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RUSSIA'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CIVILIZED WEST ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Abstract: The occupation of the sovereign territories of Georgia by the Russian Federation, and later the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have emphasized that the great powers are still demonstrating their power to satisfy their "imperialist" ambitions and to establish a "new world order".

The Russia-Ukraine war is a huge challenge for the civilized West, where its leadership and involvement are crucial in solving the problems. Against the background of the current events, the diplomatic efforts of the West are aimed at avoiding war. All of this made the world community think again about what the 21st century world order is like, which is now being formed and will take its full form after the Russia-Ukraine war.

Key words: Russia-Ukraine war, civilized West, world order.

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Introduction

Since the Caribbean crisis of the last century, there has been no confrontation on such a scale in the world as the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. In fact, this is not only Russia's war against Ukraine, but also the largest confrontation between Russia and the civilized West.

131 countries were involved in the war - practically the entire West. If we look at history, we will see that this is not the first time that Russia has fought half of Europe.

Back in the 19th century, during the Crimean War in 1855, Russia fought half of Europe alone. Nicholas I was not helped even by the countries he had saved - Prussia and Austria, which Russia had saved by suppressing the Hungarian uprising.

This time, the situation is made more dramatic by the sanctions imposed by the West. Of course, the dedication of the Ukrainian people is very important, but the sanctions imposed by the West still play a decisive role. It is a fact that Ukrainians are fighting

against Russia with self-sacrifice, but it is also a fact that there are many such cases in history. For example, we can name the Polish uprising, where this country fought against states ten times more powerful than itself. Or the struggle of Georgians and Finns against the Soviet Union, which resembled the fight of "David and Goliath".

In contrast, the international community has already assessed the Russia-Ukraine war not only as a war between two entities, but also as an event that concerns not only a narrow geopolitical area, but also threatens the security of Europe and determines the future of not only Ukraine, but also the Western international order in general, and the sense of security of Europeans in the coming years. That is why the conflict has taken on the form of a war for resources. In the words of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the West is paying the price of this war by money, and the Ukrainians are paying the price by blood.¹

¹ Keohane, R. "After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy", Princeton University Press, United Kingdom, 1984. P.21.

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The cynical and aggressive policy pursued by Russia should become the cause of a new Euro-Atlantic awakening, as a result of which this space will definitely regain its former strength of unity and solidarity. Today, the time has come for the above to be confirmed by real steps from the West, the practical manifestation of which could be the granting of Membership Action Plans (MAPs) to Ukraine and Georgia.²

Putin's Ukraine Gambit - A Challenge for the West

Russia invaded Ukraine at dawn on February 24, 2022, and began a full-scale war. The Kremlin cited the denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine as the reason for the invasion and announced the annexation of Ukraine within a week. The Russian patriarch and generals assured Putin that all of Ukraine would be greeted with flags. Putin gave 10 billion Ukrainian oligarch and Verkhovna Rada member Viktor Medvedchuk, who called Putin a "personal friend," to prepare for the Russian invasion of Ukraine but Medvedchuk used this money to found the "For Life" party. Putin spent billions to prepare the situation in Ukraine so that everything would be over in a week, but in the current specific situation, the entire civilized West has sided with Ukraine against Russia. They have considered this conflict as their own challenge.³

Today, Western analysts unanimously say that this war could have been avoided if appropriate measures had been taken when Russia invaded Georgia, or when Russia took Crimea from the Ukrainians.

The power on the battlefield is unequal. At the beginning of the war, Russia had a population of 130 million, while Ukraine had 44 million. It is also worth considering that, despite Russia having 2 million unemployed and an 11% economic contraction, Putin's approval rating in Russia, according to a public opinion poll conducted by the Levada Center at the beginning of the war, is 83%. However, before the war it was 73%. In our opinion, there is no reason to doubt the fairness of this research company.⁴

This fact can be explained by the imperialist nature of Russian nationalist thinking. After the introduction of the socialist system, it was not possible for a long time to create a new national identity and national narrative within the new geographical borders, political reality, and international agenda,

until the Putin government put forward a series of patriotic narratives.⁵

The concentration of power in the hands of one person and the formation of a cult of Putin have restored a sense of "pride" and "dignity" to some Russian citizens. The state's bureaucratic machinery and the Kremlin-controlled media have tried to portray Putin as a "national hero" who was able to "put Russia back on its feet," a country that had fallen into the most difficult situation since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In 1994, H. Kissinger wrote in his excellent work "Diplomacy": "The overwhelming majority of leading figures in Russia, regardless of their political views, refuse to recognize the collapse of the Soviet empire or the legitimacy of the successor states, especially Ukraine." Unfortunately, the consciousness of the Russian statistical person has not changed in the 21st century.⁶

In the 1990s, when Russia occupied Abkhazia in Georgia, no Russian politician appeared to condemn this fact. Kasparov, one of the most decent person - "is going to protect the Russians of Crimea from the atrocities of the Ukrainian army." Khodorkovsky, after being released from prison, says in an interview that he is fighting to subjugate Chechnya, Novgorodtsev is going to work on Medvedchuk's channel, Latynina is going to build some kind of "new Russia" in Ukraine.

Journalist Luba Sobol quotes Navalny, "Crimea is not a sandwich that can be returned." Nikita Mikhalkov, a prominent representative of the Russian intelligentsia, director and artist, who has always fought against censorship and the regime's idiotic bans, today unequivocally supports Putin's war in Ukraine and appeals to him to impose censorship in Russia.

A few people who are oppositional to the government, progressive-minded and at the same time free from any imperialist clichés, have always been in Russia and still are. They protest the war in Ukraine, but, unfortunately, they cannot change anything in the country, because they are in the minority. The majority of the population supports Putin's war in Ukraine. When the people support a government like the Russia has, it will do anything in the name of the people. That is why the consolidation of the West around Ukraine and the sanctions they have imposed are of decisive importance in this war.

² Gentleson B. "American Foreign Policy", Ilia State University Press, Tbilisi, 2015. P.12

³ Kiknadze T., Volsky G. Ethnopolitical Conflicts and Prospects for Their Resolution, Journal of Political Logos, Vol. 1, Tbilisi, 2018. P.3

⁴ Hoffman, F.G. 'Conflict in the 21st century: The rise of hybrid wars'. Paper, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, TX.2007, 58. P.42

⁵ Arti R., Jervis R. "International Politics". Tbilisi: Ilia State University Publishing House, 2011. P.37

⁶ Kissinger H. "Diplomacy", Simon & Schuster, Reprint edition, 1994. P.15

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Western international cooperation in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war

Russia's bombing of Ukrainian cities has led to the supply of weapons to it from various countries. The European Union has imposed 13 packages of sanctions in response to Moscow's aggression against Ukraine.

Initially, in early May 2022, British Prime Minister David Cameron warned that Ukraine could launch a military operation with British weapon on Russian territory. On April 23, London announced that it would provide Ukraine with the largest aid package in the country's history, worth \$617 million (£500 million). The military support package, according to information received by the press, will include more than 1,600 surface-to-air and anti-aircraft missiles, the largest of which is a batch of Storm Shadow cruise missiles, the range of which will be approximately 250 kilometers.

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The main transit country for international aid sent to Ukraine is Poland. It was one of the first European countries to sense the threat from Russia and constantly warned NATO and the European Union about these threats. Poland's radicalism towards Russia's actions was then described by Western partners as a post-communist disorder, but today the reality has fundamentally changed, and Poland is the main stronghold for NATO during the war in Ukraine, and for the West – the main weapon for the defense of Ukraine and Europe. The main advantage for Poland is the border with Western Ukraine and the airport at Rzeszow, which has become the main conduit for Western weapons entering the territory of Ukraine. Passenger planes were used to transport aid from NATO countries and other allies of Ukraine. To this end, the United States and other NATO member states deployed additional troops, armored vehicles, and air defense systems to the border regions. Consequently, Poland found itself on the front line of the systemic conflict that arose between the West and Russia, and was assigned a role as important as that of Germany during the Cold War.

The Council of the European Union extended sanctions against Russia for its illegal occupation and annexation of Ukrainian territories by one year, until

February 24, 2025. However, despite such unprecedented European assistance, the resources of European states at this stage of the conflict have proven insufficient, which has worsened the position of the Ukrainians on the battlefield, with CIA Director William Burns stating that "there is a real risk that the Ukrainians could be defeated on the battlefield by the end of 2024 (without additional assistance)." This fact has further highlighted the urgent need for American assistance.⁷

As early as 2008, Edward Lucas stated in his book *The New Cold War*: "The richest and most powerful free countries in the world must support smaller states that face threats from Russia. It may be inconvenient, expensive, or even painful, but if we do not win the new Cold War on our own terms, we will have to fight it at a time and place of our opponent's choosing, and our opponent will have the advantage."

After almost a year of discussion and efforts, the US House of Representatives approved the US aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan (the so-called "Johnson package") initiated by Speaker Mike Johnson, which amounted to 95.3 billion US dollars.

According to the Washington Post, Johnson's opposition to aid to Ukraine changed after he took the position of spokesman and increased access to intelligence information. "History will judge us for what we do today. This is a critical time now... I am a Reagan-era Republican. I believe in peace through force," he said. As CNN writes, there is also a personal factor that prompted Mike Johnson to change his position: "My son is going to the Naval Academy this fall. To put it simply, I would rather send bullets to Ukraine than American boys. This is not a game, this is not a joke."

During the statement, Johnson also mentioned that if Russia is not stopped, it will pose a threat to other NATO countries and the world order. That is why the United States of America has allowed Ukraine to use American-sponsored weapons to attack Russia, however, only Kharkov's closeness. This decision represents a significant change in policy. It is known that at that time President Biden refused to talk about the US giving Ukraine permission to use its military equipment to attack Russian territory.⁸

Following in the footsteps of the United States, Germany has also given Ukraine permission to use the weapons it has received to strike Russian territory. According to Deutsche Welle, the official representative of the German government, Stefan Hebestrait explained this decision by the recent shelling of the Russian border in the Kharkiv region.

⁷ Allison G. "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?". Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. P.7

⁸ Kaplan R. "Anarchy and Hegemony". Global Affairs with Robert D. Kaplan, Stratfor. 2013 See

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/anarchy-and-hegemony> Last accessed 20.05.2023.

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Conclusion

In the international system, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a serious challenge of the liberal international order and the entire civilized West, because Russia's victory in this conflict could lead to a weakening of the Western order and significant changes of the security environment. The Russian state made a statement about revising the existing liberal order with its invasion of Georgia, and it clearly formulated its concept of establishing new international norms with the Russo-Ukrainian war, which is associated with the Russian historical imperial vision.

The West responded to the Russian concept with an unprecedented consolidation around Ukraine, the likes of which have not been seen since Reagan. It is precisely the West's maintenance of unity and the subsequent dynamics of its political steps will determine the outcome of the Russia-Ukraine war, In what direction and under what scenario will the transformation of international relations continue, on

which the future of the civilized West, as well as those countries that have expressed a desire to become an integral part of the civilized world significantly depends.

From a global perspective, Russia's success in Ukraine would be the biggest blow to the world order based on liberal-democratic international order since the end of the Cold War. This will encourage the ambitions and actions of authoritarian regimes on a planetary scale, primarily Beijing, which, in a statement released jointly with Moscow, in fact expressed a desire to establish a new world order. After this, the world will continue to develop around two political, military-technological and economic gravitational centers - Beijing and Washington. Small states that will be located on the geopolitical landscape touching these spaces will have to make a choice or balance in the new reality.

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