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PERSPECTIVES ON THE
WAR IN UKRAINE

• UTRIKESPOLITISKA FÖRENINGEN UMEÅ •

EDITOR'S NOTE

DEAR READER,
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? SOMETIMES IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUTHS OF REALITY. THERE ARE DISTORTED SENTENCES AND NOT EVERYTHING IS REPORTED.
THAT IS WHY I AM SO HAPPY AND GRATEFUL THAT TOGETHER WITH THE WRITERS AND THE WHOLE UPF I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE A PIECE OF THE TRUTH.
FOR ME, IT WAS A NATURAL CHOICE TO MAKE A MAGAZINE ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE. DUE TO THE ATTENTION THE COUNTRY HAS RECEIVED FROM ALL AROUND THE GLOBE, THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON THE REGIME MORE THAN ON THE PEOPLE. HEREFORD, THIS MAGAZINE IS ENTIRELY BASED ON THE PEOPLE.

UNTIL NEXT TIME, CLARISSA MOORE, EDITOR

PERSPECTIVES ON THE
WAR IN UKRAINE

The war in Ukraine with a warist view

Writer: Felicia Nyman

There have been a lot of wars in our history, amongst them two world wars and several ongoing. One of them is the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, where Putin ordered his military to cross Ukrainian borders attacking military as well as civilian targets. The news and information flowing from Ukraine have been increasingly difficult to comprehend, with President Vladimir Putin ordering the Russian military to invade the borders attacking military as well as civilian targets forcing people in Ukraine to leave their home. The situation escalated further with Putin ordering nuclear forces to heightened preparedness. The Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyj has declared martial law in the country following these actions, encouraging those able to stay in the country to fight. War has been a phenomenon throughout most of our timeline, bringing use of weapons and violence, families fleeing their home and humans dying. This is generally viewed as a bad thing by most people. But there are arguments for why war is seen as a natural phenomenon or morally justifiable, that there aren't always better alternatives to act. These arguments are explained as perspectives or theories describing why and how war is used as an instrument to reach certain goals.

Warism explains that war is morally justifiable in principle and often in fact. This view is described as being a dominant outlook in western culture with the thought process of war either being to prevent it for as long as possible or win it when it does occur. Another example is trying to stop war with the threat of another war.

According to this view there are fights for superiority happening across all levels of society, from politicians "declaring war" on drugs or poverty to empathize their seriousness on the issue, to portraying super heroes such as GI Joe and Rambo as role models. (From warism to pacifism, s. 17) The difference in this scenario is how the Ukrainian invasion isn't morally justified by western countries. Putin is morally justifying the war and defending why the invasion happened. One of his explanations for this is that he is fighting for a peaceful life and to denazify Ukraine. He has made several statements where he justifies the invasion, calling it "a special military operation".

There has not been found any proof of these claims other than his statements, but the focus is what he claims to be the truth.
To bring another view including perspectives from both countries to compare Putin's reasons for the war being morally justifiable with how Zelensky views it are two statements - each of which created about the situation. In these statements both leaders of Russia and Ukraine have related these happenings with the second world war, but with different perspectives. One of Putin's reasons to do the military invasion in Ukraine is explained as attacking the enemy which he related to the same enemy of the second world war. He used the similarities of a ukranian military batallion using a strategy which he claimed to be that of the strategies used by Nazis. In a speech by Zelensky there is a different perspective of who the enemy is. He uses the history of Ukraine being attacked during the second world war with them now being attacked by the Russian military. A difference worth noticing is how Putin mentions attacking referring to his own military while Zelensky speaks about being attacked.

Using the view of warism to explain Putin's rhetoric is one potential perspective to ask why this war is happening, but there is a lot of history not taking into account the relation between Russia and Ukraine. But this does not answer the question of why, but is only a presentation of one view to use when asking the question.

# United States foreign policy vis-a-vis Ukraine since 2014

Writer: Heike Brkn

Russia´s full-scale invasion places Ukraine at the center of the geopolitical struggle - reminiscent of the Cold War days when Germany was split in two, dividing Western democracy and Russian communism. Instead of communism, the ideological battle line now lies between democracy and autocracy. In just over nine weeks, the Ukraine-Russia conflict has rapidly evolved into a full proxy with Russia, having global ramifications. The United States has crossed a threshold in Ukraine with its short-term involvement and long-term intent. Initially, during the winter, even after Russia amassed fifty thousand troops along the Ukrainian border, the US was cautious. However, this changed with the invasion. Just a few days after Russian troops crossed the border, the US administration declared America´s goal of standing behind Ukraine and announces hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid. This article discusses the ambitions and actions of foreign US policy towards Ukraine since 2014.

The Ukraine crisis started with the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014. Ukraine´s President Yanukovych fled the country after the Maidan Revolution and Russian special forces started to occupy the peninsula after a ´referendum´ declared Crimea´s independence and soon after in March, Crimea was incorporated into the Russian Federation. The crisis began to spread to eastern Ukraine where Russian-supported separatist tried to take control over the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, also known as Donbas. The crisis aggravated further when separatists shot down a civilian aircraft in July 2014, killing 298 people.

Fierce battles in 2014-2015 ended with one-third of the region´s territory, occupied by two Russian proxy statelets, the self-described Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.

The armed conflict turned into a trench war, with troops facing off a 420km long front line cutting through areas densely populated. Between 2014 and early 2022, the conflict has killed at least 14,000 people, ruined the Donbas area´s economy and industry, displaced millions and turned the region into one of the most mine-contaminated areas.

PHOTO: JOSH WILBURNE
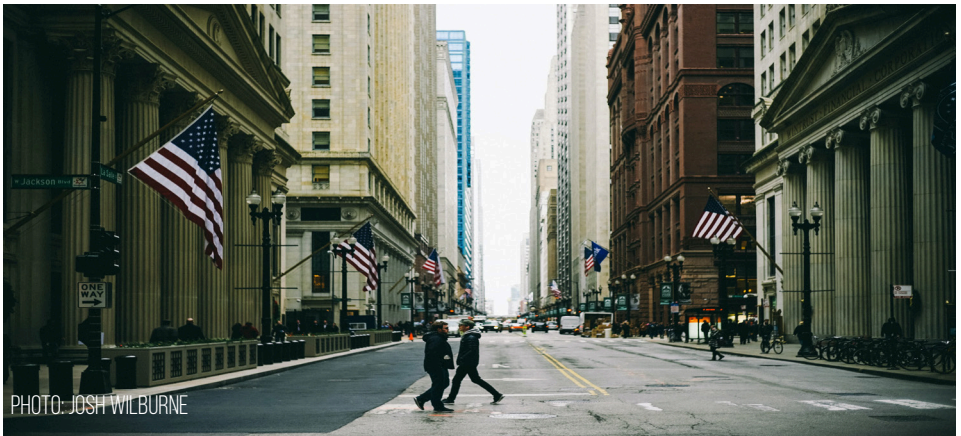
Invasion/ 2022

Russia´s invasion has terminated the post-Cold War period. Biden and his administration have pledged to defend "every inch" of NATO territory, but it is Ukraine that is on the front lines fighting desperately to defend freedom, liberty and democracy. Ukraine, much weaker in military capabilities is left to fight Europe´s largest conventional military that has a huge nuclear arsenal as well. The US, among other states, has condemned Russia for its invasion but has not put ´boots on the ground´ to directly engage Russia.

However, America´s role in the war has become more ambitious. The US has become more deeply involved due to the revelations of atrocities (e.g., Bucha), the underperformance of the Russian military as well as the alarming and flagrant rhetoric about nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the growing involvement reflects broader fears of Russian aggression not stopping with Ukraine. On April 22nd, a senior Russian military commander announced that they sought full control over Ukraine to open the way to neighboring Moldova. Thus, the US has stepped up its efforts and approved more security and non-security assistance. On March 15, President Biden signed the bipartisan Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act to provide an additional $13.6 billion in military, humanitarian, and economic assistance to help Ukraine. Additionally, the US banned imports of Russian energy products and will welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainian citizens and others fleeing Russia's aggression.

PHOTO: NORBU GYACHUNG

The new life of Ukraine

Writer: Rebecca Slättås

Looted grocery stores, enormous traffic jams, packed petrol stations. The people of Ukraine are now fleeing their country at a colossal pace, as Russia invades the border. People are doing what they can to escape, the roads are filled with cars and the metro stations are overfilled with people seeking protection.

On several occasions Putin has declared that he doesn't see Ukraine as a sovereign state, because of it being a former Soviet state it shares lots of connections to Russia. But it didn't reach the tipping point until Ukraine requested to join NATO. Many people thought Putin was joking when he presented the ridiculous list of demands for guaranteeing security, including the demand to deweaponize all countries who've joined the organization after 1997, meaning mostly eastern-european countries, such as Poland, Baltic countries and Balkan countries.

So what does this mean for the Ukrainian people? Well, to begin with, over a million Ukrainians have left their homes in hope to start over in a different country, and the number of refugees keeps growing every day. Pictures are showing families who've settled in the metro stations underground to seek shelter. The borders to Poland and Romania are reportedly filled with people escaping the war, and the neighboring country Moldova has received so many that they are getting close to an economic collapse.

After thousands of people already fled the country, Zelenskyj banned all men between 18 and 65 from leaving the country, to be able to stay and join the army if needed. This means thousands of families who will worry about their fathers, brothers and husbands.

According to Conor Clark, writer at the British journal Gay Times, Russia allegedly has a list of gay advocates, journalists and activists to punish once they invaded Ukraine. The letter was sent to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Bathsheba Nell Crocker (representative of the United States to the European Office of the United Nations), in a written statement that they have credible information that the Russian forces have created a target list of Ukrainians to be killed or sent to camps. This means a new kind of threat to the Ukrainian LGBT+ community, meaning they're extra vulnerable in means of Russian ockupation.

Furthermore, there have been reports of segregation of the population at the Ukrainian border. It has been made visible that black and white families have been separated. The white families are prioritized meanwhile the black community gets left at the border. African students and refugees testify about being deprioritized at the Ukrainian border. People are thus being divided into priority groups depending on the color of their skin, despite the modern society we are living in.

Ukrainian nationalism was first awoken after centuries of being conquered by Poland and Russia. The most cultivated part of society started provoking the Russian rule, but were shortly arrested and deported. It wasn't until the February uprising that the thoughts of an independent Ukrainian state was awoken again. Literature and education in the Ukrainian language had been strictly forbidden since 1876 after the industrialization. This prohibition however was lifted after the Russian revolution in 1905.

In 1922 Ukraine became one of the founders of the Soviet Union together with the Russian SFSR, Belarus SSR and Transcaucasian SSR, after famine and the civil war in 1921-1922. The rest of the decade became a golden age for the Soviet population, with new laws such as NEP, allowing private enterprise within agriculture and commerce, among other things. But Stalin's collectivization of agriculture in 1929 put that to an end. All grounds were nationalized, which resulted in severe famine in huge parts of the country.

The following decades involved oppression of the Ukrainian people in many different forms, but in the 1980s there was a visible change, especially after the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986. The regime's management, or lack thereof, the crisis angered lots of people. Groups were established, demanding civil rights, such as environmental rights. The movements inspired each other, one after the other. On December 8th 1991, Ukraine together with Russia and Belarus signed the contract to dissolve the USSR.

The resolution of the Soviet Union had a huge impact on Ukraine's economic climate, and the years following the independence were marked by difficulties in the change between planned economy and market economy. Poverty was once again a fact. The following years have been characterized by chaos in the political landscape, still affecting the country today..

That being said, this is one of the largest conflicts of our generation, most people can probably tell you where they were, how they felt that morning. The morning of the first attack, Putin's invasion of Ukraine. These are hard times, and as much as we want to help, there's only so much we can control. What we can do, however, is to try to help, through charity, through spreading the word, etc. Organizations have received historical amounts of money, amounts that can and will help the people affected by these horrible circumstances.

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PHOTO: EUGENE TKACHENKO

The invasion of Ukraine through Russian eyes

Writer: Alva Barchéus

In the early morning of February 24th, Ukrainians were awakened by war sirens and bombing, when Russia begun what Putin calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine. In a speech addressed to the Russian people, he stated his purposes: to "protect people" from "bullying and genocide", and to strive for "demilitarization and denazification". Since then, Ukraine has endured attacks on civilian targets, thousands have been killed and more than 10 million people have been displaced. Why does Putin insist on calling this a special military operation? What does he mean by Nazis? What militarization of Ukraine is he referring to? To understand what is happening today, we need to understand Russia's motivations based on their worldview, and the historical underpinnings.

Putin wants to strive for "demilitarization and denazification" of Ukraine. He means that the Ukrainian government is controlled by Nazis, and is using this as a reason to invade. Does the neo-Nazi accusation of Ukraine hold any ground? The Azov battalion is central to understanding this. They are a small paramilitary neo-Nazi group which has been fighting alongside Ukrainian troops. While it is shocking that they have been working under government command, and need to be taken seriously, they in no way control Ukraine. Azov fighters are a very small fraction of the military, have no political power, and has in the last years been "de-ideologized". It's easy to say that they are not the big threat that Russia depicts. The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, is of Jewish heritage and lost relatives in the Holocaust. The government is democratically elected and the far-right ultranationalist parties are electorally insignificant. There is no big neo-Nazi conspiracy holding Ukrainians hostage like Putin claims.
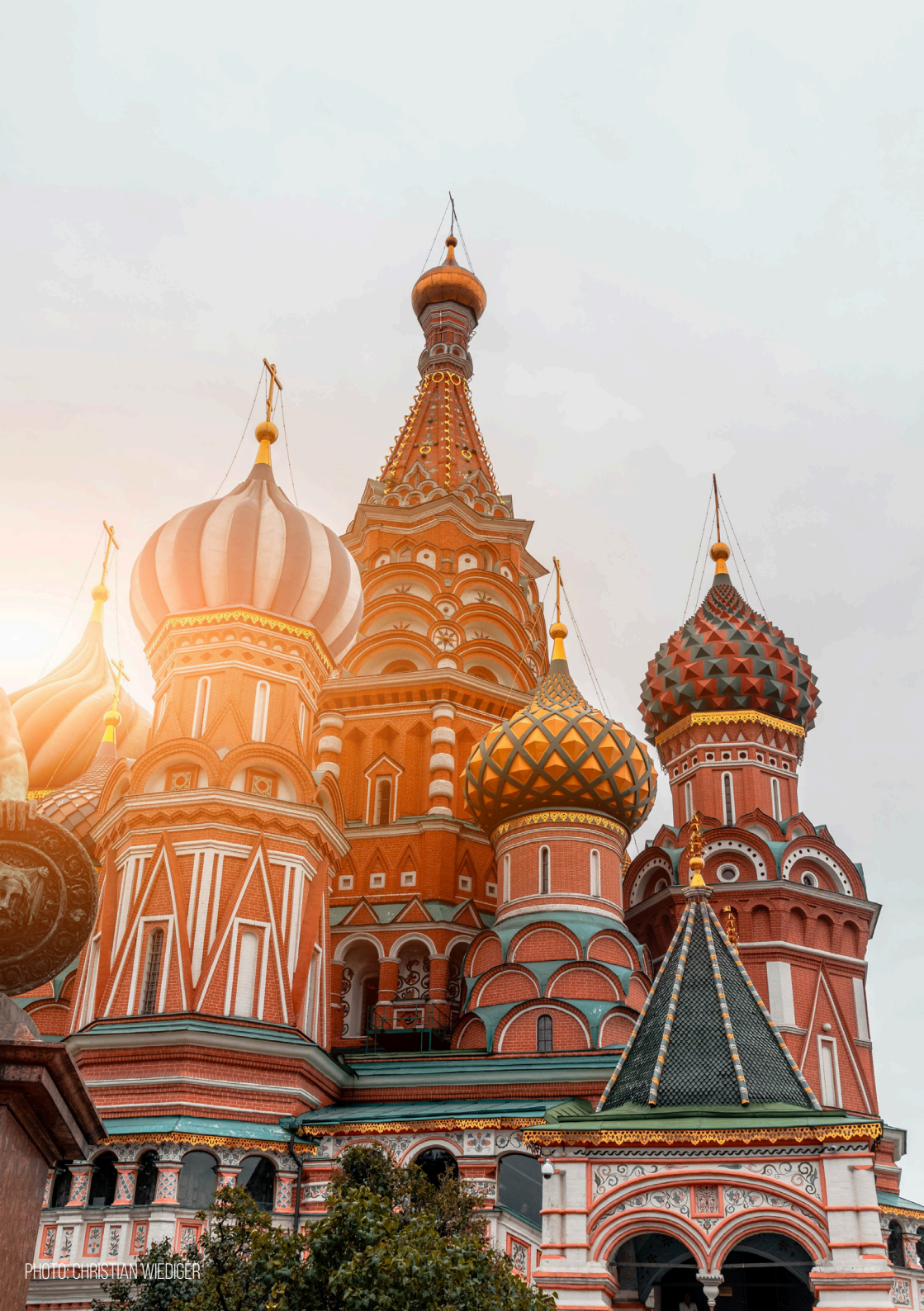
But the accusation has a deeper, historical, underpinning. Nazism is a very politically loaded subject in Russia. The remembrance of how the Soviet Union defeated Nazi Germany in the second world war is a central foundation of national propaganda, and a powerful tool in forming a national identity to unify the Russian people. This use of history to legitimize the present is not new; the narrative of the brave Russian heroes saving the world from Nazis has been integral in propaganda for decades. The state narrative downplays the violence of the Soviet state and magnifies the heroism of the Soviet army in World War II in a selective way, to legitimize the current government and shape a certain worldview among citizens. Russian people's painful memories of war are turned into a mobilization tool to fight in Ukraine.

Another core element of Putin's claim is that Ukraine is not a real and legitimate country. He uses his own view of history to support this idea: that Ukraine was "completely created" by Russia. *"Ukraine is not just a neighboring country for us. It is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space",* he said before the invasion. According to Putin, Lenin created modern Ukraine, out of historically Russian land. Official Russian media states that Ukrainian and Russian people are fundamentally Russian, and that all attempts to shape a Ukrainian identity is just Western interference. The invasion is thus seen as a "restoration of historical justice". The annexation of Crimea was motivated in a similar manner.

But simplifying history like this is problematic. The region's older history is complex, Ukraine was divided and ruled by many different rulers for a long time. It has long been a middle ground between east and west; for example, the Ukrainian church has had both orthodox and catholic connections. Crimea was part of the Ottoman empire from 1475. Thereafter several ethnic groups have ruled and populated the area. It became part of the Russian empire in 1793.

Calling Ukraine a fiction ignores the complexity of Ukrainian history and identity, and the linguistic, ethnic and cultural differences – and similarities – with Russians.

Putin accuses Ukraine of genocide on the Russian-speaking population in the Donbas region (Donetsk and Luhansk). He uses this emotionally loaded word to justify the invasion – probably mostly within the Russian population, but perhaps also with the world. However, this claim has no evidence and has been rejected by actors like the EU and UN. The idea of liberating the citizens of Ukraine from corrupt pro-Western leaders is a recurrent theme throughout his claims. It implies some role for Russia to act as a parent to protect Ukraine from a perceived threat. Putin is furious with the Ukrainian government for violating the Minsk agreement, which would give Donbas more autonomous rule. Though, his worry for the people of Donbas can be questioned. Russia isn't exactly famous for its concerns about democracy and human rights. Could there be underlying geopolitical concerns?

One of Putin's key arguments is the expansion of Nato. He refers to the Nato principle that the enhancement of one state's security should not harm the security of other states and says that Russia is threatened by Nato expansions. When Ukraine took steps towards a future Nato membership in 2008, Putin feared that the port of Sevastopol would be controlled by Americans. He believes that Nato will never reject the membership of Ukraine, and has therefore taken it into his own hands to stop it from happening. He takes advantage of Nato's principle of not admitting countries that don't control their own borders, thus creating a "frozen conflict" – similar to the situation with South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and other low-intensity conflicts around the Caucasus region where pro-Russian separatists control some areas. A Russian occupation of Donbas would create such a stifling situation.

Another aspect of this is a deep distrust against Nato. Putin is accusing Nato of betrayal of an agreement made after the fall of the Soviet Union. In 1990 in negotiations about the future of the now united Germany, Soviet leaders accepted that Germany would be united and a Nato member, on the condition that Nato would not expand "one inch to the east". This was reaffirmed by important figures like German chancellor Helmut Kohl, Nato Secretary-General Manfred Wörner, and US Secretary of State James Baker. Since then, 14 countries have joined Nato, all in Eastern Europe. Kremlin now uses this broken promise as reason to "protect" their sphere of interest against the threat of an expanding Nato.

But there's a crucial problem: the promise was never written down in formal agreements. Experts disagree on whether Western leaders did in fact give – and break – a promise not to expand to the east, or whether it doesn't count since nothing was written down. Technically, no promise has been broken. But regardless of that, the betrayal is very real in the psychological sense of the Russians. It further fuels their suspicion against both the West and international law. This can help us understand how Russia perceives the legitimacy of Nato's expansion. It's safe to say that the distrust Russia feels against the West has narrowed down the opportunities to resolve the crisis in Ukraine.

State-controlled media is echoing this view – making historical parallels between the Soviet fight against Nazi Germany, calling the invasion a "peacekeeping operation", and focusing on Russian heroism. If they'd falter, Russian people would start questioning why their sons, brothers and friends are being sent into Putin's "special military operation". It's important to separate the Russian state from Russian people. Many Russians are likely unaware of the invasion, due to media restrictions and distortions.

Surveys say that about two-thirds of Russians endorse the invasion, 22% are against, and 10% unsure. However, these results shouldn't be taken too literally – those who publicly oppose government actions face heavy repression, and thus many avoid expressing views on sensitive topics. Another indication of Russian attitudes could be the widespread anti-war protests and civil disobedience all over Russia – thousands have been arrested and abused by police. Though, the majority is silent and many likely buy into Putin's worldview.

The levels of truth behind Putin's accusations on Ukraine and Nato can clearly be questioned. The crisis was manufactured by the Russian political elite, by a worldview based on lies, and the consequences will be disastrous for millions of people – both in Ukraine and Russia.

PHOTO: GAYATRI MALHOTRA

Nuclear Power Plants and Ukraine War

Writer: Heike Brkn

The brazen bombardment and invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces poses the most serious threat to European security since World War II. On the day that Russia invaded Ukraine, Russian troops took control of the defunct Chernobyl nuclear power plant. A week later, Russian shelling resulted in a fire at the Zaporizhzhia plant, Europe´s largest nuclear power plant. According to Ukraine, the Russian army has placed land mines around the plant´s perimeter and stockpiles arms at both power plants. Combat has reached active reactors and the world is watching an unprecedented war in a nuclearized country. Near accidents and risks of radioactive leakages have revived memories of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

In 2011, after the tsunami breached the sea wall of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, causing the meltdown of three reactors, officials have reviewed the safety of reactors in Europe. However, these safety assessments have primarily focused on imagined extreme weather events, such as floods or earthquakes, terrorism or airplanes crashing into reactors. For decades the focus has been on nuclear deterrence and imagining nuclear-emergency scenarios, but less on nuclear power plants´ vulnerability and role in war even though, the threats from a precision weapon and terrorist attacks are serious. Russia´s invasion has highlighted the lack of consideration for advancing armies in nuclearized countries and has raised concerns about nuclear safety globally.

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Since Russia's war against Ukraine began more than a month ago, Russian forces have occupied the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and surrounding territory and taken control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in southeastern Ukraine. The shelling at the latter has resulted in a fire at the plant´s training facility without serious repercussion but it could have been worse. Zaporizhzhia remains under Russian control whereas Russian troops that occupied Chernobyl have reportedly left due to radiation concerns. The international community has called to ensure the safety and security of Ukraine´s nuclear power plants.

Electrical grids and power plants present strategies targets. By targeting these, the enemy can be incapacitated. Ukraine, for example, derives more than half of its energy from nuclear power plants. Additionally, captured nuclear installations can serve as safe-havens. For instance, the Russians can calculate that the Ukrainian troops would not fire on them. The strategic target of a nuclear power plant has many obvious exposure symptoms and reconnaissance positions are easy. Modern long-range combat capabilities can effectively attack plants and reactor buildings might not withstand blows from artillery or missiles.

Even without a direct hit on a reactor building in the Ukraine-Russian war (so far), it is worth considering the fragility of nuclear power plants and examining the higher risks of catastrophic accidents during combat.

In the Ukraine-Russian war, power was cut at the Chernobyl, followed by a partial power loss at Zaporizhzhia that lasted for a while. As a result, in Chernobyl, the ventilation did work properly for a while resulting in hot air forming condensation that rained down inside the building thus corroding and damaging equipment. At Chernobyl, there were reports of a spike in radiation attributed to heavy military equipment stirring up contaminated soil near the site. Probably because of the vibrations linked to the passage of the tanks. No imminent threat has been caused by these power isolations, yet it is crucial to understand the potential impacts.

All nuclear reactors have a sturdy concrete and steel structure that contains radiation and can withstand natural disasters such as earthquakes and explosions caused by shells. However, they are not designed to withstand sustained attacks from heavy explosive munitions or rockets. Troubling is that fifteen nuclear power plant reactors in Ukraine are still operating or were shot down recently. They are full of extremely radioactive and hot nuclear fuel both within the reactors and the cooling systems. If electricity would be cut as in Chernobyl, there could be a meltdown of multiple reactors. Bombings could also disrupt power and cooling processes. If the circulation of water through the reactor cire is disrupted and cannot be replenished, radioactive fuels heat up and melt through the pressure vessel and concrete containment. Meltdowns caused by the loss of coolant water is what happened in Fukushima, Japan in 2011, causing the most serious nuclear disaster of the 21st century. In military conflict situations, the reactors' cooling systems not only need to remain functional until they have been safely shut down. They must remain operational after the shutdown until the residual heat from the fuel has been cooled by sufficient amounts of water. At Fukushima, an earthquake knocked out the grid connections supplying the electric pumps that circulated coolant water through the reactor and the ensuing tsunami submerged the backup generators. Even though the reactors had been shut down, the loss of coolant meant that the residual heat in the radioactive fuel was sufficient to cause a core meltdown.

Notwithstanding, the risks and dangers do not end there. The spent fuel storage facility at one of Ukraine´s plants could have been damaged or been operated improperly as well. After the nuclear fission process, radioactive spent fuel must be cooled and later on isolated permanently. These spent fuel pools are often near reactors and structural damage or loss of cooling and power could release radioactive material with localized impact.

Apart from the risks deriving from combat and structural damages, Russian troops taking control of power plants brings other risks. First, because normal oversight and operations have been replaced by disorder and isolation. For instance, workers in Chernobyl had to be on the job for weeks in isolation, with no contact, clean clothing etc. Employees are taken hostage in Zaporizhzhia as well. With untrained Russian soldiers as well as exhausted and stressed personnel mistakes could happen. Keep in mind, that the Chernobyl nuclear disaster was not just a result of design flaws but was also caused by operator error. In war situations, nuclear power plants operators are under extreme psychological (sometimes physical) stress heightening the risks of accidents. In addition, Russian information seems opaque and untrustworthy at times. Thus, there could be a lack of reports on possible damages, infernos or injuries in the future at other nuclear power plants under Russian control.

Interestingly, there are inadequate existing international instruments for targeting nuclear power plants in warfare. Special protection in the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (Article 56), does apply to works and installations ´containing dangerous forces´ but these protections can cease, thus, do not apply necessarily to nuclear power plants. A nuclear power plant can be a legitimate target (Article 56, 2b) "if it provides electric power in regular, significant and direct support of military operations and if such attack is the only feasible way to terminate such support." Further, the non-proliferation treaty of 1970, primarily concerns the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons and not the protection of nuclear power plants during warfare. The United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has never undertaken a scenario-based risk and threat assessment of nuclear power plants nor issued recommendations for multilateral agreements. Despite the utility of these possible agreements being questionable and the inherent difficulties of controlling them, guidelines, norms and agreements could be a good place to start, given the risks to the civilian population near nuclear reactors.

Some in the international community have called for the IAEA to ensure safety at Ukraine´s plants with some suggesting imposing demilitarized zones or mandating Russian troops not to shell nuclear facilities. However, some deem these calls as misplaced because the IAEA has a neutral status with a technical mandate and should not do anything that would question their neutrality and objectivity. Despite that, in the past, the IAEA and its directors have contributed to the de-escalation of international crises with nuclear dimensions. For example, bringing proof of North Korea´s nuclear activities in the 1990s and contributing to negotiations between Iran and Western countries in the 2000s resulted in the continuation of diplomacy. Current Director General, Grossi, has traveled to Ukraine and the IAES has delivered dozens of updates. Furthermore, Grossi has dismissed Russia´s claim that Ukraine might build nuclear weapons. Grossi is taking a diplomatic role by meeting for talks with Ukrainian and Russian officials that could reduce the risks of a nuclear accident.

Most experts rule out a severe nuclear disaster of the same scale as Chernobyl, which affected most of Europe, and deem this scenario as highly unlikely. However, nuclear reactors threaten to release dangerous levels of radioactivity if there is a structural failure and news of an (un)successful attack could risk panic-induced mass exodus from surrounding areas. Nuclear power plants face a higher risk of catastrophic accidents during military conflict and one can hope that both Russian and Ukrainian troops are careful to avoid nuclear incidence. However, even if military leadership understands the dangers and takes precautions, troops on the ground could still damage nuclear facilities. With European countries´ new interests in constructing new or prolonging the operation of nuclear power plants, aiming at decreasing dependence on Russian gas, it is worth considering the full spectrum of risks including plants´ vulnerabilities in warfare.

A word from the President

Dear members of the Association of International Affairs in Umeå,

If I was going to describe this semester in one word, it would be illumination. The sheer amount of different activities that the Board of 2021-2022 has organized this semester has made it one of the busiest in recent memories. This work has not only illuminated what is possible with a group of dedicated and hard-working individuals, but also illuminated different perspectives of the volatile and complex world that we live in. I am truly privileged to have been able to work with the Board of 2021-2022. They have worked tirelessly and I am so proud of them all.

Now at the beginning of spring, it is time to look forward. The Board of 2021-2022 has roughly 2 months left of their mandate period meaning that soon this great Association will have new leadership. I want to wish the next Board of the UAIA all the best in their future work.

My strategic goal when I became elected to be your President was to kick-start the UAIA after the pandemic. I wanted to create a UAIA renaissance that provided unique value to you the members and I think that, to a certain extent, we achieved just that. We were able to rise from the ashes like the mythical phoenix. However, this time there will not be any apoptosis. Rather, this phoenix will continue to rise to new heights. I hope that you want to be a part of this journey; a journey towards illumination.

Your President,

Oliver Björkman.

GET INVOLVED!

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN
JOINING OUR DIFFERENT COMMITTEES, BRING YOUR SKILLS AND IDEAS AND
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OUR MAIN FOCUS IS BRINGING INTERESTING LECTURES FROM ALL OVER THE
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