notes that these very significant energy resources currently lie captive to the Russian and Chinese markets. A pipeline through Azerbaijan along the Southern Gas Corridor would facilitate the bringing of much greater gas supply from Central Asia than Azerbaijan could ever offer to Europe (maximum of 5 per cent of European needs). Zbigniew Brzezinski, of Grand Chessboard fame, who saw Armenian diaspora influence within the US Congress as detrimental to US interests in Eurasia, once described Azerbaijan as "the cork in the bottle containing the riches of Central Asia." He

wanted to open the Central Asian bottle of energy riches to the West through Turkiye, Azerbaijan and Iran (which he believed was only temporarily antagonistic to the West but had the same fundamental geopolitical interests).

Doran suggests that if Azerbaijan were to fall fully into the Russian sphere Moscow could dominate the European energy market indefinitely. On the other hand, if Washington succeeds in disabling Russia through its economic and military support for Kiev the vast energy riches of Central Asia may end up falling into the lap of China – the US's main geopolitical opponent. Therefore, it is imperative to provide Azerbaijan with an outlet to Europe in order for the West to capture the great energy resources of Central Asia. That is Azerbaijan's central strategic importance for US geopolitics – as a transit hub for the future Eurasian energy security system. The political character of Azerbaijan is of no consequence for Washington, as long as it is stable.

Luke Coffey argues that the US objective in Eurasia is to replace the Chinese Belt and Road and turn it into a transportation and development generator in the Western interest, usable by both Japan and South Korea, the US capitalist satellites in East Asia. This would involve the diversion of Turkmenistan's gas from the Russia/Iran North/South axis to Europe/East Asian West/East axis. Doran and Carafano believe that the infrastructure needs to be developed to enhance the capacity of the Middle Corridor to make this economically viable. To do this Washington needs to revive the interest and enthusiasm of the Clinton years, when Zbigniew Brzezinski was sent by Washington to do business with President Heydar Aliyev. A little American elbow grease needs to be applied to make this happen and create an energy corridor that enhances the independence of Azerbaijan and the Central Asian states from Russia and China. This is imperative when there is the distinct possibility that the decline of Russia, after Ukraine, brings the US/China geopolitical conflict on.

James Carafano makes the important point that fossil fuels are still viewed as the future, not the past. The ideological net zero commitment is completely at odds with physics, chemistry, economics and geopolitics. It is bogus because the new climate policy advocated is completely unrealistic if it is expected to produce the stable market conditions and energy supplies needed for political stability and development. Carafano predicts that the policy will have to be stopped internationally from Washington because fossil fuels are here to stay. Climate Emergency policies are dysfunctional and Europe, which has now been firmly placed back under US hegemony by the Ukraine war, and deprived of cheap Russian energy supplies, has not woken up to its predicament yet. Green energy replacing fossil fuels is a pipe-dream of European ideologues.

This all makes the South Caucasus and particularly Azerbaijan of increasing geopolitical concern for the United States.

Russian Fightback at Sochi

In late October, Moscow attempted to regain the initiative which was being wrested from it by Washington and the EU. The Russian President hosted the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Sochi.

The Sochi statement itself tends to suggest this was a kind of a holding operation. There was still some momentum in the Russian peace process. But nothing looked like it had changed. The major importance of it were the things that were

omitted from the statement. Pashinyan's wanting a reference to the future "status" or future negotiations on "status" were not in the statement. And certain territorial gains Azerbaijan has made, which Pashinyan wanted the Russians to reverse, were not overturned or even referred to in the statement. So, the most significant thing about the statement is what was not in the statement.

At Sochi President Aliyev made it clear that the question of special "status" for the Armenian populated parts of mountainous Karabakh was not on the table. He emphasized to Yerevan that Azerbaijan will only sign a peace treaty with Armenia if that treaty fixes the existence of all of Karabakh as an integral territorial administrative unit of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan again rejected any ethnic-based Armenian autonomy for Karabakh.

The Armenians were concerned that Washington was ready to support this position if it forced a Russian retreat from the region.

Some Armenian sources have suggested that the primary Moscow goal in the Sochi summit of October 31 was not to achieve a breakthrough in Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiations but to prevent the signature of a potential US-mediated peace agreement. This argument suggests that the Kremlin is satisfied with the current status quo with Karabakh being a *de jure* part of Azerbaijan but part of it remaining *de facto* controlled by Russia and its peacekeeping presence. The best case scenario for Russia, it is argued, would be to extend this situation for at least another 5 years after 2025 to maintain leverage over all parties. The Kremlin would then be able to use the absence of a peace settlement as justification for its continued military presence in the region.

On the other hand, a peace agreement would undermine the basis of the Russian military presence. Putin made the remark to Prime Minister Pashinyan that if he wished to sign an agreement with President Aliyev he could – but he would be taking his chances with the West if he did and, in that event, there would no longer be "Russian protection". That was probably designed to concentrate Armenian minds on the value of the Russian presence.

On 27 October, when asked a question by a journalist at the Valdai Club, Putin answered by saying that there were now two competing peace plans: One was represented by a Washington plan recognising "Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh as a whole". The second was the Russian plan which recognised the complexities of Karabakh, taking account of the Armenian presence as well as Azerbaijan's sovereignty.

This was undoubtedly Putin's play to Yerevan in providing a carrot along with the stick, to maintain Armenia's adherence to the Russian peace plan, lest they be tempted away by Nancy Pelosi, Washington and the EU into a new Promised Land of Western milk and honey.

A few days before the Sochi summit, Pashinyan said he was himself ready and willing to sign a document in Sochi that would extend the Russian peacekeepers' mandate by up to 20 years. However, the Sochi statement did not extend the mandate, currently set to expire in 2025.

Certainly if Russia's primary goal during the Sochi summit was to obstruct progress it succeeded. It was shown that Armenia and Azerbaijan could not agree an extensive joint statement because of disagreements. President Putin was able to present the argument that if Armenia and Azerbaijan could not agree on an extensive statement, how could they ever agree on a final peace agreement? Both Armenia and Azerbaijan confirmed the significant role of the Russian

peacekeepers and agreed not to use force or the threat of force in the future. The Sochi summit therefore succeeded in obstructing any hopes Washington had in detaching either Armenia or Azerbaijan, or both, at present from the Russian process.

After Sochi Edmon Marukyan, Yerevan's Ambassador-at-large said that Armenia's negotiators were "satisfied" with the Sochi summit because it showed that two competing peace tracks – a Western one and a Russian one – are not "contradictory." This was very much in line with Armenia's policy of riding 4 horses at once – US, France, Russia and Iran – waiting to see which horse delivers the best deal for them. However, the fact that these 4 horses are riding off in different directions will surely make this policy unsustainable and hazardous.

Some pro-Western observers have suggested that Baku should jump at the Western offer and embrace the Washington peace process as an alternative to the Kremlin's. But Baku is wise to express caution at "Greeks bearing gifts". For one thing, any such move would drive Yerevan firmly toward Moscow and the protection of Russian power. The Azerbaijan Government would be wary of Western Governments, particularly those of the US and France, with their influential Armenian diasporas and interest groups, presenting themselves as "honest brokers" when they have been pro-Armenian before, during and after the wars over Karabakh.

The French meddling in the Karabakh issue is particularly detrimental to Western interests in Azerbaijan, including those of the US. The French Senate's hostile Resolution of 15 November along with Emmanuel Macron's statement of 12 October, accusing Baku of "unleashing a terrible war against Armenia in 2020," will have confirmed Baku's view of France as a historically anti-Azerbaijan, anti-Turk and anti-Muslim force. It has raised suspicions that Paris is angling to expand its influence in the South Caucasus and ultimately displace Russia's position in Armenia by seeking to act as Yerevan's patron and protector. This is dangerous because, with the departure of Britain from the European Union, France is the main military power of the EU and seems to be operating a parallel policy to that of Brussels. And the foreign interventions of Paris, like in Algeria and lately in Libya have almost always led to chaos in the regions concerned with the French retiring home leaving a mess behind them. Baku can only see the hostile, pro-Armenian meddlesome France beneath the EU mask of benevolence.

The Azerbaijani experience of the OSCE from 1994–2020 would not have engendered confidence in Baku in the objectiveness of Western diplomacy. The historical experience of the 1920s, when the Western Governments abandoned the Azerbaijan Republic to the Red Army also could not be forgotten. A year or two earlier Russia was down and out and on its knees, with Britain in control of the South Caucasus. By 1920 Russia was back in the region for a further 70 years. Predictions of Russian disaster should always be treated with a pinch of salt by any statesmen who have to deal with the reality of power in the region!

Another possible platform for the peace process is emerging in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), where, as SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming said in March 2022, the granting of observer status to Azerbaijan and Armenia is now being actively discussed. The 3+3 regional formula proposed by the Azerbaijani and Turkish Presidents remains relevant too. This format could bring Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia together with Iran, Russia, and Türkiye in order to deal with regional issues. At present this proposal

is handicapped by Georgia's reluctance to participate within such a format due to its unresolved territorial disputes with Russia over the two breakaway entities, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that unilaterally declared their independence from Georgia in 2008.

The hedging Armenian policy, and the West's toleration of Yerevan's links with Russia and Iran, which would not be tolerable in relation to other countries, makes Azerbaijan's position a difficult one. It can only pursue a principled position in relation to Moscow and Washington and react to Yerevan's opportunistic choice when it comes. On the other hand, Azerbaijan's traditional balanced, policy of non-alignment has been provided with a breathing space by the Western intervention and an opportunity to pursue its more independent policy in the future.

All this resembles a game of Chess on the South Caucasus chessboard.

Approaching High Noon, 2025?

Early 2025, when the mandate of the Russian peacekeepers comes up for renewal, is likely to be a High Noon moment – unless it is postponed until 2030. At that point it is likely that Baku will be faced with a fateful choice: whether to collaborate with Moscow in an extension of the mandate or to request termination of it.

It is possible that Baku may choose to kick the can down the road in order to complete the process of reconstruction and repopulation and buy more time for confidence building with the remaining Armenian population of Karabakh and Yerevan.

After the 2020 war was won the Azerbaijan government began to reconstruct its liberated territories after 30 years of occupation. Up to June 2022, the Azerbaijani government had already invested more than \$2.5 billion in the reconstruction process and allocated a further \$1.7bn for the following year. In July 2022, the return of the first 10 families, to the Zangilan region, took place. The process of restoring roads and transport net-works in Karabakh have so far included 600 kilometres of roads, regional interlinking motorways, and more than 150 kilometres of railway tracks. The flagship in this regard is the 100-kilometer-long Victory Road to Shusha, which has already been completed. In February 2021, the foundation of the Horadiz-Agband railway line to the districts of Fuzuli, Zangilan, Lachin, and Jibrayil was laid. The strategic importance of this railway line, with a total length of 100 kilometres, is significant. First of all, transportation infrastructure will play a decisive role in the bringing of Azerbaijani citizens to the liberated lands. Secondly, it will be instrumental in establishing a direct transportation link between Azerbaijan's mainland and its Nakhchivan exclave and onwards to Turkiye.

The construction of new airports also gives an impetus to the development of the liberated territories. In September 2021, an international airport in Fizuli was put into operation in a record seven months. A second one, located in Zangilan, is expected to be commissioned before the end of 2022. The construction of a third airport in the city of Lachin is earmarked for completion in 2024. This is possible with the return of the city of Lachin, as well as the villages of Sus and Zabuh, to the control of Azerbaijan at the end of August 2022.

Unfortunately the extensive land-mining of the occupied territories by the Armenians has led to the slower progress

of reconstruction and particularly repopulation that would be desired.

In 2025 the Azerbaijan Government may perhaps bite the bullet and request Moscow to withdraw its peacekeeping forces, which have been useful in some respects in curbing (although not ending) Armenian military activity. Yerevan's repeated refusal to implement Article 4 of the Trilateral Agreement and Moscow's reluctance to force adherence to it on the Karabakh Armenians is a sore point for Baku. Article 4 requires the "withdrawal of the Armenian troops" concurrently with the deployment of the Russian peacekeeping forces makes it clear that "Armenian troops" does not refer solely to the official Armed Forces of Armenia but also to men at arms under the command and control of the remnant of the Armenian secessionist entity.

In circumstances of requesting the termination of the Russian presence it is likely that Baku may have to make one or other concessions to Moscow and/or Armenians. It is perhaps too optimistic to believe that the Kremlin will not exact a price for its cooperation in this matter, and it is likely that this will mean a security arrangement treaty of some sort to the satisfaction of Moscow. Of course, the outcome of the war in Ukraine has made speculation about this much more difficult than it would otherwise have been.

Azerbaijan has in its favour, however, the importance the Kremlin attaches to good relations with Baku and Ankara, which is of far greater geopolitical significance for Russia than what it has with Yerevan or the territory of the Karabakh rump. That was the fatal miscalculation the Armenians made when they believed the Kremlin would intervene on their behalf during the War.

On the other hand, if Baku attempts to outmanoeuvre the Kremlin to lever the Russian peacekeepers out in 2025 there is an imperative to work with Yerevan and the Karabakh Armenians in the mutual independence interest. That means the development of regional confidence building and inter-governmental structures aimed at alleviating the present antagonism that exists and which will affect the future inclusion of the Karabakh Armenians within the Azerbaijan State.

President Aliyev has made recent statements to that effect:

"We are ready to talk to people who live in Karabakh and want to live there. We are ready for it. By the way, this process has already begun. If there is no interference from (other) countries... and no attempts are made to stop this process, then I think it could go well. However, this has nothing to do with Pashinyan and his government. As I said, there should be a consensus between Azerbaijan, the European Union, the United States and Russia, between those countries, and about structures that are capable of assisting in this matter."

An Alternative Suggestion

What I have outlined above are the changes that have taken place in the Armenia/Azerbaijan peace process since the ending of the war in 2020 and the recent change in the process from a Russian one into a competing Russian vs. Western one. In some respects the reappearance of the West has been a positive force, injecting momentum into a slow-burning process, hampered by Russia's distraction by events in Ukraine.

However, there are dangers in this in relation to the South Caucasus becoming part of a wider, intensifying geopolitical conflict between the West and Russia. The region has had its

fill of wars and the intrigues of international powers and it could do with a respite from such, as was promised by the armistice of 2020.

So, the present writer will make some brief suggestions as to how a positive course could be plotted that would insulate the region from the negative aspects of geopolitical competition whilst availing of the positive aspects of international assistance in the peace process.

Along with the Five Principles put forward by the Azerbaijan Government the following conditions could be provided for:

The South Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) to establish a formal non-aligned neutral buffer zone between the West and Russia.

No foreign forces to be permanently stationed on the territories of the 3 South Caucasus states.

No membership of global military alliances (i.e. NATO and CSTO).

Establishment of Transcaucasus Intergovernmental Council to facilitate economic and security for the mutual benefit of the 3 states in the region.

The point of this would be to secure a peaceful Russian withdrawal from the South Caucasus while guaranteeing Moscow's security concerns about NATO/Western military enlargement into the region. It would remove Moscow's hold over Armenia's independence and sovereignty and end the manipulation of forces within the region by external powers for their own interests. There would be no repeat of the tragedy that has engulfed Ukraine and its people in the South Caucasus.

The South Caucasus would be a model for peaceful coexistence and cooperation of peoples, involving mutual security, stability and economic development.

Russia and the 'Fourth Political Theory'

By Peter Brooke

At the end of my article about the 'Katehon' website in the last issue of Irish Foreign Affairs, I offered tentatively to 'descend more to particulars, the particular shape of Russia and its population(s).'

I still don't feel able to do this. 'Russia' - the Russian Federation - is an immensely complex network of different cultures. In some ways it occurs to me that Western notions of Russia have been greatly influenced by the part of 'Russia' closest to Europe, namely Ukraine. But how much do we know about the Republic of Adygea (population 452,000), the Republic of Bashkortostan (population 4,097,000), the Republic of Buryatia (population 1,003,000), the Kubardino-Balkar Republic (population 897,000), the Komi Republic (population 1,024,000) - to mention only five of the twenty one more or less autonomous republics among the eighty five administrative divisions which constitute what we gaily call 'Russia'?

For the moment, then, I'm going to continue along the lines I started in my 'Katehon' article, in particular looking at the thinking of one of its principal and best known (in the West at least) contributors, Alexander Dugin, posing the problem of how the relative success of Vladimir Putin in establishing a politically stable Russia able to withstand the pressures exercised by 'the West', following the collapse of the USSR, can be continued once Putin himself departs the scene. A question inseparable from the question of what 'Russia' is as a moral unit, given the immensity of its land and the variety of cultures it embraces.

NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM

Dugin first came to public notice in the 1990s as the theorist of the 'National Bolshevik Party.' The flag of the National Bolshevik Party was a red base with a white circle but instead of the swastika one might expect to see in the white circle there was a hammer and sickle. It looked at first sight like a joke, the more so because the leader together with Dugin was Eduard Limonov, an exotic figure whose semi-autobiographical novel, *It's me, Eddie*, an account of his life in the punk subculture of New York, 'scandalised the Russian public with its many pornographic descriptions

of homosexual acts involving the narrator.' I'm quoting the Wikipedia account. The cheapest copy of the English translation of *It's me, Eddie* I've found online costs £200.00. The party had a violent side to it and Limonov spent some time in prison for arms purchasing before eventually, to Dugin's disgust, teaming up with Gary Kasparov's pro-American 'Other Russia' party.¹

But the term 'National Bolshevism' was not invented by Dugin and Limonov. There had in fact been two movements in the 1920s which were called, or called themselves, 'National Bolshevik' - one of them Russian, the other German. The Russian one, based in Paris or Berlin, whichever happened at the time to offer cheaper living accommodation to Russian émigrés, published a paper called 'Changing Landmarks'. The reference was to the collection of essays - 'Landmarks' - published in 1909 by a group of Marxist intellectuals who had been converted to a more traditionally Russian, or Russian Orthodox, political philosophy. The best known theorist of the Changing Landmarks group was Nikolai Ustrialov, though he was actually part of the Russian émigré community in Harbin, in China. Ustrialov memorably compared Russian Bolshevism to a radish - red on the outside, white on the inside. The great achievement of the Bolsheviks in his view was to restore the Russian state after it had collapsed through the liberal revolution in February 1917 and the subsequent civil wars. The movement was supported with Soviet government money and encouraged émigrés with skills needed in Russia to return. Ustrialov himself returned and I think was engaged

¹ I give a much fuller account of all this in Peter Brooke: 'Third Rome, Third International, Third Reich - A review of Alexander Dugin: *The Fourth Political Theory*, London (Arktos) 2012', *The Heidegger Review*, No. 1, July 2014, accessible on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/dugin-index/> Limonov, it should be said, himself Ukrainian, was very critical of Putin's failure after the Maidan coup of 2014, to take the Donbass as well as Crimea.

in forestry projects². Like many other interesting Russians, his life came to an end in 1937.³

There was so far as I know no connection between this Russian National Bolshevism - strongest in the early 1920s, the period of Lenin's New Economic Policy - and the German National Bolshevism, which came to the fore in the late 1920s. The leading figure here was Ernst Niekisch and we find ourselves in the exciting world of youth movements in the Weimar period, torn between the competing claims of Nationalism and Socialism. Niekisch's own background was initially, apparently at least, on the left. In 1919 he was President of the Central Committee of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Councils of Bavaria and as a result was imprisoned for two years for 'high treason'. After his release, however, two ideas were central to his thinking - the need for a strong German state and the recognition that Germany's worst enemies were Britain and America. Both of these convictions led him to sympathy with the USSR where the Bolsheviks had developed a strong state which stood in decided opposition to Britain and America. But he wasn't tempted to join the Communist Party. The Communist Party was 'internationalist', meaning in practice that it subordinated itself to the Russians. What Niekisch wanted to see was a strong German state in alliance with the USSR. As a German patriot he found himself in sympathy with the tendency known as the Conservative Revolution, in particular with the writer Ernst Junger.

Niekisch was ferociously opposed to Hitler and the National Socialists whom he saw, not without some justification, as a weapon being prepared by the 'West' to be directed against the USSR. He identified with what he saw as a Prussian, Protestant, tradition in opposition to Hitler's Catholic and Latin-oriented Bavaria. I quote the account by the French right wing theorist, Alain de Benoist, a close associate of Dugin's:

'Not only was Hitler not a true revolutionary anti-capitalist, his "socialism" only being a lure to use radicalised petit-bourgeois, but in searching for the good grace of Italy, England, and France - that Niekisch denounced under the name of "Brito-Germania," the Anglophilia of the "Hitler-Hess line" - it placed him "on the terrain of Versailles," which showed that he had taken the role of "the gendarme of the West" by launching a "crusade" against Bolshevism. And Niekisch risked this prophecy: If Germany misguidedly gives itself to Hitler, it will surely go towards disaster. "It will remain an exhausted people ... without hope, and the order of Versailles will only be stronger than ever."⁴

Niekisch's weekly paper *Entscheidung* ('Decision') was banned by the Nazis soon after they took power and he himself was arrested in 1937, the same year in which Ustrialov was executed, spending the war years in prison. Walking the tightrope between Nationalism and Bolshevism was a dangerous exercise.⁵

2 Dmitry Shlapentokh: 'Bolshevism as a Fedorovian regime', *Cahiers du monde russe*, October-December 1996, vol.37, no 4, p.447.

3 Robert C. Williams: "'Changing Landmarks" in Russian Berlin, 1922-1924', *Slavic Review*, Dec 1986, Vol 227, No 4.

4 Alain de Benoist: 'Preface to "Hitler: A German Fate" and Other National Bolshevik Writings', accessible at <https://niekischtranslationproject.wordpress.com/tag/alain-de-benoist/page/2/>

5 It happens that a self-professed 'National Bolshevik' party has recently been established in the UK. Called the 'National Peoples Party' its founder is Peter Wilberg, a name

THE FOURTH POLITICAL THEORY

From his involvement with the National Bolshevik Party, Dugin went on to elaborate what he calls the 'Fourth Political Theory.' The three previous political theories were Liberalism, Communism and Fascism. Communism and Fascism had been comprehensively defeated and only Liberalism, the ideology of the Anglo-Saxon world, was left. This of course was the thesis of Francis Fukuyama's famous book *The End of History*. Liberal Democracy was now established as the optimum form of government, the direction in which the whole of history had been headed. It was firmly established in the United States and Europe and what 'history' was left was simply a matter of the rest of the world catching up.

Fukuyama's thesis was, however, challenged by Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilisations*. Fukuyama's view was based on the notion of a common human nature - that basically all of us have the same needs and desires, in Fukuyama's view needs and desires that could be satisfied by all the good things that are available in the United States. Huntington however argued that there are essential differences between the human natures formed in the context of the different historically evolved civilisations of the world, and these cannot be easily dissolved and will result in conflict. As Pat Walsh has pointed out, *The Clash of Civilisations* includes a map showing the 'Eastern boundary of Western civilisations.' The line separating 'Western Christianity' on the one hand from 'Orthodox Christianity and Islam' on the other passes through the middle of Ukraine (and indeed also Belarus and Romania).

But the 'civilisations' Huntington evoked were larger than individual nation states. They relate to a concept developed by Carl Schmitt in the 1920s of the 'great space', which was, as it happens, adopted by Niekisch, living in East Germany after the war. And this is the idea taken up by Dugin with his 'multipolar world.'⁶

Although this term is central to Dugin's thinking I don't know to what extent he could be regarded as its originator or principal advocate back in the 1990s, but it has become central to the discourse of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and is unquestionably a large part of the appeal Russia has for countries that, one way or another, find themselves at odds with the American unipolar 'rules based international order.' However, the terms 'civilisation', 'great space', 'pole' imply, as I've suggested, something other than the nation state, something more closely resembling 'empire', and, as we saw in my previous article on the 'Katehon', Dugin, who regards the 'nation' as an artificial construct corresponding to the needs of the rising bourgeoisie - a bourgeois 'invention' as argued by Benedict Anderson - isn't afraid to admit the fact. What he has in mind, however, is a land-based, contiguous empire along the lines of the old Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empires. These - based on a common religious idea - were quite different from the European - British, French, Dutch, Belgian, Spanish, Portuguese and, late in the game, German - empires, made up as they were of culturally very varied territories scattered throughout the world. The First World War could be interpreted as the triumph of the sea-based empires over the land-based empires. It was the great - indeed quite breath-taking - achievement of the Bolsheviks

that may ring a bell with some readers of Irish Foreign Affairs. See <https://nationalpeoplesparty.wordpress.com/about/>

6 Alexander Dugin: *The Theory of a multipolar world*, translated by Michael Millerman, London, Arktos, 2021.

to preserve, and eventually to expand, the Russian land-based empire.

'Russia' - the 'Russian Federation' which is essentially an empire - now finds itself in Dugin's eyes charged with the job of opposing what he sees as a unipolar American empire. The ideology of the American empire is triumphant liberalism but Dugin would argue that liberalism:

'is an equally outdated, cruel, misanthropic ideology like the two previous ones. The term 'liberalism' should be equated with the terms fascism and Communism. Liberalism is responsible for no fewer historic crimes than fascism (Auschwitz) and Communism (the Gulag): it is responsible for slavery, the destruction of the Native Americans in the United States, for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for the aggression in Serbia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, for the devastation and the economic exploitation of millions of people on the planet, and for the ignoble and cynical lies which whitewash this history. But, most important, we must reject the base upon which these three ideologies stand: the monotonic process in all its forms, that is, evolution, growth, modernisation, progress, development, and all that which seemed scientific in the Nineteenth century but was exposed as unscientific in the Twentieth century. We must also abandon the philosophy of development and propose the following slogan: life is more important than growth. Instead of the ideology of development, we must place our bets on the ideology of conservatism and conservation.'⁷

Liberalism, he argues, based as it is on individual freedom, contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Nothing stays still and the process of the freeing of the individual ultimately leads to the freeing of the individual from everything that gives substance to human being - attachment to the soil, family, ethnos (identification with particular people or community which Dugin distinguishes sharply from the idea of nation), creative work with one's own hands, religion - especially religion of the sacramental, priestly, 'magical' type, 'Orthodoxy' for example. All that has, one might think, already gone, but Dugin does not accept the 'eschatological' view that history is headed in one particular direction. Time, in Dugin's view, can turn back on itself and what has been lost can be restored. That is, after all, what the Soviet Union experienced when it went back to capitalism, national conflicts and Orthodoxy as a national religion. This flexibility of time leads Dugin to express considerable interest in and sympathy for the German 'Conservative revolutionaries' - Niekisch, Moeller van den Bruck, Junger, Schmitt. One could suggest that Dugin's Fourth Theory, like 'National Bolshevism,' is made up of what he believes can still be discerned as valuable in the wider circle of thinking that surrounded both Fascism and Communism:

'The second and third political theories [Fascism and Communism - PB] must be reconsidered, selecting in them that which must be discarded and that which has value in itself. As complete ideologies, trying to manifest themselves in a literal sense, they are entirely useless, either theoretically or practically. However, certain marginal elements which advocated ideas that were generally not implemented, and which remained on the periphery or in the shadows ... may, unexpectedly, turn out to be extremely valuable and saturated with meaning and intuition.' (ibid., p.24)

But he distinguishes the Conservative Revolutionaries sharply from what he calls the Conservative Fundamentalists:

⁷ Alexander Dugin: *The Fourth Political Theory*, translated by Mark Sleboda and Michael Millerman, London, Arktos, 2012, p.65,

'the Conservative Revolutionaries say to the conservative fundamentalists: 'You offer to return to a condition when man exhibited only the first symptoms of illness, when there first began the hacking cough. Today this man lies dying, but you speak of how good things were for him earlier. You contrast a coughing man with a dying one. But we want to dig down to discover from whence came the infection and why he started to cough. The fact that, in coughing, he does not die, but goes to work, does not convince us that he is whole and healthy. Somewhere that virus must have nested even earlier... 'We believe', continue the Conservative Revolutionaries, 'that in the very Source, in the very Deity, in the very First Cause, there is drawn up the intention of organising this eschatological drama.' In such a vision, the modern acquires a paradoxical character. It is not merely today's sickness (in the repudiated present), it is a disclosure in today's world of that which yesterday's world prepared for it (so precious for traditionalists). Modernity does not become better from this; and tradition, meanwhile, loses its unequivocal positivity.' (p.95)

In Dugin's view the direction in which liberalism was heading, the true 'eschatology' of liberalism - 'post modernism' - was freedom from the last contact with the real world, a freedom that could be symbolised by 'virtual reality.' The individual enters into a world of his or her own making (or more likely chooses a world of someone else's making) and in that world he or she can be whatever they want to be at that particular moment.

Which brings me to Heidegger. Dugin says that each of the major political theories - Liberalism, Communism, Fascism and his own fourth theory - has its own 'subject'. In the case of Liberalism it is the individual, in Communism it is class, in Fascism he separates Italian Fascism from German National Socialism. For Italian Fascism it is the state and in National Socialism it is race. In the case of the Fourth Political Theory, it is 'dasein.'

The term 'dasein' was not of course invented or first introduced in philosophy by Heidegger but it is very closely associated with him. Henry Corbin, the specialist in Iranian philosophy who was the first person to translate Heidegger into French, rendered it as 'human reality.' Another translation that has been proposed is 'being in the world.' Being, in this case human being, that is situated in the world, I would say, using a term Heidegger would never use though I suspect he wouldn't have disagreed with it, created by God. Or the gods. Heidegger declared that to be an issue as yet undecided.⁸

But it is also of course the world as formed in a particular human collectivity, culture or civilisation - Islamic, Buddhist, animist, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Confucian or whatever. Even perhaps, as many of these tendencies would understand Western civilisation, Nihilist. While rejecting nationalism and racism (in its widest sense - 'the very ideology of progress is racist') Dugin enthusiastically advocates:

'a positive attitude toward the ethnos, an ethnocentrism directed toward that type of existence which is formed within the structure of the ethnos itself, and which remains

⁸ Martin Heidegger: *Contributions to Philosophy - The event*, translated by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniella Vallega-Neu, Indiana University Press, 2012, p.345. I discuss the relation between Heidegger and Dugin in Peter Brooke: 'Absolute Beginner - A review of Alexander Dugin: *Martin Heidegger - The Philosophy of Another Beginning*, Arlington VA, Radix/Washington Summit, 2014', Heidegger Review, No. 3, October 2016, accessible on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/heidegger/>

intact throughout a variety of stages, including the highly differentiated types of societies which a people may develop in the course of their history. This topic has found deep resonance in certain philosophical directions of the Conservative Revolution (for instance, Carl Schmitt and his theory of 'the rights of peoples', in Adam Müller, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and so on) or the German school of ethnic sociology (Wilhelm Mühlmann, Richard Thurnwald, and others). Ethnos is the greatest value of the Fourth Political Theory as a cultural phenomenon; as a community of language, religious belief, daily life, and the sharing of resources and goals; as an organic entity written into an 'accommodating landscape' (Lev Gumilev); as a refined system for constructing models for married life; as an always-unique means of establishing a relationship with the outside world; as the matrix of the 'lifeworld' (Edmund Husserl); and as the source of all the 'language-games' (Ludwig Wittgenstein). Of course, ethnicity was not the focal point either in National Socialism, or in Fascism. Yet, liberalism as an ideology, calling for the liberation from all forms of collective identity in general, is entirely incompatible with the ethnos and ethnocentrism, and is an expression of a systemic theoretical and technological ethnocide.' (p.46)⁹

The great advantage of 'Empire' over 'nation', of course, is that, as in the case of the Russian Federation, it can accommodate many different ethnic groups.

RUSSIA AND THE 'HISTORY OF BEING'

I want to end with a little improvisation of my own which brings together Heidegger, some of the issues we've been looking at and the present conflict in Ukraine - a conflict which, whether or not it actually develops into a world war, I believe will have the historical importance of a world war.

Heidegger's theme, evoked in the word 'being', is the human sense of reality and he argues that this evolves through human thought, specifically the thought of the philosophers. The direction, we might say the eschatology, of our own sense of reality was set in his view by the questions posed and answers given by the Greek philosophers, starting with Anaximander, Parmenides and Heraclitus but taking a definite form in the work of Plato and Aristotle. What followed - including the whole course of Western Christianity - was a working out of the thoughts that had been developed at that time, culminating in the German philosophy of the nineteenth century and especially the work of Nietzsche. Nietzsche, in a great anguish that ended in madness, confronted the fact that all that was left to us of our sense of reality was the Will to Power, expressed not necessarily in the obvious form of political power but in our identification with 'machination' - in what could be done with technology. For Nietzsche, as for Heidegger, this was a devastation of the spirit and Heidegger saw his task as trying to bring about 'another beginning' - going back to and rethinking the original questioning of the Greeks.

What he is describing however is the evolution of European - and eventually American - "Western" - thought. Despite seeing its origin in Greece Heidegger shows no interest in what happened subsequently in Greek culture. His Christianity is entirely Western - Catholic and Protestant. He has no interest in Greek Orthodoxy. And yet it was in Constantinople that the actual writings of the Greek philosophers and poets were preserved.

They were preserved, so to speak, in amber - a precious cultural heritage, something to be proud of but nonetheless not particularly relevant to the needs of the day. The questions posed had now been answered through the Christian revelation and the understanding of that revelation gained by the Fathers of the Church. It was from Constantinople that the Kiev-based 'Kingdom of Rus' was converted. The Greeks gave the Slavs Christianity, but they didn't give them their own classical culture. Why, they would have reckoned, would the Slavs be interested in that?

So we have Greek Orthodoxy preserving classical culture as something to be proud of but safely installed in the past much as we might regard Anglo Saxon or early Celtic literature; Russian Orthodoxy ignorant of classical culture; and European Christianity, fascinated by classical culture, believing it to contain the means by which the world, including the Christian revelation, could be understood.

The Kiev-based Kingdom of Rus, made up of a number of more or less independent principalities, broke up definitively under the impact of the Mongols. One part came under the domination of Poland and Lithuania and the other became what we now call 'Russia'. The people who subsequently became known as Ukrainians are the people who maintained their commitment to Orthodoxy under Polish Catholic domination. The area round the Dnieper became a war zone in which an Orthodox population, as 'Cossacks', notionally under Polish rule but actually highly independent, confronted the continuing Mongol population, the Tatars, who controlled the Black Sea coastline including Crimea, in alliance with the Ottomans who now controlled Constantinople.

It was in this area that, in the seventeenth century, a most extraordinary thing happened - the establishment of the first 'Russian' (if we can use that term) theological academy. It would be better to call it a Cossack academy. It was formed under Cossack patronage - at a time of very great violent confrontations, not just with Tatars but also with Poles and Jews - to defend Orthodoxy against the 'Uniates' in Galicia - the area with an Orthodox population that was more securely under Polish rule. The Uniates were Orthodox priests who, under pressure of persecution, accepted incorporation into the European Roman church, together with its theology, but were allowed to continue using the Greek/Slavonic liturgy.

Nonetheless the 'Kiev-Moghila Academy', as it came to be known, had undergone the influence both of the Catholic Church and of the Renaissance, with its renewed interest in classical culture - fuelled as it was by the great abundance of material that had become available since Constantinople had fallen to the Ottomans. The language of instruction was Latin, the case for Orthodoxy was argued in the terms of scholastic philosophy, the languages of culture were Latin and Polish and exotic subjects such as 'rhetoric' and 'poetics' were taught. It was, in other words, quite alien to Orthodox Christianity as understood in 'Great Russia' as it had emerged from under the domination of the Mongols.

But it was highly appreciated by Peter the Great in pursuit of his project of re-orientating Russia in a European direction. Peter in the eighteenth century suppressed the Moscow patriarchate. The Church was reorganised along Anglican or Lutheran lines as a government department under the direction of Theophan Prokopovich, a professor in the Kiev academy. Seminaries on Kievan lines were organised throughout Russia.¹⁰ The twentieth century Russian Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky refers to this as a

⁹ We can note in this context his book *Ethnos and Society*, translated by Michael Millerman, London, Arktos, 2018.

¹⁰ See e.g. my essay 'Solzhenitsyn and the 'Russian Question'', Part 19 Who are the Ukrainians? - Part one, from *Kievan Rus' to the Polish partitions' Church and State*, No.148,

‘ukrainisation’ of the Russian Church and the overall process, starting in the seventeenth century, produced the schism between the official government sponsored church and the ‘Old Believers’, who wanted to keep to the old Russian ways. Dugin, incidentally, defines himself as an Old Believer and the Dugin family seem to have played a significant role in Old Believer history.

Without wishing to attribute everything to the Kiev academy, it is only in the nineteenth century that Russia, in the person of Pushkin, produced a literature that is readily comprehensible to the European mind. The point here is that Russia received the line of thought that Heidegger considers as originating with the Greeks quite late in the day, via Ukraine, and as something alien to itself. Its culture, then - and one feels this already with Pushkin, the most Renaissance orientated of Russian writers - combines that European tradition with something else. Maybe this could be illustrated with Pushkin’s poem *The Bronze Horseman*.

It begins with a celebration of the beauty and elegance of St Petersburg and praise for Peter, using it ‘to cut a window through to Europe /To stand with a firm foothold on the sea ... A hundred years have passed, and the young city/The grace and wonder of the northern lands/Out of the gloom of forests and the mud/Of marshes splendidly has risen.’ It then tells us of the young, poor worker, Yevgeni, dreaming of the possibility of marrying the girl he loves, Parasha, while outside his window a storm is brewing. The storm swells up, the river Neva overflows its banks, Yevgeni is next seen sitting astride the marble statue of a lion in Peter’s square with the water lapping at his feet, anxiously looking towards the obviously poor quarter where Parasha lives. Eventually the waters recede:

‘Thus a marauder, bursting into a village with
His savage band, smashes, slashes, shatters
And robs, shrieks, gnashing of teeth, violence,
Oaths, panic, howls! And weighed down by their plunder,
Fearing pursuit, exhausted, the robbers leave
For home, dropping their plunder on the way.’

Yevgeni desperately then gets a boatman to take him to Pasha’s house while ‘heavily the Neva breathed like a horse/ Galloping home from battle’ to find her house has been swept away. The revelation drives him mad and he takes to wandering the streets: ‘He fed on scraps handed to him through windows/Tattered and mouldy grew his shabby clothes./Children threw stones at him.’ Eventually he finds himself in Peter’s square where the stone lions are and the huge bronze statue of Peter, erected on the order of Catherine II:

‘His breast contracted, his brow was pressed against
The cold railings, his eyes were sealed by mist,
Flames ran through his heart, his blood boiled.
Sombrely he stood before the statue;
His teeth clenched, his hands tightened, trembling
With wrath, possessed by a dark power, he whispered:
“All right, then, wonder worker, just you wait!”¹¹

And then he runs off, convinced that the statue, the bronze horseman is chasing after him. It is surely, already, the world

April-June, 2022, accessible at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/solzhenitsyn/ukrainians-1/>

11 Alexander Pushkin: *The Bronze horseman and other poems*, translated by D.M.Thomas, Penguin, 1982.

of Dostoyevsky. Nicholas Berdyaev in his book *The Russian Idea* quotes, as fundamental to the Russian view of the world the poet Fyodor Tyutchev saying that the world is

‘A carpet flung over the abyss
And we float, by the flaming abyss
Surrounded on all sides.’¹²

The National Bolshevik argument was that Russia had received the essentially European idea of Marxism and turned it into something else. Perhaps that can be illustrated by an extract from Ernst Niekisch’s *Considerations on a voyage to Russia* (1931):

‘The portraits of heroes of the revolution, the revolutionary literature, the figures of Russian production, the yield tables of the factory, the crews of boats, the kolkhozes are icons, holy books, religious signs of these modern places of spiritual elevation. This new myth shows its cohesive force, although it must make its proofs under the lighting of an awakened conscience. It culminates in the cult that vows to the body of Lenin. The mausoleum before the Kremlin, facing the extraordinary church of St Basil, dating from the epoch of Ivan the Terrible, is as functional as it is striking. Each day, thousands of people file before the embalmed corpse, resting in his glass coffin, illuminated by spotlights. In this place, one cannot shudder before the mystic secret floating in the air and immortally based in transcendence. The naive soul can be moved, but the cold scientific curiosity found there is also realized. The ambiance obliges no one to respect the embalmed corpse like a wonder worker and saviour. The light there is so flooding that it nearly reduces him to a wax figure. The myth flowering here borders where scientific curiosity begins. But, despite all, the will to believe is strong enough to let it divert itself from the austerity of the environment; the rationalism of daily life cannot remove his confidence. The myth flourishes even under the same strong lighting of the factory rooms. “For us, the Russians”, wrote a fervent communist, “things are easier than for other peoples. When we are at an impasse, we consult our Lenin and there we find advice.”¹³

Russia is not, or is only tentatively, a participant in what Heidegger sees as the most fundamental characteristic of the European sense of being. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the intervention in Ukraine, it represents for the foreseeable future a break with the integration into Europe that appeared as a real possibility in the Gorbachev years. But to quote Dugin (*Fourth political theory*, p.109): ‘*even this was not only an extrapolation of the bravado-based, propagandistic pretensions of the West itself and a result of the network of influence’s induction, but also a form of Russian cargo-cults: the first McDonald’s, private banks and clips of rock bands shown on Soviet television were perceived as “sacral objects”*’.¹⁴

(Continued p.11)

12 Quoted in Nicolas Berdyaev: *The Russian Idea*, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1947, p.84.

13 <https://niekischtranslationproject.wordpress.com/tag/considerations-on-a-voyage-to-russia/>

14 The ‘cargo cults’, product of the encounter between a technologically advanced culture and a pretechnological culture, saw the advantages of technology in simple terms of cause and effect. The white invaders would clear a strip of land, for example, and a plane full of good things would then arrive from the sky. The native inhabitants thought if they cleared a strip of land in the form of a runway, a plane full of good things would arrive for them as well.