

ETHICS AND ARMED FORCES

CONTROVERSIES IN
MILITARY ETHICS AND
SECURITY POLICY

ISSUE 02/2022

War in Ukraine

SPECIAL

The Return of Violence

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EDITORIAL

Since February 24 of this year, there is war again in Europe – a full-scale war, fought with all military means. The consequences are horrifying: tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians killed, millions of refugees, mass deportations and abuse, immense suffering and destruction in Ukraine, and global economic repercussions. In addition, there is the constant threat of the conflict expanding, most recently with missile debris falling on Polish territory.

Although this edition of *Ethics and Armed Forces* is not based on the diffuse sense of unease, it can serve as our theme for this editorial. Isn't it always deeply disconcerting how a country's leadership can become caught up in national religious myths and war rhetoric? By way of an introduction, we asked Ukrainian political scientist Tatiana Zhurzhenko about the justification narratives and ideological background to the Russian attack.

How can and should Ukraine be supported in its defense against Russian aggression? It may be that the heated debates on this subject here in Germany also reflect shock at the end of peace in Europe, which had been taken for granted. Even within the churches, supporters of arms deliveries clash with those who call for immediate peace negotiations and reject any form of military support. Does just peace – the peace-ethical guiding concept of the Protestant and Catholic churches in Germany – now need revision, or is there a need for reflection on its essential meaning? The two essays by Markus Vogt and Friedrich Lohmann examine this question.

The “turning point” in security policy proclaimed by Chancellor Olaf Scholz is frequently discussed in terms of the large-scale upgrading of the *Bundeswehr's* material capabilities. But the soldiers who have sworn an oath to uphold the German constitution should not be forgotten. How do the events in Ukraine change their view of their profession? What attitude is required in these times of “new insecurity”, and what role does *Innere Führung*, but also personal development, play in this context? These are questions directed to the top military leadership. In this edition, Eberhard Zorn, German Chief of Defence, sets

out his mission statement for the core task of national and collective defense, and the mindset required.

“We need to be ready,” writes General Eberhard Zorn. This feeling, and the resulting new seriousness, also form the subject of our special, “The Return of Violence”. In an interview, Deputy Surgeon General Dr. Stephan Schoeps talks about providing medical assistance and care for Ukrainian wounded, and the psychological and moral burdens of war. I talked with the two Catholic military chaplains Iurii Kuliievych and Dr. Petro Stanko about the importance of their pastoral work. The two Ukrainians describe, for example, how they accompanied soldiers in Rukla, Lithuania shortly before and at the start of the war.

Since the war began, events have been overshadowed by the possible use of nuclear weapons. Peter Rudolf of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs points out in his essay that the utmost caution is required in this dangerous game of “nuclear poker”.

Finally, Eastern Europe expert and violence researcher Jan Claas Behrends, and Lithuanian psychologist Danutė Gailienė discuss possible explanations for the disturbing brutality of Russian warfare. At the same time, they point out that generalized attributions of blame or hostile stereotypes are misguided. “I would say that every society can change”: with this quotation from Professor Behrends, I would like to conclude this brief overview in a mood of hope – and on behalf of the editorial team, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this edition.

Rüdiger Frank
Copy Editor



“RUSSIA IS PLAYING A HIGH-STAKES GAME”

What is the war in Ukraine about? Russia’s security, or the restoration of an “eternal Russian civilization”? How ideologically charged is this military conflict? To what extent have attitudes hardened? The editorial team at Ethics and Armed Forces asked Ukrainian political scientist and Eastern Europe expert Dr. Tatiana Zhurzhenko for her assessment. In this interview, she explains key historical and political concepts and their ideological background.

Dr. Zhurzhenko, an astonishing variety of justifications have been offered for the Russian war of aggression. It has been legitimized ethnically (protecting the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine), historically (unification of Ukrainians and Russians), morally (Nazi regime in Ukraine), and on grounds of national security (encirclement by NATO). What is this all about?

Firstly, there are some advantages to this at first glance heterogeneous variety of justifications. Depending on the situation and context, the Kremlin can choose suitable rationales to appeal to different audiences – within the country or internationally – and also respond flexibly to new developments.

Secondly, these justifications can be understood as elements of *one* narrative. According to this narrative, Russia is more than a state; it is a civilization that transcends national borders. This civilization is eternal; it has been fighting its enemies since time immemorial and always rises anew. In a speech at this year’s Valdai Club conference, Putin invoked a “symphony of human civilizations” built on societies with traditional values. This vision is directed against the West, which supposedly wants to impose a unipolar order on the world. Russia is defending itself against these hegemonic intentions, and sees itself as an advocate of the non-Western world.

And Ukraine is regarded as part of this world? Ukraine is the theater in which the struggle against the West is being enacted. It plays an important role in this narrative, because – ac-

ording to the narrative – it has always been part of eternal Russia and has now been captured by the West. When the Soviet Union collapsed during the Cold War, the Russian people were divided by new borders. From the Russian point of view, these borders are artificial. Accordingly, Russia is obligated to protect those Russians and Russian speakers who live beyond the new borders. (Putin used this argument when he annexed Crimea.) Ukrainians are really Russians, and anyone among them who insists on a separate Ukrainian identity is a nationalist or Nazi who must be fought in order to bring the Ukrainian people back home, into the Russian empire. This rhetoric echoes the key role of the Great Patriotic War and the victory over Nazi Germany.

As for the alleged encirclement by NATO, which is part of the threat scenario you mentioned, the weak response to the Swedish-Finnish accession process shows that Russia is concerned about Ukraine’s neutrality not so much for security reasons, but rather because it represents a symbolic boundary of Russian civilization.

These justifications tie into different conceptions of Russia and its role in the world. Can you briefly explain the most important ones, such as *Russkiy mir* and *Novorossiya*?

These terms overlap and are sometimes used interchangeably, but they have different origins and connotations.

Russkiy mir or “Russian world” is an ambiguous concept that has geopolitical, cultural and religious aspects, and is used by various political actors. It came into circulation in the early 1990s and refers to the transnational community of carriers of Russian culture and language. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the “old” Russian émigrés were joined by the new Russian-speaking diaspora in the post-Soviet countries. To this day, Moscow regards itself as their protector. In addition, the promotion of Russian culture abroad functions as an instrument of Russian soft power.

As the Russian regime evolved toward authoritarianism, the concept of *Russkiy mir* became increasingly conservative and developed into an alternative to Western civi-

lization. So it shifted from something purely cultural to the geopolitical realm. Finally, with Russia's war against Ukraine, *Russkiy mir* has become almost synonymous with Moscow's neo-imperial territorial claims.

The term *Novorossiya* has historical origins. It was the collective name for the territories of the northern Black Sea coast from present-day Odessa to Dnipro, which Imperial Russia had conquered and colonized in multiple wars against the Ottomans. These territories were repopulated by various peoples, especially ethnic Ukrainians. After the disintegration of Imperial Russia, they became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. In the spring of 2014, Russia resurrected the concept, still hoping that the protests against Kiev and the pro-Russian mobilization would lead to a split in Ukraine.

Besides that, there are also more or less religiously charged concepts like Neo-Eurasianism or the "Holy Rus" ...

The idea of "Neo-Eurasianism" goes back to a group of intellectuals among the Russian émigrés of the 1920s and '30s. For them, Russia was more than just a European country – they understood it as Eurasia, that is, a distinct civilization combining elements of the West with those of the East.

In the 1990s, the Eurasian discourse was rediscovered in several post-Soviet countries that were seeking their place between East and West, for example in Kazakhstan. In Russia, Alexander Dugin most notably developed a particularly aggressive form. For him, it is less about the coexistence of European and Asian cultures than about a struggle that Russia-Eurasia is waging against "Atlanticism" (by which he means primarily the United States and their allies in Europe). Many experts see Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism as a far-right ideology that imagines a totalitarian, Russia-dominated Eurasian empire as an alternative to Western liberalism.

The idea of "Holy Rus", in turn, has its roots deep in Russian history. It comes from a tradition of Russian religious thought that saw Moscow as the Third Rome, that is, as the successor to Byzantium (the Eastern Roman Empire),

and the center of the Orthodox world. From this perspective, the 1,000-year history of Russian Orthodoxy goes back to the early medieval kingdom of Kievan Rus, which is viewed as the cradle of Russian civilization. The fact that Kiev/Kyiv is now the capital of Ukraine, which also claims Kievan Rus heritage, is a challenge for the Russian Orthodox church. That is why Patriarch Kirill deplors the splitting of Holy Rus by Moscow's opponents.

In any case, the Russian Orthodox church is playing an important role in legitimizing the war?

The Russian Orthodox church, as represented by Patriarch Kirill, has not distanced itself from Putin's "special operation", but rather fully supports it. While Kirill expresses regret at the bloodshed in Ukraine, he blessed the Russian military before the operation began. This puts the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in a difficult position, and they are often regarded as a Russian fifth column in Ukraine. As I mentioned just now, for the Russian Orthodox church Ukraine and Belarus are inseparably part of Holy Rus. So this discourse plays into Putin's hands.

Although the Russian Orthodox church is an important ally of Putin's regime and has contributed to the conservative shift, that does not make Russia an Orthodox theocracy. It is true that Putin likes to be seen praying in church, and that businessmen loyal to the regime are expected to make donations for new churches and statues of saints. But one must not forget the Soviet socialization and KGB origins of Putin and his people. Their-

Profile

Tatiana Zhurzhenko is a researcher at ZOiS (Centre for East European and International Studies), Berlin, where she works on the project "The Liberal Script in Ukraine's Contested Border Regions" (Cluster of Excellence Contestations of the Liberal Script - SCRIPTS). Her academic interests include memory politics as well as borders and borderland identities, with a focus on the post-Soviet space. Her most recent publication is "Terror, Kollaboration und Widerstand. Russlands Herrschaft in den neu besetzten Gebieten der Ukraine", in: Osteuropa, issue 6-8 (2022).



ligiosity is not genuine; they see themselves as the new elite of the Russian empire, and the Orthodox faith is simply a part of that. Russian society has remained basically secular, and the church does not interfere in private life.

You referred to the anti-Western factor. Russia presents itself as the preserver of traditional values and institutions, such as the classical family; Western countries by contrast are caricatured as decadent and libertarian “Gayrope”. Where does this perspective come from?

This thinking is the result of the conservative turn in Russia, the beginning of which can be dated back to the 2012 performance by Pussy Riot in Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The ensuing court case sparked a culture war, and deeply divided Russian society. In 2013, the law banning “LGBT propaganda”

Today’s ideology serves only to legitimize the regime – it seems no-one values coherence anymore

toward minors came into force. A new law is currently being debated in the Duma that represents a further tightening. According to it, the “promotion of non-traditional sexual orientations” among adults and the “denial of family values” shall be criminalized.

Where does this conservatism come from? It is a useful tool for dividing Russian society into conservatives and liberals, in order to weaken it. Moreover, it is a way to shackle and marginalize the liberal opposition with the LGBT issue. At the same time, this policy helps to demonize the West in the eyes of the Russian people and alienate them from it.

How much do Russian elites, and ultimately President Putin himself, believe their narratives? Is it all just cynical propaganda to secure their own power?

Perhaps not everyone in Russia is convinced that LGBT is a threat to the nation (although there is certainly a lot of homophobia). At

least until recently, many Russians owned real estate in the West, and sent their children to Western schools. So from that angle they hardly subscribe to the idea of the West as an enemy, which is put out for the masses, and they cannot be happy about the war that has cut them off from Europe. But as far as Ukraine goes, for example, I think that most of Putin’s elite and he himself are convinced that it is not a nation but an artificial construct, and has no right to national sovereignty.

You have also talked about a quasi-ideology made up of various secular and religious elements. Where do you see the contrast with a genuine, coherent ideology?

Today’s Russian ideology is not comparable to the Soviet one. The latter was genuine inasmuch as it claimed to be an alternative to the capitalist West, and promised a better future – that is what made it attractive at one time. It was based on Party texts and canonical authors – Marx, Engels, Lenin – and was codified as a dogma. Today’s ideology, on the other hand, serves only to legitimize the regime. It is fluid, “postmodern”, eclectic – it seems no-one values coherence anymore or is bothered by internal contradictions.

How do you explain the fact that all of these elements, which link in with ideas from the pre-Soviet period, have somehow survived the Soviet Union? Was the Soviet Union nothing more than a Russia-dominated empire 2.0 for the Russians?

The October Revolution radically did away with the imperial tradition, partly because of the belief in internationalism and an imminent world revolution. The core of communist ideology was to create a new culture of the working class, to grant women equal rights, and to give peoples a right to self-determination and national development. The federal structure of the Soviet Union was a response to the challenge of how to deal with the diversity of ethnic groups in a non-imperial way, and even affirmatively strengthen them.

However, as early as the late 1930s, when the Soviet regime was gearing up for war, certain symbolic figures and narratives were

reclaimed from history, such as Alexander Nevsky¹. This tendency then became even stronger during the war, when the Russian Orthodox church was partially rehabilitated. In the post-war period, Soviet internationalism remained a sacred cow, but Russian language and culture were given increasing weight. In addition, Russian imperial history was popularized in the late Soviet period, and the Russian émigrés were rehabilitated and portrayed positively.

Finally, the collapse of the Soviet Union and disappearance of communist ideology removed the last obstacles to a renaissance of ideas from the pre-Soviet period.

On the other hand, President Putin famously said that the end of the Soviet Union was “the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century”. Did he strike a nerve with that?

The collapse of the Soviet Union did not happen overnight; it was the result of a permanent crisis. For the people, the last few years were marked by economic problems and everyday worries. In many republics, but also in Russia itself, the dissolution was an emancipatory moment. Yeltsin embodied the democratic alternative, a new beginning for Russia. Then the hopes associated with that quickly evaporated in the face of economic recession and unemployment resulting from privatization in the 1990s, the Chechen war, and the emergence of the oligarchic system that strangled the young democracy.

Putin projected this chain of crises and defeats (and the negative experiences associated with them) onto the collapse of the Soviet Union. Then, in the early 2000s, he claimed credit for an economic recovery and rising prosperity. Paradoxically, as soon as people were better off, they developed a nostalgia for the Soviet Union. They easily forgot the hardships and absurdities of the system, and longed for the respect that the Soviet Union had enjoyed as a great power.

When the borders between the former Soviet republics were redrawn after the end of the Soviet Union, people at the time hardly noticed it in their everyday lives because they had other worries. Now, in recent times, it

seems that these borders have become too narrow for the new Russian consciousness.

Why does such reminiscing about “former greatness” play such a big role, and why is it still going on? After all, no-one gains anything from it, one might say.

Especially in Russia’s case it is indeed possible to ask whether the country isn’t already big enough. Before 2014, millions of Russians vacationed in Crimea. They didn’t need a visa for that and they could communicate in their

Paradoxically, as soon as people were better off, they developed a nostalgia for the Soviet Union

own language everywhere. Hardly anyone missed Crimea as a part of Russia. So why annex Crimea?

Putin took this decision in a small circle or even alone. But there is no denying that it met with widespread popular support and even enthusiasm. Propaganda had prepared the way for the decision with the argument that Russians living in Crimea must be saved from the alleged fascist coup in Kiev, and that this piece of land, which played such a big role in Russia’s imperial history, would finally be brought home. Above all, it was the fact that Crimea fell so easily into Russia’s hands, without war and bloodshed, that generated enthusiasm and popular support. As we know today, the annexation of Crimea was not an exception. It set a precedent that led to the belief that Russia has the right to redraw its borders as it sees fit. But the annexation of the newly occupied territories was met with less enthusiasm because of the disproportionately higher costs to the country, and because the war has hit home. Only time will tell whether this shock will help heal the imperial complex, or further increase resentment.

The Russian intellectual and cultural elite has not seriously engaged with the country’s imperial past, and is partly responsible for the policy of territorial expansion. Many cultural

figures have actually contributed to the glorification of this history.

Is the banning of organizations like Memorial, which kept the memory of Stalinist crimes alive, related to this?

Yes. Memorial was the most important institution for coming to terms with the past. It played a significant role in educating the general population. It did the work that the Russian state neglected to do. The trauma of the Stalinist past affects most families in Russia. There is a great demand for information in society – the 2019 gulag documentary by Yury Dud, a popular Russian blogger, was viewed 27 million

Of course, you can always claim that certain Russian interests were not taken into account. But does this justify war?

times.² Dud has found a language that makes the subject accessible also to young people.

Did we in the West underestimate the importance and enduring nature of these sensitivities and resulting needs? Should we have been more responsive to them?

My view is that Russia was internationally integrated and well-represented on many levels – political, economic, and so on. For thirty years, the West worked to make Russia an integral part of Europe and the international security architecture. Even after the annexation of Crimea, many in Europe tried to continue working with Russia – think of Nord Stream 2, for example. Of course, you can always claim that certain Russian interests were not taken into account. But does this justify war?

Russia's behavior now is destroying the basis of trust built up over thirty years. One wonders what it gains from this war, and from its hostility toward the West.

What lessons can be learned from this for Ukraine, which is now defending itself against Russian aggression, and for the countries supporting Ukraine?

From Ukraine's point of view, this war is not only about its sovereignty and territorial in-

tegrity, its existence as a nation. It is also about the struggle of democracy against authoritarianism. It is democracy – however imperfect – that distinguishes Ukraine from most other post-Soviet countries. The eight months of this war have demonstrated the value of democracy, that it works even under the most difficult conditions, and has made the country more resilient. What we can observe is trust in the elected representatives of the people, and an active civil society that not only supports the army but works successfully in many other areas too. The fact that the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian society are now showing much more resilience than in 2014 is also the fruit of the reforms of recent years, especially the decentralization reform. So from Ukraine's perspective, it is only natural to expect support from the West, because we share the same values. This is all the more important as on the other side, the authoritarian regimes are forming coalitions – Russia with Belarus and recently with Iran ... The ambivalent position of China is also part of that.

And what is your assessment of Russia's willingness to compromise?

This war really does seem to be motivated by Russia's neo-imperial ambitions. There is little rationality on the Russian side. Russia is not only weakened economically by sanctions, it is isolating itself internationally. Moreover, the remnants of independent civil society, media and cultural institutions are being destroyed. There is a dramatic brain drain. All of this is setting Russia back decades. It is playing a high-stakes game. Russia is betting that the West will eventually give up and it can establish a new world order. It is sacrificing everything for this goal.

While Russia constantly asserts its willingness to compromise, it is not willing to discuss the status of the newly annexed territories. Negotiations under these conditions would be a capitulation for Ukraine, which no-one is prepared to accept. Even if both sides were to agree on a ceasefire, it could not last. A situation in which, for example, Kherson becomes part of Russia but Mykolaiv and Odessa remain in Ukraine cannot be stabilized.

In this context, how do you view recent commemorative and cultural measures in Ukraine such as renaming streets or the possible removal of Russian literature from curricula?

The decolonization of Ukrainian culture and the public space has become a hot topic since the war started. Previously, the question of the extent to which Ukrainians perceive themselves through the lens of hegemonic Russian culture tended to be something that was discussed only in intellectual circles. The war has turned this discussion into a culture war, which is now being fought in the streets as well. Of course, one would hope that the accompanying change in thinking would not take the form of destroying cultural objects associated with Russian imperial history, such as the demolition of monuments to Alexander Pushkin. In an ideal world, these objects would perhaps be placed under protection until a consensus is reached on their fate. But we are in the midst of a cruel war, in which countless people are being killed and Ukrainian cultural heritage is being destroyed.

We don't know which Ukraine will emerge from this war. Ever since the country became independent, it has been argued that Ukraine should be a political nation that does not define itself in a narrow ethnic and cultural sense and in which the Russian language and culture of course have a place. Especially since the Maidan, a nation has emerged that increasingly defines itself in terms of shared values – national sovereignty, democracy, protest culture. The Ukrainian language is therefore not a marker of cultural identity, but an important symbol of these overarching values, including for Russian speakers, Crimean Tatars, and others. This war could give rise to a political nation in which Russian culture loses its historical place, and Russian identity becomes problematic.

Dr. Zhurzhenko, thank you for the in-depth interview!

Questions by Rüdiger Frank and Kristina Tonn (in writing).

1 The Russian national hero and saint of the Russian Orthodox church lived in the 13th century. He served as Prince of Novgorod and Grand Prince of Vladimir. See <https://www.owep.de/artikel/alexander-news-ki-russlands-unsterblicher-held> (accessed November 2, 2022).

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo1WouI38rQ> (accessed November 2, 2022).

THE UKRAINE WAR AS A CHALLENGE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN PEACE ETHICS

Author: Markus Vogt

The peace-ethical consequences of being a Christian in a fragile world

The consequences of being a Christian in a fragile world need to be explored anew, focusing on peace ethics.¹ The distressing reality of evil is currently being experienced once again in the Ukraine war, and this calls for nuanced responses. It is necessary to examine very carefully the ways in which wishful thinking about finally overcoming the institution of war and achieving reconciliation between peoples may have contributed to an underestimation of the long-looming danger of a new escalation of military conflicts. This article attempts to make a sober assessment of current experiences and challenges.

At the same time, Christian peace ethics – because it refuses to think primarily in terms of violence and counterviolence – is an important counterbalance especially in times of military confrontation and armament, which Europe is expected to face even after the end of hostilities in Ukraine. The accusation that it is naïve in the face of a world of aggression, conflict and violence is by no means new. But this unjustly equates its positions with those of a pacifism based on an “ethics of conviction”. Such an approach would actually not be in line with biblical realism, which unsparingly describes the reality of violence but nevertheless trusts the human being again and again with the ability to reason, repent and reconcile. Seen against the hopelessness of spiraling violence, the radical readiness for peace in the Bible acquires its own kind of realism. Of course, this also includes the virtue of bravery – which sometimes requires the willingness to overcome hostile stereotypes, to leave behind habitual patterns of thought and notions of security, to approach the enemy always anew, and to put one’s life on the line for the belief in freedom and justice.

Abstract

The paradigm of just peace constitutes one of the main currents of Christian peace ethics. Its point is not to reject military security policy and the responsibility to protect, but rather to expand horizons with regard to the complex challenges of peace and reconciliation. Just peace relies on a professionalization both of cooperation with civil society forces, and of intercultural and interreligious dialog. It regards a culture of genuine interpersonal encounter as the “art of peace”. But in light of the conflicts of identity and recognition in the struggle for a new world order – which are exploding with massive violence in the Ukraine – it also needs a European and global interlinking of different security policy institutions to form an architecture of peacekeeping. Rationalization of the ethical discourse surrounding modernity – with its assertions of human rights, pluralism and separation of powers – is also an important peace service that Christian theology can and ought to perform. This includes processes of understanding and learning on the Western side, too.

Overcoming the institution of war through law and dialog?

The encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (FT) by Pope Francis was published in October 2020.² Quite unfairly, it has received little recognition as the third encyclical on peace (after *Pacem, Dei munus pulcherrimum*, 1920, and *Pacem in terris*, 1963). It urgently warns that world peace is acutely endangered. It sees a policy of self-preservation that excludes others and deliberately fabricates enemies as being the starting point for a gradual slipping into a “third world war fought piecemeal” (FT 25 and 259). Owing to the immense destructive power of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, war today is “a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil” (FT 261) and can never be justified. Even possessing nuclear weapons, but especially threatening to use them, is judged by the pope to be morally reprehensible.

In my view, the lack of a systematic distinction between attack and defense is problematic. This fails to address the necessity of defensively opposing excesses of armed violence, and not allowing oneself to be blackmailed arbitrarily by the threat of using weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). A categorical rejection of all warfare is not in conformity with the mainstream of Christian peace ethics. For example, the right to self-defense is explicitly recognized in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes* (no. 79).

The key element in peace ethics with a Christian profile is not the ideal of unconditional nonviolence, but that of overcoming violence through law and dialog.³ According to Kant, the very idea of law includes the power to coerce, and thus a state monopoly on the use of force, which is inconceivable without police or military power. The guiding idea of the peace encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963) is to transfer the state’s monopoly on the use of force, established at the national level, to the international level under the authority of the United Nations (UN). Unfortunately, the UN Security Council has been and continues to be abused by the veto powers to serve their own interests, and has therefore lost its credibility.

Notwithstanding possible differences concerning the scope of pacifist ideals, however, the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* contains a whole series of considerations that can point the way forward – especially now, in the arduous search for ways to escape the spiraling violence. First, there is a sober analysis of the situation: “War is not a ghost from the past but a constant threat” (FT 256). In the estimation of Pope Francis, the opportunity presented by the end of the Cold War was not used sufficiently to create lasting peace and advance the architecture of a new world order – among other things through reforms at the UN. The guiding standard for the pope – as it

The key element in peace ethics with a Christian profile is not the ideal of unconditional nonviolence, but that of overcoming violence through law and dialog

was for John Paul II – is the principle of the human family, which entails an obligation of cross-border fraternity, relativizes the category of the nation, and is to be safeguarded by a defense of universal human rights (FT 26, 100, 127, 141, 205). A culture of dialog and genuine social encounter is referred to as the “art of peace” (FT 228235).

In categorizing the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, it seems important to me not to overlook its differentiating aspects, despite what I consider to be necessary criticism of its general rejection of war (FT 261 et seq.). Even before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Francis highlighted peacekeeping as the central ethical challenge of the current era. In this context, he emphasized the danger of thinking that we have to protect ourselves from one another, stating that processes of cultural alienation resulting from closed and self-referential structures were the starting point for a destructive regression (cf. FT 1012). This points to a way forward. His warning that the supposed responsibility to protect can easily be misused in war rhetoric to legitimize wars of aggression was also justified. Moreover, his statements on violence are not entirely unam-

biguous. For example, he explicitly considers the individual defense of family and community to be permissible, as long as it is not driven by hatred and vengeance (FT 241243). In addition, the pope refers to the Charter of the United Nations, which guarantees the right to self-defense and assistance (FT 257). Key aspects of what Francis says about dialog, encounter and reconciliation as the “art of peace” and politically about the “architecture of peace” (FT 228254) can be categorized as an important papal development of the paradigm of just peace.

Expanding horizons through the paradigm of “just peace”

For a long time, discussions in Christian peace ethics revolved around the “just war” concept coined by Saint Augustine. But for more than twenty years now, the term “just peace” has been established as a guiding concept.⁴ This is not simply a pacifist countermodel, but rather an expansion of horizons with regard to multifarious prerequisites for peace, and the

the manipulation of public opinion in digital media, in the shadows of which aggressive nationalist thought patterns are able to spread. The actors of just peace oppose generalizing hostile stereotypes, and constantly seek anew the power of reconciliation across national borders and boundaries of culture, religion and social strata. They see reconciliation between peoples as a challenge that today increasingly includes development policy, climate policy and migration policy. In all of this, peace is defined not as the absence of violence, but rather as a primary category, as a spiritual power working towards the humanization of conditions, which according to Eugen Biser can be understood as an “inversion” of the question as well as of the hierarchy of terms.⁶

The ideological vacuum of cynical nihilism as a war factor

In many respects, the brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, long in the making and personally pursued by the Russian president, seems irrational. The justification that Ukraine must be “de-Nazified”, that the oppressed Russian minority in eastern Ukraine is crying out for liberation, and that Russia’s security interests are threatened by NATO’s eastward expansion, is contrived. The Nazi accusation in particular is an absurd, infamous and malicious lie. Ultimately, this is an ideological conflict dominated by a peculiar mixture of nationalist and pseudo-religious motives: the driving factor is the idea that the “Russian World” (*Russkiy mir*) – the ties of identity and unity between the states of the former Soviet Union – needs to be protected against decadent Western influence.

It is hard to tell whether the excessively religious and moral national identity construct purported by the Russian president is a driving motive or a pretextual façade. Early on, he described the collapse of the Soviet Union as “the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century”.⁷ Consistently and step by step, he has tried to restore the past, using not communism but the fiction of a Greater Russian identity – to which the other Eastern Europe-

The guiding concept of just peace is not simply a pacifist countermodel to just war

need to strive for it on all levels. “Just peace” considers the diversity and interconnectedness of military, diplomatic and civil society arenas in the struggle for peace, freedom and security. The conflict in Afghanistan is a good example of how the Western powers may be well equipped with weapons, yet show a considerable lack of professionalism when it comes to the conflict management in civil society that would be needed to ensure lasting peace. With weapons alone you can win a war, but never the peace.

Just peace relies on the vigilant and early recognition of violence and human rights violations. It implies education to resist ideologies, repressive forms of politics, and exclusion.⁵ An acute challenge for just peace is

an states are subordinated, without rights of their own – as the guiding idea.

A critical reappraisal of the repressions of the Soviet era has taken place only to a marginal extent in Russia, with the result that the turning point of 1989 is regarded by the majority not as a liberation, but as a fall. As compensation for the supposedly great past and unity of the Eastern European region, the idea of the Russian World emerged in the 1990s. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) also participated in its development and adoption. Not least, the current Patriarch Kirill has made this world of ideas his own, essentially deriving his self-image and his supposed mission from it, as well as his legitimization of the war: in his view, it is a “metaphysical struggle” for the defense of Orthodox values against the morally decadent West.⁸ One can presume a deep mutual affinity between Putin and Kirill, who have known each other since way back during their KGB days.

Already for many years, and in concentrated form in his essay “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians” (July 12, 2021), the Russian president has denied Ukraine’s right to exist independently and declared a claim to Russian hegemony.⁹ As we can see in hindsight, it was blind not to view the multitude of Russian aggressions in their context closely linked to Putin’s political rise and presidency, which has increasingly turned into a dictatorship: the Chechen wars of 1994-96 and 1999-2009, the Georgia war in 2008, war in Syria in 2015, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, hybrid war in eastern Ukraine since 2014.

“In fact, the war in Ukraine has only become possible because the Russian leadership has consistently lied for years and because the people in Russia allow themselves to be lied to.”¹⁰ They have no inner defense against the lie, because Putin’s pathos-infused and at the same time seductively simple world view is more comfortable for them than the reality, which is fraught with annoying contradictions. Because the situation is so desolate for the majority of Russians socially and economically, many cling to the supposed comfort of a one-sidedly transfigured history. They are

trying to fill the ideological vacuum of Putin’s system, built on lies and propaganda, with the illusion of the Russian World. In the future, peace ethics must engage much earlier on, more vigilantly, and in a more nuanced way with such developments of Christian-charged war rhetoric. It must give more serious consideration than before to the destructive forces of evil, the seductiveness of hostile stereotypes for the masses, and the abuse of power.

Rationalization of the ethical discourse surrounding modernity as a service to peace

On the initiative of Patriarch Kirill, an independent Russian Orthodox social doctrine has emerged, which finds expression in two extensive documents. These writings, from 2000

In the future, peace ethics must give more serious consideration than before to the destructive forces of evil, the seductiveness of hostile stereotypes for the masses, and the abuse of power

and 2008, are essentially a massively disparaging critique of the guiding modern Western European and American values.¹¹ Criticism of human rights as the quintessence of a secular and liberal model of society, because they supposedly do not do justice to the primacy of cultural and religious values, plays a central role, especially in the 2008 document. Kirill is by no means alone in his aggressive rejection of the supposedly secular, areligious West, characterized by the decay of values; he represents a broad mainstream of opinion, fueled by years of propaganda in Russian state-controlled media.

Ultimately, Kirill and the Russian president have attached themselves to a religious and mythical illusion of identity as a supposed justification for the war. A religious enlightenment is needed. It would strike a liberating blow of inestimable effect if as many Orthodox believers as possible were to emancipate themselves from this illusion and acknowledge the

primacy of peace as a central Christian duty. Many bishops of the ROC in Ukraine have now removed Kirill's name from their prayers during the Divine Liturgy, which in the Orthodox understanding is tantamount to a breaking of communion. Among theologians, too, there is increasing opposition to the Russian World ideology and its imperialist exploitation for the legitimization of war. A group of now more than 1,400 scholars, among them a large number

In essence, this is not an opposition between Western and Eastern values, but rather the rejection of a system of power built on lies, division and repression

of Orthodox theologians, has called this doctrine unorthodox, unchristian, and heretical.¹² Among the silent majority, however, Kirill still seems to have strong support. From the point of view of Christian peace ethics, it is extremely depressing to see what a central role religion plays in this war. At core, this is about the unresolved relationship between religion and modernity.

If ecumenical dialog could rationalize this discourse, it would be an invaluable service to peace. But this should not simply be an apologetic defense of the values of "the" West and modernity on the one hand, and the values of "the" East and Orthodoxy on the other. The point is rather to overcome such generalizations and stereotypical typological oppositions. The pan-Orthodox social doctrine *For the Life of the World*,¹³ published in 2020 under the direction of Patriarch Bartholomew

of Constantinople, which differs considerably from the social doctrine of the ROC, offers many constructive starting points for such a discourse.

From the pro-European side, it has to be conceded that modernity is of course associated with many ambivalences,¹⁴ and that the question of the significance of specifically theological approaches to ethics, given the dominance of a secular humanism and a secular, individualistic understanding of human rights, is by no means easy to answer.¹⁵ However, it is important that this discourse should not lose sight of the fundamental peacemaking function of human rights and humanism, as well as of democracy and the separation of powers. Especially in view of the massive repressions of the "Putin system", the humanist ethics of human rights gains renewed appeal. In essence, this is not an opposition between Western and Eastern values, but rather the rejection of a system of power built on lies, division and repression. The question of human rights is centrally important for Christian peace ethics. According to *Pacem in terris*, it is here that the secret of peace resides. At the same time, the accusation that human rights are an instrument of "the West" for imposing its values on other cultures must be critically examined.¹⁶

Conflicts of recognition in the struggle for a new world order

Seen in this light, it appears that the Ukrainians are defending not only their own freedom, but also the value system of Europe and the United Nations. This impression has given rise to a wave of global solidarity unprecedented in history, underpinned by political, economic and cultural sanctions. Russia is inflicting enormous harm on itself by attacking Ukraine, and is being punished with international isolation. Even though Germany hesitated for a long time on the issue of arms deliveries to Ukraine, and these are considered by the Pax Christi organization, for example, as a betrayal of the principles of Christian peace ethics, in my view and that of the German Commission for Justice and Peace,¹⁷ they are ethically

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necessary: there is a right to self-defense. It would be a failure to provide assistance if arms deliveries were not provided to Ukraine, which is resisting Russia's superior strength with the courage of despair. In this situation, the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" can also be interpreted as a responsibility to protect: "Thou shalt not allow to be killed."

In the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the Ukrainians voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons in return for promises of protection from the European side, which must be kept. If such promises count for nothing, this will encourage a new nuclear arms race. The example of the current war teaches us the painful lesson that democratic values must be defended proactively and as a matter of existential importance, as authoritarian regimes and parties have been growing stronger worldwide for at least the last ten years. The belief in freedom and truth as well as the rule of law and the separation of powers must be defended – also against media manipulations by populist politicians and authoritarian regimes who show their contempt for the truth through post-factual forms of communication. Today it is plainer than ever: we need a democracy that is able to defend itself internally and externally. Under the protective umbrella of security guaranteed by the United States, German Christian peace ethics has neglected all of this, unduly, for decades.

We are living in a time of multiple crises and accelerated change in a multipolar world, which is increasingly marked by a highly complex "evolution of violence".¹⁸ Familiar patterns of order in politics, economics and society are fading, without the future order being discernible yet. As a reaction to the resulting uncertainty, the quest for security and resilience by individuals and societies becomes a central ethical and political goal. At the same time, the global community cannot remain indifferent to the changes in the international order. Today more than ever, tolerance must be actively defended against repressive models of society, and understood as an integral part of Christian peace ethics.¹⁹

The Ukraine conflict is part of a multi-layered struggle for a new world order. It cannot

be resolved in the long term without creating a peace and security order that takes account of today's challenges and lines of conflict. Of primary importance in this regard is reform of the UN Security Council, which no longer adequately reflects the balance of power in the world. The partial retreat of the United States as a global power has created a vacuum that must be compensated for by a consolidation of various supranational relationships.²⁰ This could include a European security council to enhance the EU's ability to act. The different institutions involved in security policy (including the UN, NATO, OSCE, EU) should be coordinated in a complementary manner. Such

Today it is plainer than ever: we need a democracy that is able to defend itself internally and externally

a consolidation and interlinking of security policy institutions, also including emerging countries and states of the former Eastern Bloc, is today an indispensable part of the "architecture of peace" outlined by Pope Francis in *Fratelli tutti*.

For an enlightened religion

Lasting peace requires forgiveness and reconciliation, also with one's own history and ambivalences. The historical dimension of the war in Ukraine is reflected not least in the fact that narratives which distort history are used to construct a justification for the war. These narratives reveal that the Russian president and a seemingly not insignificant part of the Russian population and of the Russian Orthodox Church have failed to come to terms with the fall of the Soviet Union. A sense of hurt due to the perceived insult of being excluded or ignored as a global power seems to be the driving force behind the current aggression.

Given the disastrous consequences of the Ukraine war for everyone, including Russia, this sense of hurt is intensified for now. Overcoming it will certainly take a long time. This

is where the churches and religious communities have a unique task to perform, since reconciliation always has a religious dimension.²¹ The search for peace and readiness for reconciliation are at the heart of the Bible's teachings. They are a necessary consequence of the relationship with God. Overcoming hostile stereotypes – which in the case of the Ukraine war have become deeply engrained in the collective consciousness – requires education and genuine interpersonal encounter. Reconciliation and post-conflict rehabilitation are an integral part of just peace, and should be regarded as an important expansion of the horizons of future security policy.²²

The reconciliation between Germany and France – which was long considered impossible and which today is a motor of European integration – should encourage us to believe that it is not inconceivable between Russia and Ukraine as well, given an appropriate amount of time. This is not a matter of resolving an ethnic conflict, but rather of recognizing truth and freedom as the basis of peace. Christian peace ethics is opposed to hostile stereotypes – including those against the Russian people.

In all of this, we must soberly keep in mind that the role of religions is ambivalent with regard to overcoming violence: time and again, the churches have been a contributory factor in violent conflicts because of their rigid claims to truth and rigid exclusions, as well as through their denial of liberties. Even today, religion is often an escalating factor for violence in many identity conflicts on the global scale. This by no means applies only to Russia. In this context, new forms of religious enlightenment are needed: a religion that is open to dialog and capable of tolerance is needed. In the shadow of the war in Ukraine and other genocidal war crimes, however, Christian peace ethics must also be clear that it cannot simply stand by and watch. There are situations in which Christians must take sides with the victims and support the struggle for justice and freedom alongside them, while at the same time working for reconciliation, both to prevent war and in the wake of war, in the spirit of just peace.

1 Cf. Vogt, Markus (2022): Christsein in einer fragilen Welt – Revisionen der Friedenethik angesichts des Ukrainekrieges. <https://www.zebis.eu/veroeffentlichungen/positionen/christsein-in-einer-fragilen-welt-revisionen-der-friedensethik-angesichts-des-ukrainekrieges-von-markus-vogt/> (accessed October 4, 2022).

2 Francis (2021): Fratelli tutti. Enzyklika über Geschwisterlichkeit und soziale Freundschaft, edited by Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz. Bonn. On the interpretation of Fratelli tutti as a peace encyclical with its strengths and weaknesses cf. Vogt, Markus (2021): Die Botschaft von Fratelli tutti im Kontext der Katholischen Soziallehre. In: MThZ 72, pp. 108-123.

3 Justenhoven, Heinz-Gerhard (2015): Frieden durch Recht. Zur ethischen Forderung nach einer umfassenden und obligatorischen Gerichtsbarkeit. In: Bock, Veronika et al. (eds.): Christliche Friedensethik vor den Herausforderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts. Baden-Baden, pp. 113-129.

4 Die deutschen Bischöfe (2000): Gerechter Friede. Edited by Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz. Bonn.

5 Cf. Schellhammer, Barbara and Goerdeler, Berthold (2020): Bildung zum Widerstand. Darmstadt.

6 He says it is necessary to reverse the direction of thought: just as darkness is not an independent ontological category, but merely the absence of light, war is not the father of all things, but merely the absence of peace. Cf. Biser, Eugen (2003): Wege des Friedens. Augsburg, p. 41.

7 Winkler, Heinrich August (2015): Geschichte des Westens. Die Zeit der Gegenwart. Munich, p. 303. For this reference as well as numerous suggestions, I thank my Ukrainian PhD student Michael Fetko.

8 Kirill (2022): Sermon in the cathedral in Moscow on March 6, 2022; cf.

<https://www.kath.ch/newsd/moskauer-patriarch-kyrill-krieg-soll-glaebige-vor-gay-parade-schuetzen/> (accessed October 4, 2022).

9 Cf. Luchterhandt, Otto (2022): Russlands Geisel: Die militärische Einkreisung der Ukraine und das Völkerrecht. <https://zeitschrift-osteuropa.de/blog/russlands-geisel> (accessed October 4, 2022).

10 Schor-Tschudnowskaja, Anna (2022): Russlands tiefe Leere – Wladimir Putin hat einen Autoritarismus erschaffen, der mit zynischem Nihilismus und nicht mit der Aussicht auf eine bessere Zukunft wuchert. <https://www.nzz.ch/meinung/russland-tiefe-leere-putins-autoritarismus-ist-ein-nihilismus-ld.1676539?reduced=true> (accessed October 4, 2022; translated from German).

11 The anti-Western thrust is further amplified by interpretations of Kirill, cf. Wissenschaftliche Enquete der Stiftung PRO ORIENTE (2003): Die Sozialkonzeption der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche. Ein Dokument der sozialen Verantwortung. Vienna, particularly pp. 2533.

12 Cf. Public Orthodoxy (2022): A Declaration on the "Russian World" (Russkii mir) Teaching. <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2022/03/13/a-declaration-on-the-russian-world-russkii-mir-teaching/> (accessed October 4, 2022).

13 On the document "For the Life of the World" cf. Orthodox Times (2020): For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church. <https://orthodoxtimes.com/for-the-life-of-the-word-toward-a-social-ethos-of-the-orthodox-church-is-now-available-online/> (accessed October 8, 2022).

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- 14 Cf. Vogt, Markus and Gigl, Maximilian (2022): Christentum und moderne Lebenswelten. Ein Spannungsfeld voller Ambivalenzen. Paderborn.
- 15 Vogt, Markus (2013): Theologie der Sozialethik. Freiburg.
- 16 The cosmopolitan ethics of human rights has fallen on the defensive for many reasons. In Arnd Pollmann's view, its revolutionary content always has to be explored anew in the face of concrete experiences of injustice. In a certain sense, it always remains precarious. Its concrete practical meaning has to be found anew by contemporary society in each case, especially by the countries of the East and Global South, in the context of their specific experiences of the violation of dignity; cf. Pollmann, Arnd (2022): Menschenrechte und Menschenwürde. Zur philosophischen Bedeutung eines revolutionären Projekts. Berlin.
- 17 Cf. Deutsche Kommission Justitia et Pax (2022): Erklärung zum Krieg in der Ukraine, no. 3. https://www.justitia-et-pax.de/jp/aktuelles/20220328_Krieg-gegen-die-Ukraine.php (accessed December 5, 2022).
- 18 Cf. Münkler, Herfried (2017): Kriegssplitter. Die Evolution der Gewalt im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert. Reinbek.
- 19 Vogt, Markus and Husmann, Rolf (2019): Proaktive Toleranz als ein Weg zum Frieden. Bestimmung und Operationalisierung des Toleranzbegriffs. Mönchengladbach.
- 20 Cf. Schockenhoff, Eberhard (2018): Kein Ende der Gewalt? Friedensethik für eine globalisierte Welt. Freiburg, pp. 639665.
- 21 Cf. Vogt, Markus (2021): Christian Peace Ethics and Its Relevance for Tolerance and Reconciliation in Ukraine. In: Vogt, Markus and Küppers, Arnd (eds.): Proactive Tolerance. The Key to Peace. Baden-Baden, pp. 117137; on the category of reconciliation as the key to Christian peace ethics, cf. also Benedict XV. (1920): *Pacem, Dei Munus pulcherrimum*. Rundschreiben über den Völkerfrieden. In: AAS XII, 209218.
- 22 Cf. Die deutschen Bischöfe (2000), see endnote 4, nos. 108 f.

A NEW AGE IN PEACE ETHICS?

PACIFISM FACED WITH THE RUSSIAN ATTACK ON UKRAINE

Author: Friedrich Lohmann

Since February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, which started as a hybrid war back in 2014, has been waged openly and with the use of large-scale military force. Since then, this date has been referred to as a historical epochal break. In peace ethics, too, there is talk of a new age, or at least of a necessary reorientation. In particular, pacifism has been criticized for its insistence on the primacy of non-violent conflict resolution. Karl-Heinz Paqué, Chairman of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, believes that "the end of (unconditional) pacifism" has come with the political turning point; Sascha Lobo wrote of "German Lumpenpacifism" (Pacifism adopted without thought or intelligence; on the model of *Lumpenproletariat*), in a column in *Der Spiegel*; Jagoda Marinić writes: "I am slowly losing my temper listening to those who are posturing as pacifists right now."¹ Those addressed, such as the former Chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, Margot Käßmann, have defended themselves: "Why I am still a pacifist in 2022"²

The debate extends well beyond the usual peace ethics campaigners, and is being conducted in all mainstream media. Various open letters with opposing demands are circulating; polemics and polarizing rhetoric have not been spared. Two issues have emerged as the key points of disagreement: Is it acceptable, and indeed should Ukraine be supplied with weapons to help the country defend itself against Russian aggression? And: Should Ukraine be pressured to enter into peace talks as soon as possible and stop fighting, even if this involves making territorial and other concessions?

Studying the debate more closely, we can identify a fundamental controversy that has always shaped peace ethics and underlies all the present discussions: the question of the legitimacy of military force.

The extreme positions of peace ethics

Between a categorical Yes and a categorical No to the use of military force, there is a whole spectrum of possible positions, and the entire

Abstract

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has led to a sometimes polemic debate extending well beyond peace ethics circles. At the heart of the controversy, which revolves around issues such as whether arms deliveries are acceptable, is the question of the legitimacy of military force. But extreme bellicist or pacifist positions – an unrestricted Yes to military force to achieve political objectives, or the rejection of any use of force to end an armed conflict – are not advocated by anyone in the current debate. By rejecting arms deliveries while recognizing Ukraine's right to self-defense, parts of the peace movement are pursuing a moderate pacifism that is unjustifiably characterized as an "ethics of conviction" in Max Weber's terms. They claim that its central ideas are rational and scientific, but their main arguments – both the risk of escalation faced with a nuclear-armed aggressor, and the greater effectiveness of civil resistance compared to armed defense – do not stand up to closer scrutiny. The fact that many in the peace movement are in any case turning away from pacifist positions in light of the war in Ukraine and – according to the concept of just peace – are prepared to accept the state's use of military force subject to certain conditions and limitations, does not mark a "new age" in peace ethics. It continues a trend that has been observable for some time.

current ethical debate takes place within this spectrum, without anyone adopting either extreme position. Nevertheless, it makes sense to examine these positions first, to obtain a reliable analytical tool. At one extreme is an unqualified Yes to military force, which requires no further justification for its use than its opportuneness, considered solely from a standpoint of *realpolitik*. In this view, political interests may be asserted by military means without any kind of reservations or special need for legitimization. If this is accompanied by an enthusiasm for war, it is called bellicism. One may be tempted to attribute this position to the Russian Federation in the current conflict, and for some Moscow hardliners and nationalists this may indeed be true. Nevertheless, official Russian communications attempt to invoke classic justificatory criteria from the doctrine of just war, by declaring the invasion of Ukraine to be a necessary evil that was forced upon Russia: to halt the ongoing “genocide” of the ethnic Russian population in the Donbass; as legitimate self-defense in the form of a pre-emptive strike to forestall a military attack on Russian territory from Ukrainian soil; and as a recapture of Russian soil falsely claimed by the illegitimate Ukrainian state. Although these arguments seem to be employed as a pretext, they evince a need for legitimacy that distinguishes the current Russian position from classical bellicism. The latter can be characterized as the “unrestricted right of states to wage war” of the Westphalian order, which underpinned imperialist wars of conquest into the 20th century. Yet it is clear that the Russian campaign against Ukraine cannot be reconciled in any way with the criteria of the just war doctrine as “just and limited warfare”, whereas supplying arms to Ukraine to curb Russian aggression can. It is therefore completely unwarranted to equate support for arms deliveries with bellicism³ and the spirit of 1914.⁴

At the opposite extreme to bellicism is a radical pacifism that considers any use of military force to be illegitimate, even for the purpose of self-defense. This position is founded on an absolute belief in non-violence, which is extrapolated from the private to the political sphere. Among the questions debated by adherents of this belief, for example, is whether it is legitima-

te to call the police in a situation where you are personally threatened, knowing that the police are prepared to use force.⁵ It is often supposed that pacifism is a form of passivity, of wanting to stay out of everything. But this is a misinterpretation. Pacifism is certainly proactive, only the actions taken should be non-violent. In the 1970s, one of its proponents, Gene Sharp, did some counting and arrived at 198 “methods of nonviolent action”.⁶ Of note with regard to military conflicts are the Christian Peacemaker Teams, for example, who risked their lives to

It is clear that the Russian campaign against Ukraine cannot be reconciled in any way with the criteria of the just war doctrine as “just and limited warfare”, whereas supplying arms to Ukraine to curb Russian aggression can

stand in the front lines of the Iraq war in 2003, urging the combatants to cease fire.⁷ In the early days following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it was suggested along similar lines that the Ukrainians should renounce military resistance and defend themselves non-violently – for example by demonstrating or holding a general strike. But after demonstrators in Kherson were gunned down in the first days following the occupation, these pacifist voices grew quieter. In the German peace movement, the right of Ukrainians to defend themselves militarily is no longer contested.⁸ On its website, the German Federation for Social Defense (Bund für Soziale Verteidigung, BSV) refers to a “system of total defense” which “also [!] includes civil resistance”.⁹ In light of events, the German peace movement is not advocating an absolute renunciation of violence, but rather its minimization and the inclusion of non-violent means. With such statements, radical pacifism has been abandoned.

The pacifist No to arms deliveries

Even though the peace movement has come around to saying Yes to Ukraine’s right to self-defense, it remains attached to radical non-violence in that it is skeptical about arms

deliveries from other states that help Ukraine defend itself militarily. Bishop Friedrich Kramer, Peace Commissioner of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), reiterated his No to arms deliveries at the EKD synod in November 2022, against criticism from within the church. The point is not explicitly mentioned in other recent statements, but the call to “Stop the killing in Ukraine – arms are not the solution!” – which was the theme of a joint day of action by various groups in the German peace movement on November 19, 2022 – indicates the general drift. One might now ask how this No can be reconciled with granting Ukraine a right to self-defense, including by military means. Doesn’t this right, once granted, necessarily imply that it can be exercised by the best possible means, which then also legitimizes outside support? Isn’t this one of the inherent contradictions in any attempt to advocate a pacifism which has been moderated from the extreme position described above?¹⁰

We do not do justice to the pacifist argument against supplying weapons to Ukraine if we label it as “abstract ethics of conviction”

The groups behind the call would dispute such an interpretation. Despite conceding that Ukraine has a right to military self-defense, in their view this strategy is ethically permissible – if at all – only temporarily. Arms deliveries are viewed critically because they fuel a “spiral” of violence and are thus ultimately not conducive to peace: “The current arms spiral, in which many countries of the world – including Germany – are involved, must be stopped for the good of all people.”¹¹ The question for the peace movement therefore shifts from the possible contradiction to the question of whether its general criticism of any rash and excessive use of military force applies to arms deliveries to Ukraine in the current conflict.

Pacifism of conviction and pacifism of responsibility

Behind the pacifist criticism of arms deliveries, it is easy to hear an argument that Max Weber formulated long ago as an incontrovertible fact or *Pragma*: “Violence and the threat of violence inevitably beget new violence, following an inescapable *Pragma* of all action.”¹² In keeping with this idea, a statement by the Task Force of the German Mennonite Churches (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland, AMG) issued shortly after the Russian invasion, reads: “Arms deliveries do not end war, they fuel it and make warfare and human rights violations possible in the first place. They neither stop the perpetrators of violence nor can they protect those who are threatened.”¹³ Because of its categorical adherence to this *Pragma*, it is often assumed that pacifism represents an ethics of conviction in the Weberian sense, as opposed to an ethics of responsibility that includes the concrete circumstances of action in its judgment, and is therefore the only ethics that is appropriate for the political realm. The former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt once put it like this: “I do not believe [...] that one can extract exhaustive or even halfway sufficient guiding policy ideas or political maxims for concrete situations from any kind of abstract ethical principles.”¹⁴

Yet we do not do justice to the pacifist argument against supplying weapons to Ukraine if we label it as “abstract ethics of conviction”. It is rather that they are raising the objection that proponents of the military option are making their ethical and political judgments in disregard of the empirical facts, whereas they themselves have examined the possible consequences of the various options and on *this* basis – an empirically informed one – they have reached a different conclusion. The keyword is “responsible pacifism”.¹⁵ In the concrete case, this is argued on two levels. Against arms deliveries, the risk that these might lead to escalation is pointed out, especially in the fight against a nuclear power. “What can possibly be the point of armed resistance against a nuclear power? If armed conventional resis-

tance were to defeat a nuclear-armed power conventionally, victory would depend on this power not resorting to its nuclear weapons. Any such trust in the civility and humanity of an aggressor (!) seems irrational to us.”¹⁶ And in support of non-violent resistance by Ukraine, reference is made to empirical research which is claimed to show its superior effectiveness in historical comparison. Both arguments deserve closer scrutiny.

Is non-violent resistance always the better option?

To support the argument that non-violent resistance is empirically proven to be the more successful option instead of military measures, the peace movement refers in particular to a study by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, who analyzed data on non-violent and violent resistance movements over a period of more than 100 years: “The most striking finding is that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts.”¹⁷ Direct references to the study in the debate on the Ukraine war can be found in articles by the peace researcher Véronique Dudouet and the coordinator of the “Rethinking Security” initiative, Ralf Becker.¹⁸

In his article, Becker acknowledges that the Chenoweth/Stephan study also reports on failures of non-violent resistance, and he does not conceal the fact that their new data for the years up to 2019 shows a significantly lower success rate. However: “On average, non-violent resistance in 2019 is still twice as effective as violent resistance in achieving political goals.”¹⁹ One may draw such a conclusion, but the question remains as to what is gained from this when it comes to concrete decision-making in dealing with the Russian invasion. Average figures are no help in a complex reality where every situation has to be assessed differently. Moreover, most of the resistance movements examined by Chenoweth and Stephan had an internal configuration – i.e. resistance within the country against their own government – whereas Ukraine has been attacked militarily from outside. Making

a comparison here is to compare apples and oranges. And thirdly, we should not dismiss the declining success figures reported by Erica Chenoweth as lightly as Becker does. In a new publication, she ascribes this decline primarily to problems in the resistance groups themselves; but she also notes that authoritarian regimes have changed their approach: “In the past decade authoritarian leaders have also established a savvier playbook by which to suppress domestic challengers.”²⁰ If we look at all the experiences of the last few years in Myanmar, Hong Kong, Belarus and now Ukraine together, then we have to take this observation very seriously – more seriously at any rate than those in the peace movement who, referring to Chenoweth, claim a general likelihood of success for non-violent resistance.

The argument about the risk of global and nuclear escalation

The fear of a nuclear escalation of the war in Ukraine is justified, as it has been deliberately stoked by the Russian Federation time and again. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the risk of escalation is cited far beyond the peace movement as a reason to urge Ukraine to exercise military restraint and immediately enter into ceasefire negotiations. For example, on June 29, 2022, the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* published an appeal under the headline “Ceasefire now!”, which read: “The West must do everything in its power to ensure that the parties promptly reach a negotiated solution. This alone can prevent a war of attrition lasting years, with calamitous local and global consequences, as well as a military escalation that could go as far as the use of nuclear weapons.”²¹

So here too, entirely in keeping with the idea of responsible pacifism, the argument is based on the short and long-term consequences of today’s actions. To evaluate this argument, it should first be pointed out that estimates of consequences are notoriously unreliable. For precisely this reason, it is good ethical advice to listen to reason and not impulsive emotions when making them. How likely is it, in the cold light of day, that the Russian Federation will take the Ukraine conflict to a whole new level

by resorting to the nuclear option? This question has to be asked again and again as the conflict progresses, and possibly assessed differently, with developments observable via satellite reconnaissance playing a role in the assessment alongside statements by the Russian leadership (see also the article by Peter Rudolf in this issue). At the present time, experts largely agree that this likelihood is very low. It would precisely not be the “face-saving” outcome of the conflict for the Russian Federation that those in the West who advocate immediate negotiations imagine to be the Kremlin’s wish. China and India have signaled unequivocally that they would condemn such a move and take appropriate action. It would contradict Russian interests in Ukraine – whether liberation or mineral resources – to contaminate Ukrainian soil with radioactive debris for decades. Moreover, Russia’s own population would be endangered by any fallout.

Given the – currently – low likelihood that the nuclear scenario will occur, it cannot reasonably be argued that its existence makes it necessary, on ethical grounds, to yield to Russian aggression – which would then inevitably imply immediate ceasefire negotiations. The “war of attrition” argument is different and has to be considered separately. This, too, involves an impact assessment that compares and contrasts the local and global consequences of the decision to continue the military defense of Ukraine with the consequences of the decision to give in to the Russian Federation’s aggression, as happened in 2014. This is a decision that the Ukrainians – but also those providing them with military assistance – have to make. Would

yielding actually pacify the region? And what would the global impact be on other conflict scenarios where the rules-based international order is at stake? On both levels, yielding is not consistent with the concept of a lasting, just peace. Ukraine’s struggle is also a struggle for human rights, and anyone who withdraws support here must expect to be held to account on what the idea of human rights actually means to them.

Thus the pacifist arguments against continuing the military defense of Ukraine appear unconvincing also with regard to possible escalations.

A new age in peace ethics?

Pacifism as a peace ethics option has come under pressure since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The arguments put forward against a military defense of Ukraine are not persuasive, and actually there are now voices in the peace movement that recognize Ukraine’s right to self-defense and support arms deliveries. Does this imply a new age in peace ethics?

The idea of a new age suggests a major change of direction. I do not discern any such change in the peace ethics discourse, nor does it seem necessary to me. Firstly, it must be taken into account that large parts of the peace movement had already abandoned the radical pacifist extreme position described above before the Russian invasion. The establishment of the concept of “just policing”, which has been discussed for decades in pacifist circles and is also shared by Margot Käßmann,²² for example, implies a fundamental Yes to the state’s use of force and blurs the lines to allow a limited use of military force in keeping with the just war doctrine.²³ Secondly, some pacifist demands continue to carry weight: insisting on always looking for options that are as non-violent as possible, as well as strengthening civil society through state support.

It is certainly true that radical pacifist demands such as calling for the abolition of the German armed forces have been disavowed as a result of the changed security situation. The separation of a “peace logic” and a “security logic”²⁴ also seems even less convincing than

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Heidelberg, and continues his involvement in the Heidelberg Forum for Peace Ethics, which was founded as a successor to FEST.

before. But these have always been marginal views in peace ethics. The concept of just peace, which has found approval in the two main churches in Germany and far beyond, combines the right to self-defense and protecting human rights by military means under the rubric of “force to uphold law” (*rechtserhaltende Gewalt*). Its use is always an evil, but can be ethically justified under certain circumstances – and these are certainly given with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The continuity here with the traditional doctrine of just war has often been overlooked, but that does not change the fact that it exists. What has taken place in peace ethics is therefore more of a shift in emphasis than the dawning of a new age. At present, however, much more important than such adjustments in peace ethics reflection is that everything is done to assist the people affected by the war in Ukraine by providing military and humanitarian support, without losing sight of the guiding concept of just peace.

1 <https://www.freiheit.org/de/krieg-europa-das-ende-des-pazifismus>; <https://www.spiegel.de/netzwelt/netzpolitik/ukraine-krieg-der-deutsche-lumpen-pazifismus-kolumne-a-77ea2788-e80f-4a51-838f-591843da8356>; <https://taz.de/Intellektuelle-zum-Krieg-in-der-Ukraine/!5867320/> (all internet sources accessed November 25, 2022).

2 <https://www.forumzfd.de/de/warum-ich-auch-2022-pazifistin-geblieben-bin>.

3 As Hartmut Rosa does: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bellizismus-und-der-ukraine-krieg-haltet-ein-a-7aa8cd9d-5fe3-4227-b14c-181407f0b9d0>.

4 As Nathalie Weidenfeld does: <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/ukrainekrieg-intellektuelle-kriegsbegeisterung-weidenfeld-1.5670106?reduced=true>.

5 York, Tripp/Barringer, Justin Bronson (eds.) (2012): *A Faith Not Worth Fighting For: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Nonviolence*. Eugene, Oregon.

6 <https://www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action/>.

7 Kern, Kathleen (2009): *In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams*. Eugene, Oregon.

8 “There is agreement that we do not question the right of the Ukrainian people to military defense.” This is point 15 of the statement on the war in Ukraine, as adopted by the general meeting of the Action Committee Service for Peace (Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden, AGDF) on September 24, 2022. <https://friedensdienst.de/sites/default/files/anhang/agdf-die-vermeidung-und-verminderung-von-gewalt-bleibt-unser-ziel-friedensverband-verabschiedet.pdf>.

9 <https://www.soziale-verteidigung.de/artikel/ziviler-wid-erstand-gegen-krieg-ukraine>, with reference to a CNN report of August 27, 2022: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/27/politics/russia-ukraine-resistance-war-fare/index.html>.

10 On these inherent contradictions, cf. Lohmann, Friedrich (2018): *Myth and Reality: Pacifism's Discourse on Violence Revisited*. In: *Studies in Christian Ethics* 31, pp. 186-200 (doi: 10.1177/0953946817749092).

11 <https://www.friedenskooperative.de/aktion/dezentraler-aktionstag-am-19-november>.

12 Weber, Max (1920; 2012): *Religion und Gesellschaft. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. Darmstadt, p. 541.

13 <https://www.mennoniten.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/AMG-Ko%CC%88nnten-wir-doch-ho%CC%88ren-Ukraine.pdf>.

14 Schmidt, Helmut (1976; 1980): *Gesinnungsethik oder Verantwortungsethik*. In: Reinhard Gramm and Peter H. Blaschke (eds.): *Ernstfall Frieden. Christsein in der Bundeswehr*. Stuttgart/Berlin, pp. 203-204.

15 Schweitzer, Christine (2000): *Pazifismus heute*. <https://www.friedenskooperative.de/friedensforum/artikel/pazifismus-heute>.

16 Freise, Josef u. a. (2022): “Die Perspektive des Evangeliums fehlt”. *Stellungnahme zur Erklärung der deutschen Kommission „Justitia et Pax“ zum Krieg gegen die Ukraine vom 26. März 2022*, p. 2. https://www.academia.edu/75126591/_Die_Perspektive_des_Evangeliums_fehlt_.

17 Chenoweth, Erica / Stephan, Maria J. (2011): *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York, p. 7.

18 Dudouet: <https://taz.de/Friedensforscherin-ueber-den-Ukrainekrieg/!5846168/>. Becker: <https://zeitzeichen.net/node/9624>. Both articles were published in the first weeks following the Russian invasion. In an interview published later, on November 2, 2022, Becker approves of arms deliveries to Ukraine: “I personally am in favor of these arms deliveries. I think that now the war has started – which could have been prevented – it actually makes sense to oppose President Putin with this show of strength” (translated from German). <https://www.evangelisch.de/inhalte/207683/02-11-2022/friedensethiker-becker-raet-wir-muessen-raus-aus-eskalationsdynamik>.

19 <https://zeitzeichen.net/node/9624>.

20 Chenoweth, Erica (2021): *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford/New York, p. 233.

21 <https://www.zeit.de/2022/27/ukraine-krieg-frieden-waffenstillstand>.

22 Cf. Käßmann, Margot (2015): *Plädoyer für eine Prima Ratio*. In: Margot Käßmann/Konstantin Wecker (eds.): *Entrüstet Euch! Warum Pazifismus für uns das Gebot der Stunde bleibt. Texte zum Frieden*. Gütersloh, pp. 85-108, 103: “But we can positively advocate for an international peacekeeping force that can only be legitimized by the United Nations. This is what this narrow corridor of legitimizable force can look like, for building peace and defending human rights, as described in the 2007 EKD peace memorandum” (translated from German).

23 Werkner, Ines-Jacqueline (2017): *Militärische versus polizeiliche Gewalt. Aktuelle Entwicklungen und Folgen für internationale Friedensmissionen*. Wiesbaden; Lohmann, Friedrich (2018), see endnote 10.

24 Informationsstelle Wissenschaft und Frieden in Zusammenarbeit mit der Plattform Zivile Krisenprävention (ed.) (2014): *Friedenslogik statt Sicherheitslogik. Theoretische Grundlagen und friedenspolitische Realisierung*. Wissenschaft und Frieden, Dossier 75.

BE ABLE TO FIGHT SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT – DOES THIS MOTTO STILL HOLD TRUE?

Author: Eberhard Zorn

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine marks a turning point, or *Zeitenwende*, affecting all spheres of our lives. The terrible suffering of Ukraine's civilian population is forcing millions of people to leave their homes to seek refuge, primarily in European partner countries. The brutality of Russia's warfare has severe consequences for the international order that for decades has ensured freedom, security and prosperity in Europe. Russian President Vladimir Putin no longer even shies away from threatening to use nuclear weapons.¹ Disruptions in energy and food supplies as well as turbulences in economies and financial markets are evidence of how vulnerable our globalised world is.

Even though Germany, despite the comprehensive civilian and military support it provides to Ukraine, is not *de jure* a warring party, we are *de facto* directly affected by the consequences of this war.

After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the war in Ukraine marks the second globally relevant turning point in security policy for our 21st century society. In his policy statement of 27 February, Federal Chancellor Scholz used the term *Zeitenwende* to describe the gravity of Russia's attack on Ukraine as well as its impact on the European peace order. In a similar vein, Federal President Steinmeier, in his speech on 28 October 2022, described 24 February of this year as an "epochal shift".²

In response to images of the violence and destruction in Ukraine, to the rising tide of refugees and the other consequences already addressed, as well as to the threat of nuclear escalation, he rightly concluded that this war had "plunged us (...) into a different time, into an uncertainty that we thought we had left behind us". Addressing Ukraine's defence against the Russian aggression, Catholic Bishop for the Bundeswehr Overbeck fittingly called this "defending the law against the law of the strongest".³

Federal President Steinmeier claimed that the peace dividend following the fall of the Iron Curtain had "run out" and that Germany should expect "harder years (...) in which

Abstract

*The Russian attack on Ukraine, with its devastating local and global consequences, has rightly been described as a turning point, or *Zeitenwende*. In military terms, this amounts to a fundamental change in the situation: whereas the past twenty years were characterized by deployments abroad, national and collective defence as the core mission of the Bundeswehr now requires an immediate return to full operational readiness in all areas – with special attention to combat effectiveness, including supposedly soft factors.*

Even during the Cold War era, the "inner compass" and morale were crucial to the credibility of deterrence. Innere Führung was based on the insight that maximum military effectiveness is achieved precisely by subordinating the armed forces to the free and democratic constitutional order, and aligning their moral compass with the rule of law and the respect for human rights enshrined in the Basic Law.

In the context of Russian warfare and Ukraine's successful defence campaign, the value of this organizational and leadership philosophy – oriented toward the purpose of service – becomes abundantly clear. At the same time, its evolution also involves reflecting on core criteria such as practicability and comprehensibility, leading by trust and example, and the importance of military education.

A credible offensive and defensive capability depends among other things on a conscious acceptance of the hardships of service, a comprehensive personal development approach to increase confidence and resilience, appropriate medical and pastoral care, and strong social support. "Be able and willing to fight so you won't have to fight": this modified maxim from the Cold War expresses preservation of what has proven to be useful, while also readjusting.

we must brave the headwinds”. He said that Germany had to “become capable of handling conflict”, that it was not to develop a “war mentality”, but “resilience and a spirit of resistance”, and that this included, “first and foremost, a strong and well-equipped Bundeswehr”.⁴

What the *Zeitenwende* means for the Bundeswehr

These requirements are at the heart of my own estimate of the situation as well. In military terminology, this is what we would call a “fundamental change in the situation”, which constitutes a need for action. In our open and democratic societies, we cannot rely on the rules-based international order to be generally accepted anymore. This is precisely the threat situation that the Bundeswehr must expect and be thoroughly prepared for. National and collective defence has once more become its principal task. In order to fulfil this core task, the Bundeswehr needs operational and fully equipped land, sea and air formations, reliable and continuous logistic and medical support as well as capabilities for deterrence and defence of the cyber and information domain. My goal, therefore, is the immediate return to full operational readiness of the Bundeswehr in all areas. In addition to military capabilities defined by target numbers of vehicles, weapons and major equipment, we are primarily aiming at an increase in combat effectiveness. Combat effectiveness is defined as the degree to which a unit or formation is capable of performing its assigned mission, explicitly including supposedly “soft” factors such as troop morale and training levels. In terms of military history, one might argue that we are experiencing a renaissance of what General Ulrich de Mai-zière, former Chief of Staff, Bundeswehr, aptly described with the motto “Be able to fight so you won’t have to fight”.⁵

Following Russia’s 2014 unlawful annexation of Crimea, Germany responded to the security developments with the 2016 White Paper and the 2018 Bundeswehr Concept, gradually refocusing on national and collec-

tive defence as the core mission of the Bundeswehr. As a consequence, the Bundeswehr has since become a major troop contributor to the NATO Response Force as well as the framework nation for the enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania.

Following Russia’s attack on Ukraine, the significance of the Bundeswehr for the protection of NATO’s eastern flank has increased further. By taking immediate action such as reinforcing our Battle Group in Lithuania, supporting the build-up of a new Battle Group in Slovakia, contributing to Air Poli-

In addition to military capabilities defined by target numbers of vehicles, weapons and major equipment, we are primarily aiming at an increase in combat effectiveness

cing and deploying naval units to the Baltic Sea, we have impressively demonstrated our operational readiness and our reliability as an Ally. In the coming years, our force contributions pledged to NATO will be expanded considerably across all domains.

The long-standing focus on operations abroad with mandated operational contingents on planned rotations is fading into the background. At the same time, we should not disregard the lessons learned as part of international crisis management. Because our servicemen and servicewomen have demonstrated their ability to prevail in combat in past and in ongoing operations. Focusing on our core mission of national and collective defence, however, also means for the Bundeswehr that there may no longer be a strict separation between home country and theatre of operations. We need to be ready, wherever we are and whatever the circumstances.

The Federal Government has set the right course in terms of equipment with the special fund for the Bundeswehr. It will, however, be years before the Bundeswehr is fully equipped, and it will require reliable funding

in future defence budgets. Also, full equipment of the Bundeswehr is just one aspect of its operational readiness. Especially given the historical turning point we are experiencing, it is particularly important to me that we create functional structures and strengthen personnel readiness.

In addition to a robust and demographically sound body of personnel, “mental readiness” – in the sense of resilience, as

Full equipment of the Bundeswehr is just one aspect of its operational readiness

suggested by the Federal President – is becoming increasingly important. The Bundeswehr, therefore, needs the right mindset in order to be able to accomplish its core mission of national and collective defence.

Looking back on *Innere Führung* and the Cold War scenario

In addition to lessons learned from deployments abroad in recent years, can we also draw conclusions for today’s Bundeswehr from the Cold War and the time of the Iron Curtain in Europe? In assessing the ongoing war in Ukraine, I feel it would be reckless to fail to consider the times of the bloc confrontation with the former Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. It is, of course, always necessary to take into account the specific historical conditions in order to be able to draw conclusions for the present.

When I joined the Bundeswehr in 1978, we trained for exercises rather than a war emergency. War in Europe was mostly a subject for tabletop exercises and not a brutal reality, as it is in Ukraine today. Germany was a potential frontline state wedged between the two military blocs of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The nuclear component, and thus an apocalypse of complete annihilation, was a major factor in all defence planning. The Bundeswehr constituted the highly mechanised core of conventional collective defence

in central Europe. Ultimately, however, it was not so much an army on operations as a force preparing for a potential state of tension or defence by continuously training conscripts and reservists to ensure its buildup capability. All thoughts and actions of the troops were guided by planning, training and exercising for a war emergency. “Be able to fight so you won’t have to fight” became the guiding principle of deterrence and would shape the mindset of the Bundeswehr for decades.⁶

Even then, the “inner compass” of the armed forces, i.e. the answer to the questions of the purpose of their service and what motivates them to serve, was an essential component of the credibility of deterrence. Because the resulting “troop morale”, or in more technical terms, its relevance for combat effectiveness in accomplishing the mission of national and collective defence, was an essential quality and central element of effective deterrence. The considerations of the “intellectual fathers” of the organisational and leadership philosophy underlying the Bundeswehr since its establishment in 1955 (*Innere Führung*, often translated as Leadership Development and Civic Education), were also based on this insight. Particularly the former Wehrmacht officers and subsequent Bundeswehr generals von Baudissin and von Kielmansegg concluded from the lessons learned from their own past that the Bundeswehr as an army in a democracy would only become a highly effective instrument if freedom and justice became a living part of it. Also, every soldier, no matter their rank, was to be bound by a legal and moral framework in their actions. *Innere Führung* – as a “moral armoury and instrument of modern leadership” – was needed to achieve this effectiveness.⁷

During the Cold War, *Innere Führung* had thus provided a conceptual framework for integrating the Bundeswehr into society, ensuring its subordination to the free and democratic constitutional order and promoting the ideal of the “citizen in uniform”. All military personnel was to experience these principles during their service – both their civil rights and their civil duties – and become

aware of the limits of their own actions just as the limits of obedience. Since the beginnings of the Bundeswehr, *Innere Führung* has thus provided not only a close inter-connection between military striking power, i.e. combat effectiveness, and our free and democratic constitutional order, but also a moral compass for all soldiers that is in line with the constitution and the concept of humanity derived from it.

Despite this clear commitment to *Innere Führung*, the concept has frequently been the subject of sometimes harsh criticism from the very start, which was mostly the result of the way this organisational and leadership philosophy was translated into practice. Critics claimed that the concept was too theoretical and abstract. During the 1970s, the debate about *Innere Führung* became less polarised. The 1979 annual report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces therefore stated that the concept had been accepted by the forces. It would stay this way in the following years and did not change much even during the controversies in society about the NATO double-track decision.

After the end of the Cold War, German reunification and the resulting peace dividend, national and collective defence increasingly faded into the background as a mission for the Bundeswehr. The armed forces were gradually downsized and for more than two decades, their primary task would be to conduct operations abroad. Then Defence Minister Struck publicly stated that Germany's security was also being defended in the Hindu Kush.⁸ This answer to the question of the relevance of military service after 1990 was by no means easy to digest, neither for the servicemen and servicewomen, nor for society. For the new task spectrum of operations abroad as part of international crisis management, where deployed troops, particularly in Afghanistan, were increasingly involved in combat, the motto was now "Be able to fight in order to survive".⁹ But this definition of mission accomplishment and proving oneself in the face of mortal danger on operations had not become sufficiently established, even after Russia's illegal annexation

of Crimea and the resulting return to the core task of national and collective defence. Then came 24 February 2022.

"Fighting morale" based on values

On this date, Russia's unlawful war of aggression on Ukraine began. It inevitably raises questions of "operational morale" and responsibility, as well as of military leadership on the part of the Russian aggressor. Systemic deficiencies in the Russian armed forces, for example in their treatment of conscripts, were well-known even before the war in Uk-

Reports of war crimes committed by Russian troops in Ukraine show us where military action can lead if there is no values-based leadership and mistrust prevails instead

raine. In the same vein, the brutality of Russian units and the complete lack of a moral compass guiding their actions was already evident in earlier wars such as the ones in Chechnya and, more recently, Syria. The fact that the Ukrainian forces are so successful in their defence and even offence against Russia's invading forces is clearly attributable to the abovementioned factor of "fighting morale". While the Russian troops do not seem to really know what they are fighting for in this casualty-intensive war, the Ukrainian soldiers are most motivated in their courageous fight by wanting to defend their country and their livelihoods. In addition, there seems to be mistrust at all levels on the Russian side.¹⁰ This war therefore shows us clearly how important morale is for the success or failure of armed forces in combat.

What is more, reports of war crimes committed by Russian troops in Ukraine – in complete opposition to our ideal of the citizen in uniform – show us where military action can lead if there is no values-based leadership and mistrust prevails instead.

Taking into account our own lessons learned during the Cold War and on our operations abroad, what this current war teaches the Bundeswehr has two important aspects in terms of organisation and personnel. First, *Innere Führung* as a concept and the moral compass aligned with our free and democratic constitutional order have lost none of their significance. Second, the war in Ukraine confirms that we are well advised to invest in “mentally equipping” our servicemen and servicewomen. This sets the parameters within which the Bundeswehr will have to systematically focus on a “national and collective defence mindset” in the coming years, with the explicit goal of strengthening operational readiness as a whole by substantially increasing the combat effectiveness of the forces.

To increase combat effectiveness, the Bundeswehr must for one thing better align itself with the current societal and security environment, based on its organisational and leadership philosophy that has endured from the Cold War until today. For another thing, this requires a return to the core objective of *Innere Führung* – a maximum military effectiveness of values-based armed forces. My ambition for the further evolution of *Innere Führung* is therefore to both preserve and at the same time readjust what has proven to be useful. This is the only way that the Bundeswehr and its personnel will develop a more resilient identity in the face of existing hybrid threats such as disinformation or other forms of power projection. It will also be the only way to enable the Bundeswehr to successfully counter military threats in the context of national and collective defence:

with robustness and fully operational armed forces at a high state of readiness.

We should also remember our own military tradition. As a conscious confrontation with the past, this is an integral part of the values-based identity of the Bundeswehr. One key element of our tradition is that the Bundeswehr proved its worth as a deterrence force in the Cold War and contributed to the fall of the Iron Curtain as part of NATO. Participation in international crisis management missions now also forms part of the identity and tradition of the Bundeswehr – which includes combat experience and the commemoration of the dead.

The evolution of *Innere Führung*

Echoing the criticism of *Innere Führung* during the Cold War, the practicability of this concept remains a matter of debate even under current conditions. Instead of being abstract, *Innere Führung* must therefore be comprehensible and tangible in describing the purpose and characteristics of military service. In theory and practice, aspects such as mission command must not be counteracted by micromanagement, mistrust or a lack of tolerance for human error. The same applies to honesty and constructive criticism as a feature of being a responsible citizen in uniform.

Both aspects, the evolution of *Innere Führung* and the return to traditions, first and foremost require good leadership by military superiors who are convincing role models, know how to build trust, value accountability and possess a willingness to make decisions and take risks – in other words: agility.

While these are by no means new criteria for good leadership, they have regained relevance. Today, military superiors must once again prepare their subordinates for the realities of a large-scale military conflict with an adversary such as Russia. Given how our everyday lives provide us with a sense of security from existential threats, the willingness to face situations like those we see in the war in Ukraine is to deliberately accept personal hardship. The ability to fight in high-intensity

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combat and the willingness to endure hardship and make sacrifices are qualities increasingly expected from all military personnel. Military service comes at a high price.

All military superiors must therefore now address these specific demands of military service, ensuring discipline as well as mission accomplishment even in the face of hostilities like those in Ukraine. The education of soldiers is therefore at least as important as commanding and training them. While *Innere Führung* provides a guideline for the “mental equipment” of servicemen and servicewomen, to paraphrase Baudissin, it requires a concrete and, more importantly, consistent practical implementation. This is a standing mission for all military superiors.

Given the standards we have set for citizens in uniform and the national and collective defence mindset, we must increase all Bundeswehr members’ certainty about what is expected from them. This requires us to implement a personal development concept that entails a life-long process of learning and qualification in all training measures, thus promoting conscientious decision-making skills. This kind of comprehensive education, which far surpasses the current understanding of civic education in the Bundeswehr through its much greater ethical dimension, will not only help prevent gross and often inhumane misconduct as we have repeatedly observed, primarily from the Russian side, in the war in Ukraine. This exceedingly comprehensive approach to education can also help protect against mental overload in extreme situations. Personal development thus increases certainty in decision making.

In this context, medical care and care provided to deployed soldiers by military chaplains has also gained in significance. The same applies to care provided to children and other family members in this new operational and exercise reality. Increasingly short warning and deployment times across the board pose new challenges in terms of the compatibility of work and family life and the duty of care of the Bundeswehr as an employer. Existing care concepts governing, for

example, childcare or caregiving for family members as well as the family support organisation mostly hail from the era of international crisis management and will have to become more flexible and scalable. Here, too, the national and collective defence mindset must become second nature to all those involved.

Finally, cohesion factors heavily in all these considerations – and this is not only true for Bundeswehr structures. It is not a new insight from the war in Ukraine that cohesion within

The ability to fight in high-intensity combat and the willingness to endure hardship and make sacrifices are qualities increasingly expected from all military personnel

small combat teams is essential for the combat effectiveness of armed forces. Solidarity and the successful handling of extreme situations require mutual trust. Effectively mastering stressful situations is therefore a decisive factor for cohesion within field units. But it is not only horizontal cohesion within a small combat team that is important. Vertical cohesion across all levels of hierarchy is just as relevant. Mission command can only be successful if there is mutual trust between superiors and subordinates. This equally applies to the level of units and formations, to the major organisational elements and to the Ministry of Defence.

Back in the Cold War, the objective of “training under near-combat conditions”, which was primarily based on lessons learned in World War II, was to prevail on the battlefield.¹¹ Today, training and education in the Bundeswehr must realistically aspire to successfully tackle a scenario like the war in Ukraine in all its various facets. In the years to come, this will have to be reflected in training and exercises at both the national and multinational levels. This is not to say that we will completely turn our backs on the Bundeswehr operations abroad, which continue to this day.

“Willingness” as the key element of credible deterrence

Cohesion between society and the Bundeswehr is another important factor in combat effectiveness. In contrast to Cold War times, the armed forces are no longer tied to society through conscription today. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, however, approval rates for the Bundeswehr have risen sharply. The general willingness to show Alliance solidarity and invest in the operational readiness of the Bundeswehr has currently reached a new high.¹²

This approval is no doubt important in that it inspires confidence in servicemen and servicewomen regarding their mission to defend justice and freedom in Germany, and to endure the hardships involved in military service. Therefore, I quite agree with Federal President Steinmeier, who said that “society needs a strong Bundeswehr – but the Bundeswehr also needs a society that supports it.”¹³ In my opinion, this new notion of military preparedness in our society will not necessarily result in a new spiral of militarisation, despite the deliberate violation of international law by Russia. Credible deterrence by an operational Bundeswehr in line with the motto “Be able and *willing* to fight so you won’t have to fight” is absolutely no contradiction here.

The answer to my initial question whether the motto of the Cold War still holds true is therefore: yes! It holds true if in addition to “being able to fight”, servicemen and servicewomen are willing to defend our values and our security and society is prepared for that. For this to succeed, we must also remain true to our principles, our moral commitment to our free and democratic constitutional order and to international law. *Innere Führung* is the right concept for this, both in the past and now. To put it into practice and fill it with life is and will remain the mission of all members of the Bundeswehr.

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FIT FOR DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE?

THE NATO SUMMIT IN MADRID AND THE FUTURE OF THE ALLIANCE

Authors: Anna Clara Arndt/Göran Swistek

Introduction

February 24, 2022 – the day on which Europe once again became the theater of a war of aggression fueled by imperial claims to power – undeniably represents a watershed moment. Until recently, many would have found it hard to imagine such a blatant breach of international law on European soil. Not infrequently, warnings about such a scenario – often from Eastern European states – were dismissed as scaremongering. Within NATO, at least at the military level, the possibility of conventional aggression against Allies had been considered since Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, and initial military operation plans for defense in a conflict with state actors had been prepared in the form of so-called “graduated response plans”.¹ This was intended as part of a gradual strengthening of deterrence and defense capabilities. At the political level, however, this adjustment was not made until much later. The Alliance’s Strategic Concept dating from 2010, which was still applicable until the summer of 2022, regarded the Euro-Atlantic area as a region at peace, and assessed the probability of conventional attack against a member state as low. Nevertheless, due to Russia’s increasingly aggressive foreign and security policy, as well as intensifying geopolitical competition with China, a revision of the document and its associated military planning had been under discussion for several years. At the NATO Brussels Summit in 2021, the Allied heads of government finally tasked the NATO Secretary General with developing a new Strategic Concept. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 accelerated this adaptation process, which was enshrined at the highest strategic level by the adoption of the new Strategic Concept at the Madrid Summit in June 2022. Its key priorities include refocusing the Alliance on its core area of responsibility, and strengthening deterrence and defense capabilities.

Abstract

NATO’s security environment has changed dramatically over the past decade. While NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept still envisaged a partnership with Russia, the latter’s increasingly aggressive foreign policy, annexation of Crimea and attack on Ukraine have rendered the idea obsolete. Moreover, increasing global competition with China and the links between military power and issues of energy security, infrastructure security and trade security were not adequately addressed before.

The new Strategic Concept, adopted in June 2022, takes all of this into account. On the military level, the refocusing on deterrence and defense in the Euro-Atlantic area, which was initiated in 2014, will rest to a large extent on the New Force Model (NFM). This represents a considerable quantitative and qualitative increase of deterrence and defense capabilities. At the same time, the anticipated accession of Sweden and Finland will significantly strengthen the Alliance in terms of personnel and materiel, as well as with regional operational knowledge.

After a period of relative political stagnation, the document also now sets out a revised political framework for NATO’s continuing military adaptation, recognizing the threat posed by Russia and the changed security environment. Collective defense is given priority over the other core tasks. In addition, the Strategic Concept covers a whole spectrum of current and future challenges, including cross-cutting issues such as climate change, but also cyber warfare and growing strategic competition with “authoritarian actors”, notably China.

Implementing this ambitious adaptation process will require political will – in order to provide the necessary resources, but also to ensure that Allies do not exploit the consensus principle to advance their own interests. Finally, when it comes to the complex issue of NATO-EU cooperation and strengthening the European security architecture, new opportunities are emerging.

A changed security environment

NATO's security environment has changed dramatically over the past decade. When the 2010 Strategic Concept was adopted, Allies were still seeking a partnership with Russia to jointly shape the European security architecture.² Since then, Moscow has emerged as a core threat to the Alliance. For years, Russia has regarded the U.S. and NATO as the greatest military threat to its own security – a view that has been accompanied by increasingly strident rhetoric directed against the West.³ Moscow has used this perceived threat to justify an aggressive foreign and security policy of spheres of interest and influence, accompanied by a military buildup. The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, published on July 31, 2022, clearly illustrates this development. The document assumes that NATO seeks direct confrontation, including military confrontation, especially in the Euro-Atlantic area,⁴ and sets out global geographic priorities for containing the United States and NATO, supposedly in defense of its own security.⁵ The maritime domain is one in which Russia aims to realize its geopolitical interests and ambitions and to shape the international order on its own terms. In this context, the Arctic is given the highest national priority. But the triad of the Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea is also attributed great importance for Russia's geopolitical and geo-economic interests.⁶ In recent years, the Russian leadership has promoted the idea of a single security and economic zone extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific,⁷ while Moscow's aggressive and imperial actions underline its intention to move geostrategically – and in particular for geoeconomic gains – from the edge of Europe and Asia to the center of a new Eurasia, in which it would form a central hub.⁸ In light of Russia's aggressive hegemonic ambitions, any NATO partnership with Russia is hardly conceivable in the foreseeable future.⁹

A particular challenge for Western states is the increasing degree to which military power is linked to the security of energy supply, critical infrastructure and trade. Moscow's

maritime doctrine, for example, draws a direct line between military security and the use of armed force to secure the extraction of natural resources as well as control over critical maritime infrastructure and trade routes. China's activities in the Euro-Atlantic region, which at first glance seem to pursue economic goals – for example strategic investments in critical infrastructure –, have also raised increasing security concerns in recent years. Although the West recognized this connection many years ago with a broader concept of security,

The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, published in 2022, assumes that NATO seeks direct confrontation, including military confrontation, especially in the Euro-Atlantic area

it has so far struggled to come up with suitable responses and strategies. For a long time, the Western understanding of military security was limited to possible military confrontations. Trade flows, infrastructure or even the energy supply were not seen as primary targets of military action or capabilities.

It is against this background that NATO, since 2014, has been undertaking a fundamental military and political adaptation to a security environment dominated by growing strategic competition with Russia and China.

Military adaptation: a return to deterrence and defense

Since 2014, the growing realization that Russia poses the most immediate threat to NATO has caused the Alliance to return to its core mission of deterrence and defense against military aggression by state actors.¹⁰ Other tasks, such as international crisis management, remain a core part of NATO's portfolio, but have increasingly taken a back seat. This has also led to a geographic refocusing on the Euro-Atlantic region spanning from the east coast of the United States to the eastern flank of NATO's European members. In this context, the Alliance has made a series of far-reach-

ing operational and conceptual changes at the military level. The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) adopted at the Wales Summit in 2014 included initial measures to strengthen NATO's deterrence posture against a potential state aggressor, and to reassure in particular the Eastern European states, whose defense capabilities were to be strengthened by the Allies. This led to the deployment of "enhanced Forward Presence" (eFP) forces in the three Baltic states as well as Poland, and was accompanied by a series of new and revised military concepts.¹¹

In the face of the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Allies then decided at the NATO Madrid Summit to undertake a longer-term overhaul and strengthening of their deterrence and defense posture, guided by three ideas: a New Force Model (NFM) with an increased number of troops in a high state of readiness, a stronger regional focus, and changes to its deterrence model.

The central element and tool is the New Force Model. The NFM allocates Allied forces and capabilities to different potential conflict regions within the Euro-Atlantic area – such as the eastern flank and the High North – and

transferred into a new rapid reaction force, the Allied Reaction Force (ARF). The ARF will be under NATO operational command and control at all times, including before the outbreak of a military confrontation. Until now, many Allies had rejected permanent subordination to NATO's supreme command, SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe), i.e. except in times of crisis.

In addition, NATO is changing its deterrence model. Previous NATO plans in Eastern and Central Europe were conceived as "deterrence by reinforcement": the deterrent effect was based on a small rotating international troop presence in the Baltic states and Poland (around 1,000 troops in each case). This "enhanced Forward Presence" (eFP) was to be reinforced in the event of a crisis. However, in particular the most exposed states on the northeastern and southeastern flank doubted the reliability of this approach, and called for the permanent stationing of larger and more heavily equipped units. The new plans pursue more of a "deterrence by denial" approach, which seeks to demonstrate to the enemy through a stronger troop presence that an attack would be doomed to failure from the outset. In practice, this is reflected in the establishment of four new battle groups deployed in Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, as a reaction to Russian aggression. In addition, the existing eFP forces are to be upgraded to multi-domain-capable units at brigade level, and heavy equipment – such as artillery or armored vehicles – is to be deployed in advance. The aim is to ensure that troops kept on standby can be deployed to potential conflict areas within a matter of hours or days, where they can seamlessly transition to combat-readiness. In addition, the assigned forces that are placed on standby are to rotate regularly to the designated region in varying strengths for joint exercises, in order to ensure a significantly higher troop presence in the region at any given time of the year.

However, this approach will only be credible if the materiel needed for an emergency – from weapons systems and ammunition to logistics – can actually be forward deployed ready and available at short notice. Several

The new deterrence approach seeks to demonstrate to the enemy through a stronger troop presence that an attack would be doomed to failure from the outset

organizes them into three groups with rising readiness levels.¹² In total, the NFM assigns around 800,000 troops to different readiness levels and regions. The clearly defined readiness levels are referred to as "tiers". The first two levels – tier 1 and tier 2 – are to be ready to engage in up to 10 or around 10-30 days, respectively, and form the core of the high readiness forces, with a total of 300,000 troops. Tier 3 forces are to be ready to engage gradually within 30 to 180 days. There are further differentiations within the three NFM readiness levels. For example, within tier 1 and tier 2, the previous NATO Response Force (NRF) and Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) will be

countries have already begun to increase their military contributions to NATO – including Germany, which leads the NATO multinational battle group in Lithuania.¹³ A distinction must be drawn between commitments made within the NATO framework, such as those made by Germany, and unilateral commitments that strengthen the Alliance’s posture but are realized outside of NATO on the basis of bilateral agreements. For example, the United States has pledged a comprehensive strengthening of its presence in Europe on a bilateral basis, including by establishing an army headquarters in Poland, stationing additional troops in Romania and the Baltic states, deploying air defense systems to Italy and Germany, and stationing two F-35 fighter jet squadrons in the United Kingdom.¹⁴ This increases the number of U.S. troops in Europe by 20,000 to more than 100,000.

All in all, this is therefore not just a quantitative increase in NATO forces, but also a comprehensive reorganization and improvement of readiness and capabilities. The NFM will be the standard by which all NATO forces and the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) are measured. To implement the aforementioned comprehensive changes, all Allies will have to make larger contributions of higher quality (troops, equipment); this will require great effort and in some cases will take a long time.

The NATO accession of Sweden and Finland

In the wake of the war against Ukraine, not only NATO is going through a process of fundamental reorganisation. The recent Russian invasion has driven two countries outside the Alliance – Sweden and Finland – to seek membership. Even before the Russian invasion, the two Scandinavian states’ views of their security environment were in flux.¹⁵ Stockholm and Helsinki identified a number of possible lines of conflict in the Baltic Sea region as well as in the European Arctic. It did not come as a surprise when Sweden reacted with extreme alertness to the presence of a group of landing ships belonging to Russia’s Northern and Baltic Sea Fleets not far

from the island of Gotland in early January 2022, and immediately ramped up its military presence.¹⁶

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine prompted both countries to fundamentally reassess their security environment and consider joining NATO; on May 18, 2022, both submitted official accession applications.¹⁷ At the NATO summit in Madrid, the accession protocols were ready to be symbolically signed with the approval of all Allies, to clear the way for the subsequent ratification process. Yet after

Sweden and Finland will contribute substantially to improving the quality of NATO’s collective defense capabilities. Not least, both countries have experience of dealing with Russia

the official accession applications had been submitted, Turkey raised its concerns against signing the accession protocols, publicly citing its national interests, which led many to foresee a lengthy negotiation process.¹⁸ Despite a joint memorandum by the three countries on the eve of the Summit,¹⁹ Turkey had not yet given up its opposition until the publication of this article. Hungary’s consent to the accession was also still pending, meaning that the historic step from the two Scandinavian countries’ long-standing and societally deeply rooted neutrality to NATO membership had not yet been completed.

Both countries will contribute substantially to improving the quality of NATO’s collective defense capabilities. They have modern, well-equipped, effective and well-trained armed forces, which for many years have participated in exercises, trainings and international crisis management missions in close cooperation with NATO allies. Sweden also has its own defense industry with high-quality capabilities. Not least, both countries have experience of dealing with Russia. As the years ahead will likely be marked by a continuing confrontation with Moscow, this regional operational knowledge on the one hand, and the existing capabilities for war-

fare in climatically challenging conditions on the other, including in the Arctic region, should benefit NATO. The combined capabilities of the Finnish and Swedish air, land and naval forces will also enhance the defense of the particularly vulnerable Baltic states and reduce the burden on other NATO members.

Political adaptation: core elements of the new Strategic Concept

After 2014, NATO's ongoing adaptation process initially took place mostly at the military level. On the political level, by contrast, there was relatively little movement. The election of Donald Trump as U.S. President also raised doubts as to the reliability of the Alliance's militarily strongest member state. As early as 2017, the then President-elect called NATO "obsolete".²⁰ It was in this context that his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron finally announced the Alliance's "brain death" two years later, calling for Europe to become more

Nevertheless, it was this same London Declaration that provided the impetus for a reflection process under the auspices of the NATO Secretary General, "to further strengthen NATO's political dimension".²³ This led to the NATO 2030 reflection process, in which the Allies worked with external experts, parliamentarians, civil society and youth representatives to develop ideas to make the Alliance "even stronger politically".²⁴ At the 2021 Brussels summit, whose final declaration was ten times the length of its London predecessor, the results of this process were translated into a series of concrete decisions. Among other things, the Allies made commitments to strengthen resilience and enhance technological cooperation; to consult more with each other and cooperate more with partners; to mitigate and adapt better to climate change; and to develop a new Strategic Concept for NATO.²⁵

At the NATO Madrid Summit in June 2022, the adoption of the new Strategic Concept finally established – with some delay – the policy framework for the Alliance's ongoing military adaptation. Thus, at the highest strategic level, the document now acknowledges the changed security environment that has been driving the Alliance's military adaptation since 2014: the Euro-Atlantic area is "not at peace", and Russia is "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." Even the possibility of an attack on NATO Alliance territory can no longer be ruled out.²⁶ Based on this threat assessment, "collective security" is the "key purpose and greatest responsibility" of the Alliance; all other activities of the Alliance should contribute to the fulfillment of this purpose.²⁷ However, the document also explicitly emphasizes that, contrary to the Russian view, NATO does not seek military confrontation²⁸ and maintains a purely defensive character.²⁹ In accordance with the threat analysis, the emphasis on "collective defense" serves solely to protect Allied territory.³⁰ Within this framework, NATO's three core tasks from the predecessor concept of 2010 remain in place in a slightly modified form: deterrence and defense; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative se-

The adoption of the new Strategic Concept finally established – with some delay – the policy framework for the Alliance's ongoing military adaptation

sovereign in security and defense policy, and more independent of the United States.²¹ At the NATO Summit in London shortly thereafter – which was intended to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Alliance – the Allies were barely able to agree on a short summit declaration.²²

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curity. However, in line with the comprehensive military adaptation since 2014, here too the section on deterrence and defense is the most detailed and ambitious. For example, the Allies commit to “significantly strengthen [their] deterrence and defense posture to deny any potential adversary any possible opportunities for aggression.” Consistent with the ongoing strengthening of NATO’s eastern flank, the Allies will “ensure a substantial and persistent presence on land, at sea, and in the air,” including “robust in-place, multi-domain, combat-ready forces”.³¹

If the Strategic Concept provides the overdue political framework for a security environment characterized by Russian aggression and the resulting military adaptation since 2014, it also goes far beyond this acute threat. As a longer-term strategic document, it is intended to prepare the Alliance not only for existing challenges, but also for those of the coming decade. This is reflected in the way it addresses a range of new actors and challenges, some of which were identified in the course of the reflection process since 2019. Firstly, the document adapts the understanding of collective security in line with modern methods of warfare. For example, it states that “malicious cyber activities”, hostile operations to, from, or within space and hybrid operations “could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.”³² Other more recent challenges also find consideration as cross-cutting issues: priorities such as enhanced resilience, maintaining Allies’ technological edge, mitigating and adapting to climate change, human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda are to be promoted across all NATO tasks.³³

Secondly, the Strategic Concept identifies “authoritarian actors” as new challengers to the Alliance’s “interests, values and democratic way of life.”³⁴ Not only Russia but also China is explicitly mentioned in this context. In the 2019 London Declaration, NATO only briefly mentioned the opportunities and challenges posed by Beijing. In contrast, the new Strategic Concept presents a detailed breakdown

of the “political, economic and military tools” that China employs to challenge the Allies’ “interests, security and values”. It also lays out NATO’s intended response to these challenges: a mix of constructive engagement, increased awareness and resilience, but also the willingness to “ensure NATO’s enduring ability to guarantee the defence and security of Al-

The Strategic Concept is intended to prepare the Alliance not only for existing challenges, but also for those of the coming decade

lies” and “stand up for our shared values and the rules-based international order, including freedom of navigation.”³⁵

Challenges and risks

The new Strategic Concept – like NATO’s enlargement and military adaptation – is ambitious. The Alliance aims to significantly strengthen its deterrence and defense posture in view of the threat presented by Russia, while at the same time preparing for a broad spectrum of new challenges. This balancing act between adaptation and foresight is particularly evident in the Strategic Concept. Facing the acute threat of a revisionist power waging a conventional war of aggression on European soil, the document places collective defense at the heart of the Alliance. However, it would be negligent in view of the current Russian war to ignore the above-mentioned foreseeable changes in the security environment. And so the docu-

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ment weaves these newer themes into NATO's existing task portfolio under the umbrella of collective defense, without undertaking a fundamental realignment.

Yet even this intelligent compromise solution runs the risk of placing ever greater demands on the Alliance, with an ever-widening scope of tasks. The implementation of the ambitious goals of NATO's military and political adaptation already requires considerable resources and continuing common political will among the Allies. The anticipated accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO adds further challenges. On the one hand, it represents an improvement in the Alliance's strategic position, but it also comes with new military requirements. The mere fact that Finland has a 1,348-kilometer border with Russia increases the danger of a possible escalation in the spheres of influence and interest proclaimed by Russia. Although Stockholm and

places their own surveillance and weapons systems at the Alliance's disposal, enabling it to react defensively to a threat early on. This makes the regionally focused coordination of NATO activities and their balancing with the overarching deterrence policy – which has been discussed for years – all the more important.

The obstruction by individual Allies of the accession of the two Scandinavian states highlights another fundamental challenge for the Alliance: as a consensus organization, NATO can live up to its high demands and ambitions only as long as there is unity among its member states. In the coming years, it will likely have to manage further attempts by individual Allies to hold up the implementation of certain decisions in order to advance their own goals. Yet this is ultimately unavoidable due to the consensus principle underlying almost all NATO decisions; and given the Alliance's decades of experience in finding diplomatic solutions to such blocking tactics, and the impressive unity shown by the Allies since Russia's February invasion, this risk still seems limited.

Substantial differences challenging the foundations of NATO – the much-vaunted transatlantic bond – would be more problematic. In the wake of the Russian war of aggression, the United States has invested considerable resources supporting Ukraine and strengthening NATO's eastern flank in Europe. From January to October 2022, the value of U.S. assistance to Ukraine was nearly twice that of the support measures of all EU countries and institutions combined.³⁶ In the medium to long term, however, Washington's political focus will increasingly turn to the Indo-Pacific and China.³⁷ As a result, politically sensitive issues of transatlantic burden-sharing and Europe's responsibility for its own defense – which already strained the Alliance during Trump's presidency – could become more pressing. In recognition of these challenges, the Defence Investment Pledge (DIP) will be at the center of discussions at the upcoming NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023. The DIP spells out the goal the Allies set themselves back in 2014 of committing at least 2%

In view of growing economic difficulties due to the pandemic and the war, it is not likely to become any easier for many European countries to push through larger defense budgets domestically

Helsinki have so far been reluctant to permanently station NATO troop contingents, capabilities or headquarters on their own soil, their temporary presence will certainly increase with joint exercises and training segments. Given Russian failures in Ukraine, further conflict escalation due to increased presence alone or a massing of Russian military capabilities along the soon-to-be new Allied external border seems unlikely at the moment. However, except for the two areas around Kaliningrad and Saint Petersburg, the Baltic is becoming a de facto internal sea for NATO. Due to the geopolitical and geoeconomic relevance of the Baltic Sea region for Russia, this adds further lines of conflict. The military capabilities of Sweden and Finland are also permanently within the effective range of the Russian military, although this is partly offset by the fact that their accession

of their gross domestic product (GDP) to defense spending, of which at least 20% should be invested in major equipment. But there is now increasingly talk at NATO that the two percent target should be “the floor, not the ceiling” of national defense spending.³⁸ Whereas observers noted a race to reach the two-percent mark and a “blaming and shaming” of stragglers following the 2014 DIP decision, it now seems that a warmup for a three-percent race is already underway. At the same time, in view of growing economic difficulties due to the pandemic and the war, it is not likely to become any easier for many European countries to push through larger defense budgets domestically.

Calls to strengthen the European pillar within NATO lead in turn to more fundamental questions about the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, particularly the role of the European Union (EU) in Europe’s security and defense policy. The EU, with its extensive non-military competencies, is indeed better positioned than NATO to deal with certain newer challenges – particularly hybrid threats – and could relieve NATO in this area. But NATO-EU cooperation brings its own set of issues – from U.S. concerns about a potential inefficient duplication of structures, to Central and Eastern European apprehensions that greater EU involvement could undermine NATO and indispensable U.S. security guarantees.³⁹ This is probably the reason why a new joint NATO-EU declaration has not yet materialized, even though it has been on the policy agenda for some time.⁴⁰ Despite these difficulties, analysts point out that a window of opportunity for closer cooperation between the two organizations seems to be opening.⁴¹ Following the accession of Finland and Sweden, all but four EU member states will also belong to NATO, which should facilitate coordination. Meanwhile, the Biden administration seems to welcome a strengthening of European defense capacity to relieve the burden on Washington. After all, both organizations have already acted in coordination in the context of the Russian war against Ukraine, demonstrating that pragmatic cooperation is possible in a

crisis.⁴² If the Russian war of aggression has accelerated NATO’s necessary adaptation to a changing security environment, the current crisis could also become the driver of a more comprehensive modernization of the European security architecture.

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COMPETITION IN RISK-TAKING

RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE AND THE RISKS OF NUCLEAR ESCALATION*

Author: Peter Rudolf

Like the annexation of Crimea in 2014/15, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022 has been accompanied by barely veiled Russian nuclear threats, as a way of demonstrating resolve to the United States and testing reactions in Europe.¹ Shortly before launching his war of aggression, Putin ordered a nuclear force exercise to be conducted. As the invasion of Ukraine began, he issued a reminder that Russia remains one of the strongest nuclear powers: "there should be no doubt for anyone that any potential aggressor will face defeat and ominous consequences should it directly attack our country."² It was then reported that the "deterrent forces" had been placed on a higher state of alert. Manpower was increased at nuclear command centers. Nuclear submarines set out for exercises in the Barents Sea, and units of the Strategic Rocket Forces in Siberia practiced covert deployment of mobile intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers. Apart from that, no further steps were announced or observed – such as loading nuclear weapons onto aircraft, or movements at the sites where shorter-range nuclear weapons are stored. However, like the United States, Russia in any case maintains some of its long-range ballistic missiles at a level of readiness that would allow a rapid response. The threat of a possible nuclear escalation is clearly intended to deter other states from military intervention.³

With his nuclear threats, Putin has introduced an element of strategic unpredictability.⁴ Moscow's signals in this regard have potentially turned the war in Ukraine into a nuclear crisis – with the risk of either deliberate or inadvertent escalation, should the crisis between Russia and the West worsen. In such a situation, ambiguous signals may be interpreted in light of the worst-case assumptions, increasing the risk of mutual

Abstract

Russia has voiced nuclear threats since the very beginning of its war of aggression. These are evidently intended to deter supporters of Ukraine from military intervention. Thus, the possibility of a nuclear crisis – with a potentially uncontrollable escalation – has been there from the start. By incorporating occupied regions of eastern Ukraine into Russia in September 2022, President Putin has sent out a further signal, and limited his options because now Russia's own territorial integrity is at stake.

In deterrence theory, demonstrative risk-taking aimed at getting the other side to give way or make concessions is called "brinkmanship". The other party – in this case, the U.S. administration – is forced to assess the actual readiness for nuclear escalation.

As it apparently does not rule this out, the dilemma intensifies: how to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia while providing Ukraine with effective support to defend and reclaim its territory – in the form of weapons supplies and other military/intelligence assistance. Furthermore, a massive U.S. response (already announced) to any Russian use of nuclear weapons could set in motion a spiral of escalation. In addition, if the Russian military even prepares to use a nuclear weapon, there is the risk of an inadvertent expansion of the war.

Given these highly risky alternatives, the U.S. administration may at some point have to make a decision and define the limits to its support for Ukraine.

* This article is based in part on two earlier publications by the author: *Welt im Alarmzustand. Die Wiederkehr nuklearer Abschreckung*. Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, 2022; *Bidens Balanceakt – die Ukraine stärken, Krieg mit Russland verhindern*. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, June 2022.

misperceptions. Concerned about possible misinterpretations, the U.S. Department of Defense canceled a scheduled routine ICBM test-launch.⁵

Biden's balancing act – strengthening Ukraine, avoiding war with Russia

President Biden made it clear early on that a direct military conflict between his country and Russia should be avoided at all costs, because that would be “World War III.”⁶ In the face of uncertainty as to what Russia might regard as interference, the Biden administration's early line was: yes to supplying arms to Ukraine, to providing some intelligence support to the country, and to comprehensive sanctions; but a strict rejection of Ukraine's request to enforce a no-fly zone, and avoidance of anything that could be seen as direct involvement in the war. Otherwise, the major concern was that there could be a direct confrontation with Russian forces.⁷ On the initiative of the United States, a hotline was established between the U.S. and Russian militaries in order to reduce the danger of an accidental military incident.

It is true that U.S. intelligence agencies expected that Putin would authorize the use of nuclear weapons only in the event of an existential threat to the Russian state or regime. But – they said in May 2022 – in such a tense situation, there is always an increased risk of miscalculations and unintended escalation.⁸

In any case, from the outset, the Biden administration designed its support for Ukraine with an eye toward a possible horizontal (expansion of the war zone) or vertical (use of nuclear weapons) escalation of the war. The hope was that by incrementally increasing support, and refraining from supplying weapons that Ukraine could use to attack targets deep inside Russia, certain “guardrails” had been set.⁹

The U.S. administration does not publicly speculate as to what for the Russian leadership would constitute an existential threat to the state or regime that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. But it clearly does

not rule out the possibility that Putin, if faced with a humiliating defeat, might seek to change the dynamics of the conflict by using tactical nuclear weapons – for example, if he had to choose between Russia being forced to withdraw from occupied territories in eastern Ukraine or even losing Crimea, and a nuclear escalation. There are several conceivable possibilities: a demonstrative use in the atmosphere over Ukraine; use against a Ukrainian city to cripple the electricity supply in, say, Kyiv, via the electromagnetic pulse;

In his cost/benefit calculation, Putin would have to weigh up whether the possible, but by no means certain, success of nuclear coercion or the military benefits outweighed the reputational costs to Russia of breaking the nuclear taboo

or use against Ukrainian formations on the battlefield. In his cost/benefit calculation, Putin would have to weigh up whether the possible, but by no means certain, success of nuclear coercion or the military benefits outweighed the reputational costs to Russia of breaking the nuclear taboo – especially among those countries in the global South that have not so far opposed Russia.

The dilemma in which the U.S. administration, indeed the West, would find itself in the event of a Russian use of nuclear weapons, is obvious: on the one hand, Moscow must be denied the benefits it might gain from a nuclear escalation – i.e. no cessation of support for Ukraine, and no pressure on Kyiv to bow to Russian demands. On the other hand, further escalation, possibly leading to war between Russia and NATO, must also be avoided.¹⁰

Brinkmanship – politics on the edge of the abyss

Unlike those analysts without political responsibility who speak of an extremely low risk of nuclear escalation, the U.S. administration takes into account the possibility of Putin raising the stakes and confronting the

United States with serious and difficult decisions. This is especially the case after Putin, in September 2022, very clearly stated the red line beyond which any means of defense may be used: namely, any threat to Russia’s territorial integrity. By incorporating four regions of Ukraine into Russia, he elevated the war into a defense of Russian territory. Western support for Ukraine thus became aggression directed against Russia, and Putin signalled his readiness to use all means of defense to defend against such aggression. Warning that he was “not bluffing”, he said that the U.S. had created a “precedent” by using nu-

clear weapons in 1945. Thus he has raised the stakes in the game of nuclear poker. With this and the decision to mobilize, Putin has limited his political room for maneuver in the event of imminent defeat.¹¹

has repeatedly warned Russia not to use nuclear weapons. In May 2022, President Biden said that any use of nuclear weapons by Russia in the Ukraine war would have “severe consequences”.¹⁴ In response to Putin’s rhetorical raising of the stakes, the U.S. administration toughened its tone: now there was talk of “catastrophic consequences” (National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan), and “horrific” consequences (Secretary of State Anthony Blinken).¹⁵ It remains unknown what specific warnings the administration may have sent to the Russian government through confidential channels. It is not clear publicly whether the U.S. would respond to a use of Russian nuclear weapons in Ukraine primarily by increasing economic pressure and stepping up military support for Ukraine, or even by launching conventional military attacks on Russian military installations.

The aim is to manipulate the common interest in avoiding a nuclear war, to one’s own advantage

clear weapons in 1945. Thus he has raised the stakes in the game of nuclear poker. With this and the decision to mobilize, Putin has limited his political room for maneuver in the event of imminent defeat.¹¹

Putin’s policy basically follows the logic of what in classical deterrence theory is called brinkmanship: raising the stakes and being willing to engage in a potentially uncontrollable escalation, in the expectation that the other side will behave rationally and give way.¹² The aim is to manipulate the common interest in avoiding a nuclear war, to one’s own advantage. But what happens if the other side also raises the stakes in the “competition in risk-taking”?¹³ The United States government

The warning of “catastrophic consequences” was accompanied – probably not coincidentally – by a kind of nuclear signaling in the background. This included the deployment of submarines with sea-launched cruise missiles in the European theater. B-52 bombers – albeit not carrying nuclear weapons – are stationed at a base in the United Kingdom. Two took off for flights over Norway to Russia’s northern border; another two approached Russian airspace from the south. In September 2022, the U.S. Strategic Command conducted a ten-day exercise in which the B-52 bomber wing stationed in North Dakota practiced its ability to quickly load nuclear-armed cruise missiles and conduct rapid take-offs.¹⁶ In addition, it has been reported that the replacement of nuclear bombs stored in Europe with a newer model (B61-12) is being brought forward to December 2022 from spring 2023. This move is perhaps intended primarily to reassure European allies.¹⁷

The Author



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Escalation risks

With regard to the American reactions, one can speak of a deliberate “strategic ambiguity”. However, by talking about the “catastrophic consequences” that a Russian use of nuclear weapons would entail, the Biden

administration may have maneuvered itself into a corner. It has put its own credibility on the line.¹⁸ Its response will certainly not be nuclear, because it would make no sense militarily or politically for the Americans to break the nuclear taboo themselves and increase the risk of escalation. But if the U.S. response is a military one, Putin would feel pressure to respond in order to demonstrate his resolve. And in that case, what would Russia's next step on the escalation ladder be? Conventional attacks against NATO targets? A nuclear attack against NATO ships? Or detonating a nuclear bomb over a military base in Europe to cripple it with the electromagnetic pulse? The Russian leadership seems to believe it holds the better cards in the "competition in risk-taking", and that the West will not risk a nuclear war for Ukraine.¹⁹

The risk of a possibly no longer controllable escalation could already arise if Russia were to take steps in preparation for the use of tactical nuclear bombs. On the Western side, there seems to be no certainty as to whether such preparations would be detected early on – if Russia did not use such preparations as a signal anyway.²⁰ Concrete preparations by Moscow for the use of tactical nuclear weapons could set in motion a process that would heighten the alert on both sides, potentially leading to a nuclear crisis. The Russian leadership cannot be sure how Washington will react to the initial warning signals. Would it expect the United States to put its strategic nuclear forces on heightened alert, and would it proceed to do the same in advance, as a precaution? Or would Moscow opt not to heighten the alert, leave most of its strategic submarines in port, and not deploy mobile missile launchers in the Siberian forests, in order to signal that only a limited nuclear option is being prepared for? Alternatively, if Russia's strategic submarines leave the ports, American fighter submarines will trail them. Even if Moscow does not prepare its nuclear forces for increased readiness, and Washington also leaves the readiness level of its own nuclear weapons as it is, Western intelligence activities on the Russian periphery would probably intensify – with the possibility that

this could lead to entanglements. If it actually came to the use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons, it could presumably be expected that preparations would be initiated on the

The Russian leadership seems to believe it holds the better cards in the "competition in risk-taking"

American side with a view to an escalation – to which, in turn, Russian reactions would have to be expected.²¹

The lingering nuclear shadow

The possibility of nuclear escalation casts its shadow over the war in Ukraine. As it seeks to retake occupied territories, the Ukrainian government may be willing to accept the risk of Russia using nuclear weapons. But will the United States accept the risk of an escalating nuclear crisis, or will it urge Ukraine to exercise restraint?²² The U.S. is supporting Ukraine with the goal of strengthening Ukraine's bargaining position if and when negotiations eventually occur. The U.S. administration has not commented on the conditions under which Kyiv should express openness to negotiations, or on what a negotiated outcome might look like. But there may come a point when the tensions between unconditional support for Ukraine and avoiding an escalation of the war will force the U.S. administration to take a position – and answer the question of whether it would provide Ukraine with military support to take back all its lost territory.²³

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“THE QUESTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS IS A COMPLEX ONE OVERALL”

Dr Portela, the EU and other Western states have imposed sanctions against Russia in response to the Russian war of aggression, which violates international law. Is that permitted under international law?

A distinction must be made on this issue: The UN Security Council can impose so-called multilateral sanctions based on the UN Charter, which bind all states in the world. The sanctions against Russia are unilateral sanctions, i.e. sanctions that are not imposed by the UN Security Council. In principle, however, unilateral sanctions are also considered lawful.

In this respect, the EU has exactly the same rights as an individual state. Moreover, the political message is also much stronger when states jointly take the same measures. And it may seem more “legitimate” if several states impose sanctions together, although this is a matter of perception. In addition, if only a single state imposes sanctions, its companies have many disadvantages compared to their competitors because they are the only ones that are not allowed to supply certain goods.

So there is no doubt about the fundamental legitimacy of such unilateral sanctions?

Legally, it is usually argued that sanctions may be imposed because they are not explicitly prohibited. Unlike the prohibition of the use of force under international law, which is enshrined in the UN Charter, there is no prohibition on the interruption of trade. When Nicaragua challenged U.S. economic sanctions in the 1980s, the International Court of Justice followed the U.S. view that every state has the right to decide with whom it will and will not trade.

Some states, especially from the global South, nevertheless fundamentally dispute that unilateral sanctions can be imposed because they violate the right to development. Since 2014, Russia has also held this view with particular emphasis. Accordingly, only measures imposed by the Security Council would be permissible; anything else would not. Whether a measure is adopted by the Security Council or not, however, depends purely on

Sanctions were imposed on Russia by many Western countries as early as 2014 in response to the annexation of Crimea. After the invasion of Ukraine 2022, these were expanded into a comprehensive sanctions regime that imposes sectoral trade restrictions, cuts off Russian banks from international payments, and makes it more difficult for wealthy elites to access their assets. But sanctions are controversial for a variety of reasons. Political scientist and sanctions expert Dr Clara Portela, currently Konrad Adenauer Visiting Scholar at the Centre for European Studies at Carleton University in Canada, answers questions on this topic in an interview with “Ethics and Armed Forces”.

political circumstances. As a result, the Security Council loses legitimacy.

In addition to this fundamental debate, there is also a legal discussion about the cases in which sanctions can be imposed, what they may contain, to what extent they must be targeted and proportionate, and what these criteria mean. In my opinion, it would make sense to regulate this more precisely. But as long as some people deny that they are permissible at all, we will not make any progress in this discussion.

In ethics, for example, there have been attempts to assess the legitimacy of sanctions against the just war doctrine. Some have concluded that at least comprehensive trade restrictions are not permissible because they intentionally harm civilians. It is debatable, however, whether just-war theory applies to sanctions – which are, after all, economic pressures rather than military means. An overview of these issues is provided, for example, by James Pattison¹ or Elizabeth Ellis².

Can Russia take legal action against the sanctions?

As far as Russian territory is concerned, Russia remains sovereign anyway; it is not subject

to any restrictions there. At the international level, it is possible to defend oneself against trade restrictions in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Russia has also already lodged an appeal with the International Court of Justice. And there is a third option that directly affects the EU, namely to appeal to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). In a precedent-setting case in 2021, the ECJ ruled that states also have the right to challenge economic sanctions that affect them and referred Venezuela's complaint back to the court having jurisdiction.

How would you classify the current sanctions against Russia? Are they very broad measures or rather so-called targeted sanctions aimed at individuals and certain groups?

They are in fact a mixture of comprehensive measures and targeted sanctions. This also means that they do not all follow the same

to make them withdraw support from the system. The way autocracies function has a lot to do with the leadership favoring the political elites economically or in other ways. If, at some point, these elites find that their loyalty is no longer worth their while because of sanctions or the country's weaker economy, they no longer have a reason to support the regime. That, at least, is the calculation behind it.

And will this calculation work out?

It is difficult to say. In any case, we must assume that power in Russia will become more and more centralized as the war progresses. It may become increasingly difficult for certain elites to withdraw support from the political leadership without exposing themselves and possibly fearing reprisals.

At this point, have we already talked about all the possible functions of sanctions?

No. One of the functions of the sanctions against Russia is to position oneself internationally on the side of Ukraine and its Western supporters. Even if the sanctions do not lead to a change in Russia's behavior or make warfare more difficult, they have a strong symbolic and communicative value because they clearly position the country in geostrategic terms.

And one must not forget another function, namely communication to one's own population: They demonstrate that you are trying to become active, that you are reacting at all to a breach of international law. There is a kind of public demand for that. If you do not react at all because you assume that it won't lead to an end to the conflict anyway, that might not be appreciated by the public.

What does this mean for the effectiveness of sanctions and the criticism that they have no effect at all?

By imposing so many waves of sanctions so quickly, it may only be discovered in retrospect that some sanctions do not quite fit or do not hold up in court. The EU had too little time to consider this and wanted to react quickly and resolutely. Fortunately, it may

It may become increasingly difficult for certain elites in Russia to withdraw support from the political leadership

rationale. Some are aimed at making it more difficult for Russia to finance the war. In addition, in the area of high technology, there are some goods that can no longer be exported to Russia, in particular microchips, which already significantly affects the ability of the Russian armed forces to continue to wage war. The measures directed against the elites and their wealth, against their luxury yachts, real estate and bank deposits, are designed

Profile



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be said, Russia's "special military operation" was not as quick and effective as originally thought, and so some effects became visible after only a few months.

The question of effectiveness is a complex one overall. For example, the relevant provisions sometimes remain vague about what they are supposed to achieve, and sometimes they do not say at all. The sanctions against Russia following the covert military intervention in eastern Ukraine in 2014, for example, were not tied to compliance with the Minsk Agreement until a year later. But if the objectives are not clear, you cannot measure the achievement.

Sometimes objectives are not stated for political reasons. The whole issue is further complicated by the fact that sanctions do not usually pursue a single goal, but rather different ones. It is therefore difficult to make general statements about the effectiveness of sanctions. But once you have identified objectives, you have to measure them individually. Together with a colleague from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, I evaluated the sanctions against Russia in this sense.³ The economic effects are noticeable in Russia, but limited; political effects, such as growing resistance to the war among the population, are hardly evident, however.

So is the impression correct that sanctions cannot really achieve anything – certainly not a maximum objective such as an end to the attacks or a withdrawal from Ukraine?

We have to be clear about that: The impact of sanctions can often only be properly evaluated once they are already in the past. But even then, they must always be evaluated in the context of other instruments. The information needed for this is often only available much later, for example when archives are opened or politicians who played an important role can speak openly.

The sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa, for example, are often considered a success story, but they ended in the early 1990s. Today, research is perfectly possible, but at the time, people simply did not know what was going on among the elites.

While the sanctions were in place, many observers claimed that they were not doing anything. When the turnaround finally came, they were suddenly seen as a success.

In the case of Cuba, it has been said for 50 years that sanctions do not work. If there is a turnaround at some point, one may claim

Sanctions do not usually pursue a single goal, but rather different ones

the opposite. Or take the example of Myanmar, where sanctions were in place for about 20 years until 2012/2013 before there was at least a transition from a military to a civilian government and the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was released from prison. In this respect, it is hard to say that sanctions are not working while they are still in place.

However, some critics also point out that sanctions, especially when imposed on autocratic regimes, can be counterproductive and tend to close ranks. The Russian regime can also use them for propaganda: Look, the West is waging an economic war against us, they want to destroy us.

It is obvious that the Kremlin does everything in its power to promote precisely this discourse. However, sometimes there is indeed this effect and sometimes not. In any case, it does not happen automatically. At the moment, it's not easy to see: Public opinion is rarely measured independently in autocratic states. Even if there is an independent polling institute, it's hard to determine whether people are answering honestly. If I were sitting somewhere in Omsk right now and my phone rang, "This is the Levada Center, we are measuring the approval rating of the government. Are you satisfied?" ...

... well, what would you answer?

In no case anything other than: "Yes, I am satisfied"! Otherwise, I would be taking a big risk; there is no way to know if it is the opinion

research institute or some spy. I do not mean to question that existing opinion research institutes are independent, but under the present circumstances it is another question how reliable their survey results are.

If you look at the current sanctions policy of the EU and Western countries against the background of current events and what we have just discussed here, how would you assess it?

Basically, I think there has been an effort to respond very quickly and very resolutely. It is true that the EU has also imposed an oil embargo and very far-reaching financial sanctions on Iran, but much more slowly – the pace is definitely unusual this time. In the end, what is probably most interesting is not at all what the EU imposes or how fast it goes, but what has been achieved in the area of sanctions circumvention. This is because the Commission has recently been empowered to establish a universally binding definition of what constitutes an offense and minimum standards for penalties. Before February 2022, each state could individually define what constituted evasion of sanctions and what did not. The level of penalties was also extremely variable. Even if this change in EU law did not receive as much media attention as individual sanction measures themselves, it has great significance.

Dr Portela, thank you very much for the interview!

Questions by Rüdiger Frank.

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“OUR PROFESSION MAY ALSO DEMAND THAT WE PUT OUR LIVES ON THE LINE. WE SELDOM THINK ABOUT THAT”

Russia's war against Ukraine leaves great destruction in its wake; not just since the start of the large-scale attack in February 2022, but since the uprisings in the Donbas. The Bundeswehr hospitals have been treating severely wounded Ukrainians for several years now. For "Ethics and Armed Forces," Major General Dr. Stephan Schoeps, Deputy Surgeon General of the Bundeswehr, answered questions about the physical and psychological damage caused by war, about mental and material preparation, and about the Afghanistan mission as a "maturity test" for the Bundeswehr.

Dr. Schoeps, Russia has been at war in Ukraine for more than half a year now. Were you surprised by the attack? Should we have seen it coming, as people keep saying?

It is easy to be wise after the event. Looking back, there were clear signs that the Russian Federation would make a move. At the latest with the annexation of Crimea, it became apparent what Russia's intentions were. We all wanted to believe that Putin was just making threats. None of us wanted to think that our comfortable, easy lives could be in danger, and we could not imagine that an illegal war of aggression would be waged in Europe again. The suddenness and intensity of the attack were very frightening, and certainly not only for me.

Did you think that the war would last so long and develop the way it has?

Ukraine is defending its territory. That is the greatest motivation for it to mobilize all its forces and fight with every means at its disposal.

Profile



Major General Dr. Stephan Schoeps was appointed Deputy Surgeon General of the Bundeswehr (based in Coblenz) in 2016. Previously, he served, among other assignments, as Commander of the Bundeswehr Medical Academy in Munich and the Operational Medical Support Command in Weißenfels. Foreign deployments in Afghanistan in 2003 and 2009.

However, given the apparent military superiority and presumed superior military capabilities of the Russian army, I had not dared to hope that the Ukrainians would defend themselves so successfully. The Ukrainian army, with the support of the West, has done an incredible job. I take my hat off to them.

Since the beginning of the conflict in the Donbas region in 2014, the German armed forces have been assisting Ukraine in the treatment of war casualties. How is that going? How many patients have been treated?

Since 2014, we have treated more than 150 wounded Ukrainians across all *Bundeswehr* hospitals. Some will need more than twenty surgeries over a period of years and long-term rehabilitation before they can participate in life again. Caring for war wounded is enormously costly. Ukraine regularly asked the German government for support. We used to select the patients there and fly them to Germany. Now the procedure is different. Patients from Ukraine are spread throughout Europe. So far, Germany has taken the greatest number of patients. Patient allocation in Germany is handled by the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK). The *Bundeswehr* hospitals are currently treating sixteen Ukrainian patients.

These hospitals are well equipped to treat war injuries.

How have working practices at the *Bundeswehr* hospitals changed as a result? What lessons can the medical service learn from treating these patients?

As I mentioned, our *Bundeswehr* hospitals are set up to treat war injuries and already have many years of experience with these types of wounds due to the various overseas missions. There are many parallels between civilian care for polytrauma, i.e. patients with multiple, simultaneously life-threatening injuries, and medical service care of the wounded in war zones.

What is the *Bundeswehr* leadership's general view of the war in Ukraine? What scenarios are you preparing for, what conclusions can you already draw?

I think we all agree that this war of aggression,

which is contrary to international law, must not be allowed to succeed. The Bundeswehr will prepare comprehensively for national and Alliance defence, and strengthen its presence on NATO's eastern flank. In addition, the German Chief of Defence, General Eberhard Zorn, has ordered a division to be brought to combat-readiness by 2025. We are ready to defend NATO territory together with our partners.

Do you think we could really enter into a military conflict with Russia?

We now know that Russia is willing to launch an attack against a country in violation of international law. In many of his speeches, the President of the Russian Federation has revealed imperialist goals. As the war has not been going his way, he has now ordered a partial mobilization. We must draw our conclusions from that. As a society, we must also be mentally prepared again to defend our country and our freedom. The declaration [by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz] of a "new era" (Zeitenwende) and the announcement of a special fund for the Bundeswehr are the right first steps in this direction. Coordinated and targeted arms deliveries and sustained cohesion among NATO and EU partner nations throughout the winter are essential. And there is a need for level-headed political and military leaders on both sides.

The Chief of the Army, Lieutenant General Mais, famously said that the Bundeswehr is more or less "standing bare". Do you agree with this statement? Will that change in the foreseeable future with the special fund and the commitment to meet the two percent target from now on?

I cannot speak for the army. But from an outside perspective I would say that the Inspector of the Army is certainly right. The Joint Medical Service (Zentraler Sanitätsdienst) is also pretty "bare" in several areas, including strategic transport of the wounded, in its leadership ability, and in digitalization. Steps must be taken here as quickly as possible. The special fund and the commitment to meet the two percent target are a first step in the right direction, but further investment will be necessary. This ap-

plies to the Bundeswehr in general, but also to the medical service in particular.

So will the medical service also benefit from the special budget and rising spending? And if so, how?

We need the capability to provide medical support for highly mobile combat. This requires appropriate flexibility in medical service facilities, the availability of small, forward surgical teams, tent-based and also protected treat-

I think we all agree that this war of aggression, which is contrary to international law, must not be allowed to succeed

ment facilities, reliable and sufficient land and air transport capacity for the wounded, and modern command and control equipment. The defence plans take all of this into consideration, just often not as a top priority. Unless the medical service gets the up-to-date, high-quality equipment it needs, there will be no deployments. Our planners need to be reminded of this at times.

Apart from questions of materials and equipment, what about the service personnel in the German armed forces? Are they mentally and physically prepared for a national/Alliance defence scenario? Has the training changed since the war started?

Training is always evolving. For example, we have been successfully training troops to provide effective first aid for about ten years. Competent first aid from a colleague often makes the difference between life or death for a wounded soldier. The first priority is to stop bleeding.

Our medical personnel are excellently trained and are sent into action from ongoing patient care in Germany to give them a "warm start", so to speak.

For me, however, the key is to change our soldiers' mindset. We are an excellent employer with all the social benefits. For the most part, we have grown used to our roles in Ger-

many and seldom think about the fact that our unique profession may also demand that we put our lives on the line. Physical and mental resilience, strength of character and a basic understanding of what service entails are essential requirements for soldiers in the field. We still have a lot to do to achieve this. However, I am convinced that we can communicate this better with the current threat situation than we could a year ago.

In this context, what is your opinion of debates like #leistungsschwach [underperforming] on Twitter? How much stress should military personnel be able to withstand? How tough does a soldier have to be, and how important are good leadership, help and support offerings, and pastoral care?

War is psychologically and morally stressful, which can make people ill. Everyone reacts differently to physical or mental stress, and to moral conflicts. We have learned a lot about this in recent years, and offer many possibilities for prevention and therapy. The psychosocial network – consisting of medicine, psychology,

I am convinced that it is not possible to achieve something “good” by doing wrong, such as violating international law

the military chaplaincy and social services – provides support for patients.

But it is also important to be well prepared for deployment. This means not only military and professional competence, but also coming to terms with the special circumstances of life during deployment, the associated dangers and one's own fears. Here it is helpful to talk with experienced colleagues and superiors beforehand, and also with one's own family, to guard against stress. Psychological stress reactions and moral injury are certainly no longer taboo in the Bundeswehr.

More specifically, what does it mean to be confronted with the brutality of Russian warfare? Is that also something you discuss with soldiers, commanders and superiors?

Of course, we talk about it. War is always brutal, and in my opinion, there is no such thing as a clean war. It is always a matter of forcing one's will on the other side. There is no squeamishness about the choice of means anywhere in the world. But the brutality with which the Russian Federation wages war is repulsive and clearly deviates from our own values. It also indicates poor leadership, low morale, and inadequate training. It is important to us that such atrocities, wherever they occur, do not go unpunished.

How would you respond to someone who argued that in a potential fight against such an enemy, you should not weaken yourself by observing principles of international law or ethical considerations? Does self-commitment imply a military or any other kind of disadvantage?

Good leadership, excellent training and the conviction of defending a just cause are necessary conditions for fighting successfully. I am convinced that it is not possible to achieve something “good” by doing wrong, such as violating international law. If the legal framework is abandoned, everything gets out of control. Our soldiers need to know very clearly what they stand for, what they are fighting for and, in the extreme case, what they are dying for. And they must know that atrocities will not be tolerated. They need to know that they have the support of society and of our politicians, and of course that their employer is looking after them.

We can currently observe the opposite approach in the Russian Federation. The brutality I mentioned can be found not only in the way war is conducted, but also in the way its own soldiers are treated. A war of aggression in violation of international law, inadequate medical services, poor support, avoidable losses, leaving the dead and wounded behind, and the use of mobile crematoria are just a few examples.

The Afghanistan mission is hardly discussed in public anymore. Is it any different among the troops? Even though the mission was conducted under completely different conditions, to what extent has it contributed to a

different understanding of the Bundeswehr among members of the armed forces and in the public's perception?

Even among the troops, there has not been much talk about the Afghanistan mission lately. But the evacuation operation last year did rekindle the discussion, and brought the question of its purpose back into focus.

The Afghanistan mission was undoubtedly a kind of maturity test, for the German armed forces and for society. For the first time, Bundeswehr soldiers were involved in heavy combat in the Hindu Kush; they were wounded and also killed. We found out what war means. I experienced two missions myself as commander of the medical task force in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. I consider it a unique privilege of the medical service that we always have a meaningful impact. We were able to do a lot for the Afghan security forces, the civilian population, and also the Afghan health care system. Many times we were able to make a difference to individual lives – I am thinking here of the numerous cleft lip and palate surgeries for children, for example. But it was clear to me even at the time that you cannot bring about lasting change in Afghanistan using the armed forces. They create conditions of security for certain periods of time, during which others are then able to work. These periods must be used to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the country. Despite all our efforts, we obviously did not succeed in doing this.

With regard to the war in Ukraine, which is virtually on our doorstep, my view is that the meaning and purpose of armed forces is once again becoming clear to large sections of the population.

So, in your view, have Germans recognized the seriousness of the situation? If we had to defend ourselves, would we be as resilient and resistant as the people of Ukraine?

Personally, I believe that the population has indeed recognized the seriousness of the current state of affairs and also keeps itself comprehensively informed about the geopolitical situation. Russia in particular, as a nuclear power, is perceived to be a real threat. There are some well-known politicians who had a change of

heart after visiting the war zone, and who today support the urgently needed arms deliveries with no ifs or buts. Moreover, I hope that the German population would take up arms in defence of Germany with the same motivation and commitment as the Ukrainians.

What are your views on the reintroduction of compulsory military or civilian service?

Even if compulsory military service is idealized in retrospect, not everything about it was good or sensible. The suspension of compulsory military service was the end point of a distinct trend. The lack of fairness in the conscription system, the low numbers of conscripts, and the low level of social acceptance, as well as the difficulty in justifying a six-month period of military service ultimately led to its suspension. Today, the Bundeswehr lacks all the structures for reintroducing it.

Personally, I would very much welcome a compulsory year for men and women with service in the armed forces, the police, in old people's homes and hospitals, social services, etc. But at the moment I do not see any majorities in favour of this.

Dr. Schoeps, thank you very much for the interview!

Questions by Rüdiger Frank and Heinrich Dierkes. The interview was conducted in writing in late September 2022.

“THE SOLDIERS ARE EXPERIENCING A VERY DIFFERENT REALITY”

Pastoral care and character guidance training in challenging times: the editorial team at “Ethics and Armed Forces” discussed this topic in September 2022 with the two Catholic military chaplains Dr. Petro Stanko and Iurii Kuliievych. Both come from Ukraine. Here they talk about supporting the troops at home and on NATO’s eastern flank, about insecurity caused by the war, and about the Ukrainian desire for freedom.

Dr. Petro Stanko: On April 1, 2015, I joined the Engineer Training Center in Ingolstadt as a military chaplain. As a theology student in Eichstätt, I had already accompanied the Ukrainian military bishop on his visits to Germany as an interpreter, so I had become familiar with the military chaplaincy over several years.

Iurii Kuliievych: I knew my confrere Petro Stanko from when I was a student in Eichstätt. He recommended that I become a military chaplain. So I joined the military chaplaincy in 2017, then in 2021 I was appointed military chaplain at Roth – like my confrere with special roots and a special identity as a member of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

To have a chapel or a quiet room, to know that you can have a conversation anytime during duty hours, I think that is essential for people who are dealing with existential issues – especially in the current circumstances (Iurii Kuliievych)

P.S.: For me, the military chaplaincy makes a meaningful contribution, which is desired and supported by the state, and it is also a privilege to provide pastoral assistance to citizens in uniform. Part of the concept of Innere Führung (leadership development and civic education) is to teach soldiers what their uniform represents and what they are protecting. This requires spiritual and character guidance as well as political, historical and cultural education. After all, soldiering always involves

existential issues – violence, wounding, one’s own death and the death of the enemy.

I.K.: It is important for soldiers to know that the military chaplaincy is an independent institution within the German armed forces. They can come to us with problems that are troubling them, and will always find an open door and an open ear. Whether you are a Catholic or not doesn’t matter. It’s about providing pastoral care for everyone who needs it.

In my barracks, the company sergeant majors (*Kompaniefeldwebel*) often send the young recruits to me – they know from experience that this works. The crucial thing is that someone listens to them. To work things out, you need time. As military chaplains, we can offer this oasis of time. To have a chapel or a quiet room, to know that you can have a conversation anytime during duty hours, I think that is essential for people who are dealing with the existential issues I mentioned – especially in the current circumstances. Of course, I have to break the ice. But sometimes it is enough to go to the mess hall, sit down and ask: How are you doing right now?.

P.S.: I agree with that. Meetings and encounters also take place in the office, but the chaplains get to know people outside. There is no other way. There are so many different angles and possibilities when you are open to meeting people and not sitting in the office – we might show up wearing the collar during a military training exercise. To show a spirit of togetherness and so as not disturb operations, we often wear our protective clothing, which looks like the soldiers’ battle dress, but has special epaulettes with a cross that identifies us as chaplains.

Some soldiers find their way to us even though they are not members of the church, perhaps because a wedding is coming up or there has been a bereavement in the family.

I.K.: Our offerings also include family weekends, work weeks, pilgrimages and leisure activities – so there are plenty of opportunities to get to know people and their families. Of course, there are also those who come from Christian homes and want to know how they can practice their faith at the base, whether there is a church ...

P.S.: ... and those who never had anything to do with the church and are now coming into contact with a priest for the first time. Some of them start by venting their frustration about the abuse scandals and whatever other criticisms they have of the church. Finally, we have the opportunity to meet soldiers in the classroom through character guidance training (Lebenskundlicher Unterricht, LKU), which is mandatory. That is a challenge for both sides. As military chaplains, we have to make the classes varied and interesting; the soldiers listen, ask questions, and realize that they can talk to us. But they can also be critical and demanding. You can't just tell them anything in LKU or preach anything you like in the church service – our clientele is often more critical and direct than a civilian congregation.

I.K.: That's why it is important to remain credible. LKU is always about existential questions, and ultimately also about making it clear to soldiers that they have to decide for themselves! When I started in 2017, the zebis teaching portal was a blessing as it provided me with good material covering the required topics on the curriculum. It helped me get the soldiers interested in the topic and work through it with them – they're not supposed to find it boring! Sometimes they arrive in the morning tired out. As a chaplain, I must not overburden them in such situations. I have to be responsive to them.

P.S.: Character guidance training (LKU) is an important part of our work, also for the future; we know that more and more people are leaving the church and receive less and less ethical guidance at home. In my opinion, LKU is also the most difficult subject. Why is that?

You have adults sitting there, who have individual needs and expectations. I recently covered the topic of hostility. You need methods, ways to get started, short videos to explain aspects of the topic and stimulate discussion. The zebis materials are helpful, but so are the magazines and publications provided by the Catholic Military Bishop's Office. Of course, one has to be selective.

I.K.: I discovered how important what we do is when I accompanied the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission in Rukla/Lithuania.

You had taken an oath to do something, and suddenly it became serious (Iurii Kuliievych)

I once described this time as a “paradise for pastoral care”. I experienced the people there to be one family, each with their different qualities, everyone unique. There were so many questions!

P.S.: I was in Rukla when Russia invaded Ukraine. I had arrived with a new sub-contingent at the end of January. On the flight there, the soldiers were still saying: “Ah, the priest is among us, nothing will happen to us.” But I immediately noticed how sensitive and attentive they were to the news, even before the Russian army attacked. They also asked me very specific questions because they knew I was from Ukraine. On the morning of February 24, 2022, the soldiers had horror written all over their faces. They saw the images of tanks rolling and houses being destroyed, and suddenly all their sense of security was gone. Security – that could have been their own house, their own well-being, and now they could see that all it took was one missile and everything was destroyed. They talked a lot with their families

Profile



*Dr. Petro Stanko is
Catholic military chaplain
in Ingolstadt*

over the phone: Do you have to go to war now? I have never been asked so many questions as a chaplain. When I preached in the service, for example on the question of why we humans are still waging wars in the 21st century, it was very quiet in our “little church”. The soldiers were so upset and concerned. As a chaplain, you realized: I am in the right place at the right time to answer questions, but also to calm people down. Then they can reflect: Who am I? Where am I going? Is this still my job?

I.K.: In other words: Would I be willing to take up arms in a foreign country to defend my values? Not just with words, but with deeds! You had taken an oath to do something, and suddenly it became serious.

P.S.: We have to consider that soldiers have been doing their job in Germany for the past 70 years without being confronted with a war like this in the middle of Europe. And suddenly they are sitting in Rukla, far away from their family and from home, and they see civilians, but also their peers in uniform, being killed; not only Ukrainians, but also the Russian soldiers, who like them have all sworn an oath to their country. And you could see

P.S.: I think, at least, that some of the superiors really became aware for the first time of how important it is for soldiers to receive professional support. Troop psychologists and chaplains – in short, the so-called psychosocial network – have taken their role very seriously, and are looking after people. In the beginning, the NATO reinforcements in Rukla, including the Germans, were housed in tents. No exercises took place for fear of an escalation. We organized movie nights ...

I.K.: ... or a Bible breakfast ...

P.S.: ... and campfires, so that the soldiers felt: There are people who care about us, who I can go to if I feel anxious, or if I feel bad.

I think that if NATO’S eastern flank is strengthened, we will have to do even more to provide historical, political, cultural and also character guidance support. The soldiers are experiencing a very different reality, they are encountering refugees or hearing how parents have sacrificed themselves for their children in the affected areas. This will raise many questions, and we will need ways to discuss and explain: What are our values? What are we defending? What does it mean to be in an alliance?

Our guiding principles for the military chaplaincy state that our task is not to prepare soldiers for combat, but to make them understand what they are there for, what values they stand for – and what war does. But it is time to stop thinking of the war in Ukraine as a distant war. It affects all of us.

I.K.: I see it the same way. We must now prepare ourselves pastorally. And regain an awareness of what the inviolable human dignity enshrined in the Basic Law means to us. I understand that people here in Germany are concerned about their well-being and comfort. Everyone is entitled to their point of view, that is democracy. But as Christians, we say with Paul: If we do not believe in the resurrection, then all is in vain. It is the same with our values: If we do not stand by them and bear witness to them, they are in vain.

*It is time to stop thinking of
the war in Ukraine as
a distant war. It affects all of us
(Dr. Petro Stanko)*

that the Lithuanian troops in particular were even more concerned, because they have a different history with Russia..

I.K.: Some of the Baltic states have an ethnic Russian population of more than 20%. They were afraid that now the “Russian world” was coming to them too, and the same thing would happen to them as was happening in Ukraine.

Profile

P.S.: In any case we are very grateful for the great solidarity shown by the many thousands of volunteers from the public who are supporting Ukraine. Among them are servicemen and women with their families, in their free time. German officers, for example, have told me that on their own initiative they went to the Polish border to pick up wives and children of Ukrainian fellow soldiers whom they knew from training programs. However, I would like to see a little more understanding of Ukraine's history and experiences from some Western Europeans. People in Europe dream of a reconciliation with Russia, as was achieved after the Second World War between the so-called "hereditary enemies" Germany and France. Perhaps the French historian and Orthodox theologian Antoine Arjakovsky has real prophetic intuition. In his book about Russia's current war against Ukraine, published in 2015, he claims that peace in Europe in the 21st century will now depend on reconciliation between Ukraine and Russia – like in the 20th century, when peace in Europe depended on reconciliation between Germany and France. Russia, however, as a post-Soviet state, still pursues old ideals and ideologies. To this day, many crimes and misdeeds from the communist era remain unresolved. For example, it is still unclear how many officers were killed in Katyn, Poland, in 1939, and who the perpetrators were. So there has been no comprehensive coming to terms with the past, yet this is an essential basis for reconciliation. "No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness" was the very apt title of Pope John Paul II's message for the celebration of World Peace Day on January 1, 2002. In Russia, however, we are seeing instead a revival of the Stalin cult ...

We Ukrainians know all too well what it means to live without freedom, and to first hear about disasters like Chernobyl only from the Western media. Our parents and grandparents suffered a lot during those times, and resistance rose up as a result. Today, the desire for freedom and an orientation toward Western values and ideals are paramount. As the former head of our church, the late Cardi-

nal Husar, said on the Maidan in 2013: "The state is not afraid of hungry people; it can feed them. It is afraid of free people; it can only kill them!"

I.K.: As a child, we were not even allowed to sing Christmas carols in school. But to this day we still draw strength from our tradition, our faith, and Ukrainian culture. Ukrainian soldiers fight out of love for their homeland, out of conviction. They can take everything away from you, but no-one can take away your faith.

Recorded by Rüdiger Frank in September 2022.



*Iurii Kuliievych is
Catholic military chaplain
in Roth*

“YOU CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE ARMED FORCES BECOME SEPARATED FROM ETHICS”

There are various explanations for the Russian warfare in Ukraine. In an interview, Prof. Dr. Jan Claas Behrends, an expert on Eastern Europe, talks about familiar patterns, the legitimization of violence under President Putin and the dysfunctionality of the Russian armed forces.

Professor Behrends, let's start by briefly looking back to the beginning of the Ukraine war. At the time, many were surprised not only by the Russian attack, but by the level of brutality in the conduct of the war. Did you feel the same way?

First of all, it is always horrifying to see such images, and of course you wish that something like that would not happen. But from a professional point of view, I have to say that it didn't surprise me, having studied the wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya in some detail in recent years – including Russian war conduct and questions of military violence. I see very strong continuities in the use of force against civilians, and in the failure by Soviet and later Russian forces to follow the rules of the international law of war – especially since the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The “wiping out” of entire cities like Mariupol is similar to the actions in Syria since 2015 or even in the Chechen capital Grozny from 1999 onwards

Profile



Prof. Dr. Jan Claas Behrends studied history, literary studies, and philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the University of Wisconsin, and Moscow's Lomonosov University. In 2005, he received his doctorate from the University of Potsdam. After holding positions at the Center for Contemporary History Potsdam, the Berlin Social Science Center, and the University of Chicago, he has held the professorship “Dictatorship and Democracy. Germany and Eastern Europe from 1914 to the Present” at the Europa-Universität

Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder since 2022.

Let's move on to the reasons. One possible explanation is that this is simply about spreading fear and terror. What is your view on that?

It is partly about terror, I think, especially when you actually want to subjugate and subdue the population in an occupation situation. They did a similar thing in Chechnya. But the brutality and war crimes in general also stem from a lack of professionalism in the Russian army. For some of the lower ranks, the international law of war is not even part of their training, which means there is also ignorance. Of course this does not excuse what is happening, but it does perhaps explain it to some extent.

Furthermore, we can also observe an escalation of violence especially when the Russian army is under pressure – i.e. when the enemy is fighting particularly successfully, as in Chechnya or toward the end of the Afghanistan war.

This unprofessionalism was also evident in the troops' apparent frustration at the poor conduct of operations and unexpected resistance.

Apparently, at the beginning of the war, you had a paradoxical situation where even the Russian troops weren't being told what Russia's plans were. Keeping them in the dark like that no doubt produced insecurity, which can flip into aggression. By and large, this has to do with the fact that the Russian leadership did not call this war a war. It has been termed a “special military operation” – the course of which, incidentally was imagined quite differently. If your own troops suffer very high losses, there will be a desire for revenge. This is also true of other wars and conflicts.

Plus there has been a lack of medical care and logistical support ...

... and plenty of corruption. Of course the Russian army is generally a mirror of Russian society and of phenomena that we can describe there, such as violence in social relationships, including domestic violence; but also the use of public goods for private purposes, to put it in very broad terms. If our information is cor-

rect, then just a few days before the invasion, for example, the troops were still selling diesel on to the local population, and didn't have enough for their own trucks and tanks.

But why is this the case? Isn't there a risk of essentializing if we say "the Russians" or Russian society is that way? Or is violence simply a means that people use to cope with everyday life?

I would say that every society can change; the best example of this is Ukraine, which took the path to civilization, so to speak, after the end of the Soviet Union. Russia also tried to follow this path, for a few years, but then it was deliberately abandoned by its leadership. In recent decades, especially under Putin, a strong remilitarization and also legitimization of violence in social relationships can be observed. This has gone so far that domestic violence is no longer always punishable in Russia. Of course these are signals that are sent to society. This has little to do with essentialization; rather, it is a culture that is becoming more entrenched, in which the rules of civility are not only not being enforced, they are being broken.

Does the display of machismo all the way up to the highest levels of leadership also play a role in this?

Yes, but not only the cult of masculinity around Putin and others. There is also the war cult around May 9. It is no longer about commemorating those who died in World War II; now it is about mobilizing society for war and desensitizing the population to the victims of war. In other words, even this holiday has acquired a new meaning under Putin, to the point of glorifying war, violence and victory. Signals like this feed into these phenomena of increasing brutalization.

So this means that violence is not only sanctioned, it is actually desired?

In principle, violence is an everyday resource that we all have at our disposal. But we also know from research on violence that it is especially likely to be used when it is not punished, or when it is even rewarded. The units that

committed war crimes in Bucha, north of Kiev, were decorated in the Kremlin a few weeks later. In other words, the act of violence, the violation of borders, ultimately also violence against civilians, rape, murder and so on, is followed in the end by the reward. That is – and let's be clear about this – the criminal pattern that we observe here. We know this from the Second World War, for example: If soldiers or other armed units are basically encouraged to act in this way, then that is what will happen.

In recent decades, especially under Putin, a strong remilitarization and also legitimization of violence in social relationships can be observed

Regarding conditions in the military, there is the well-known quote by the Russian writer Mikhail Shishkin who called the Russian army a "school of slaves".

It is well known that new recruits to the army are terrorized by those who have been there for some time, they have to do menial work, they are humiliated ... this so-called *dedovshchina* is part of the culture in the Russian armed forces..

And then this finds expression in the conduct of war against others?

To some extent, yes, but on the other hand it is also reflected in the fact that their fighting capacity may be pretty limited and they are more interested in taking another washing machine from the next Ukrainian village than winning the war. This army, like many other institutions of the Russian state, is a deeply dysfunctional institution.

Why can't the military and political leadership in Russia see that this will ultimately have the opposite effect, i.e. it will boost the will to fight that has been there since the beginning in Ukraine? They seem to have no ability to change strategy at all.

I think firstly there is an information deficit in the Russian leadership, which is quite typical

for dictatorships. Nobody dares tell the boss what's really going on. Apart from that, the people in Putin's circle – all of whom are now aged between 65 and 75 – have a very stable Soviet world view, dating back to the Brezhnev era. They think of Ukraine as an integral part of Russia. The fact that a lot has changed in Kiev since 1991 and that Ukraine has always had its own identity simply does not fit. If you read Putin's essays on this subject, which he published last year, the paradox becomes quite clear.

Brutality is not the same thing as the successful achievement of military objectives

Despite the evident brutality, Ukraine does not seem to be responding with similar violence. Do you have an explanation for this?

To be honest we don't know everything that is happening on the Ukrainian side either. But it is very significant, in my view, that the Ukrainians themselves want this difference. They want to fight like a NATO army and not like a Soviet army. Seeing themselves as part of the West and gaining legitimacy to join the European Union or NATO – that definitely has an influence on how they fight this war as well. Moreover, since the 2014 attack this army has increasingly turned away from the Soviet model and become professionalized by the many NATO advisors, but also through its own efforts.

Can ethical considerations and also ethical education help to curb excessive military violence?

In this war, you can see what happens when the armed forces become separated from ethics, as has happened in Russia. These are phenomena that, unfortunately, are all too familiar to us from European history. One can only keep urging that the effort to regulate and contain war should not be given up. Violence can always be unleashed, including by states – and modern states have an enormous

potential for violence. When this potential is put to use, it can lead to situations like the one in Mariupol, which turned genocidal. In some circumstances, we have the opportunity to prosecute those responsible and hold them accountable. Even if this is not always successful, these methods are important and right.

In view of all the outrage about the war atrocities and the feelings that surface as a result, is it important to communicate that ethical considerations don't put you at a disadvantage?

Absolutely. Even though Ukraine has imposed more "constraints" on itself, if you like, than Russia has, Ukraine's fighting strength is evidently much greater. Brutality is not the same thing as the successful achievement of military objectives; it is precisely not the indiscriminate use of force that counts. It is simply not professional to fire shells into apartment blocks – that is nothing for a soldier to be proud of.

Questions by Rüdiger Frank. The interview was conducted on 12 September 2022.

“ALL PSYCHOPATHS ARE MANMADE”

Professor Gailienė, Russia is fighting a very brutal war in Ukraine. There are many cases of torture, random killings, and rape. The Russian army shells civilian targets such as hospitals, playgrounds ... Does this surprise you?

Absolutely not. In Lithuania, we are very familiar with that from our historical experience. During the first and second Soviet occupation and once more in 1991 when we gained independence, Soviet armed forces used brutal aggression even against peaceful civilians. It is typical for the Russian military to use “unnecessary” violence, which means destroying things, leaving trash and excrements, torturing people. When I saw witnesses from Ukraine on TV talking about what they had experienced, it was the same: They can’t see any civilized behavior in it.

Psychological research shows everyone is able to commit violence, even excessive violence. But are there no special character traits which contribute to brutal, violent behavior?

In accordance with researchers who have investigated that in more depth, I would answer: All psychopaths are manmade. What does that mean? Of course, we carry everything in us, the positive and the negative, we all have the potential for aggression. That is our human condition. It is obvious that we inherit different temperaments and different predispositions. But this alone is not enough for a person to become so cruel. From my clinical experience I know that external, social conditions, civilization, play a crucial role in that. In the case of Russia, we are inclined to speak about pathological indoctrination or ideology, not about pathological individuals.

Could you explain this a bit more?

I will give you two examples about how social conditions contribute to such bad behavior. One is from Professor Thomas Elbert and his colleagues from the University of Constance in Germany. He and his team have formulated the concept of “appetitive aggression”. In African conflict areas where teenagers or very

What causes soldiers to attack defenseless civilians and war violence to escalate? Lithuanian psychology professor Danutė Gailienė, who has researched the psychological effects of the occupation in her country, points to the central importance of indoctrination and a frighteningly simple mechanism that is also well known from German history.

young boys were involved in war or armed conflict, they discovered that these children sometimes became excited by violence. These boys are not naturally born criminals or psychopaths. They had just been encouraged to it from a very early age and they had learned that violence could cause pleasure, so they used it not just to defeat an enemy or to defend themselves, but for their own joy. This is a very serious problem and I guess there are such cases also now in Ukraine.

On the other hand, we can look at those people who rescued Jews during the Third Reich. They lived everywhere, in Germany, in Lithuania, in Belgium ... It is very interesting for psychological research to find out why they decided to help and even risk their own lives. Psychologists have identified at least three characteristic traits which made them not so “ordinary”. One is, they had loving parents. Second, they had intact families; third, they had either religious or humanistic values.

I know that these are two extreme examples but my intention was to show you how important education and socialization are for guiding our behavior.

Profile

Dr. habil. Danutė Gailienė is Professor of Clinical Psychology at Vilnius University. She earned her Master's degree in Psychology from the Vilnius University in 1974, her Doctoral degree in Social Sciences/Psychology from the University of Moscow in 1985 and her Habilitation from the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas in 2001. She initiated very first studies on psychotraumatology in Lithuania, especially on traumatizing effects of long-term traumatization. Author of many scientific articles and books. Dr. Gailienė serves on editorial boards of several professional journals, including “European Psychologist” and “Psychology”.



Which means that society teaches people respect for values and fellow human beings ... and vice versa. We can teach them to “turn off” morality.

And the pathologic ideology you mentioned earlier plays a part in that?

It is a fact well-known from history. In Lithuania, we have been very close to it. We have been watching indoctrination for decades, starting from kindergarten, and how it can create even pseudotrauma. Let me explain that:

The war in Ukraine shows us once again where what I call “moral destruction” of people can lead to

for us, the period of Soviet and Nazi occupation was a traumatic experience. When Lithuania became independent, it meant happiness, victory. In Russia, on the contrary, step by step and beginning with the memory of the “Great Patriotic War”, Putin started to create a trauma narrative. By saying that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest catastrophe of the 20th century, he has made the Russian population believe that they are victims. This is pathological because it is a lie. But it’s hard for people to resist those narratives when they are exposed to it almost all the time.

But how exactly does this contribute to what we see in the war in Ukraine? What is the psychological mechanism behind it?

To put it in short terms, it is moral dissociation. We do not have to talk only about Russia all the time, it has been investigated in Nazi criminals as well. When Hannah Arendt spoke about the “banality of evil”, she showed a way to explore this duality. Dissociation means that you take responsibility from yourself, that you delegate it to the superiors, which enables you to be cruel and relentless to some persons without asking yourself if it could be wrong. This is a very powerful mechanism. You don’t feel responsible, you just act because they decide. And it works –

not only for individuals but for societies as a whole.

We should be familiar with that in Germany. But it is still troubling to find out that people can strip off morality to such an extent.

I am also a suicidologist and I have been working for many years in suicide prevention. I remember that when the first suicide bombers appeared we wondered: Is this really suicide? Or is it something else? My colleagues and I agree that there is no other explanation for it: the first step is moral indoctrination, the second step turning off empathy. You don’t care about yourself, you just do what others tell you to do ... It sounds quite mechanical but that’s the mechanism behind it.

And the feeling of being a victim you have just mentioned, does it also help to feel justified? To think that Ukrainians are “traitors” ...

... yes, and even more. Russians are told that Ukraine is in the wrong hands. Ukraine has to be rescued from bad Nazi leaders. All of this adds to my main idea: dissociation, switching off moral responsibility, delegation to superiors. Then people become objects to you.

And the pathologic ideology you mentioned earlier plays a part in that?

It is a fact well-known from history. In Lithuania, we have been very close to it. We have been watching indoctrination for decades, starting from kindergarten, and how it can create even pseudotrauma. Let me explain that: for us, the period of Soviet and Nazi occupation was a traumatic experience. When Lithuania became independent, it meant happiness, victory. In Russia, on the contrary, step by step and beginning with the memory of the “Great Patriotic War”, Putin started to create a trauma narrative. By saying that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest catastrophe of the 20th century, he has made the Russian population believe that *they* are victims. This is pathological because it is a lie. But it’s hard for people to resist those narratives when they are exposed to it almost all the time.

Does this also mean that these criminal acts do not leave any traces in the perpetrators themselves?

This is a legitimate question although we should take the victims' perspective first and not forget that they are more damaged than perpetrators. The latter have mechanisms to cope with it. Conscience is a very plastic thing, you know.

But yes, their deeds can damage them as well. Violence is very dangerous for personality. I'm sure that many of those who will come home will continue this criminal behavior, there will be alcohol and drug abuse. Binge drinking is very typical, but alcohol also increases aggressivity. From research, even from our own history, we know that active collaborators with either the Soviet or Nazi occupiers often became alcohol-dependent or committed suicide.

Yet soldiers must obey orders from their superiors. From your point of view, how important is it to teach them that they still have to make their own moral judgments?

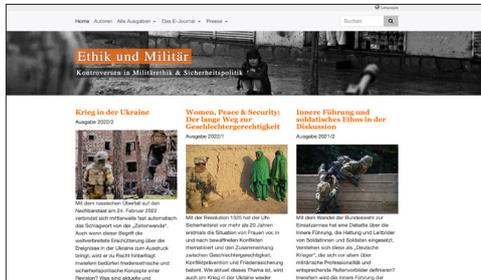
It is extremely important because it means prevention of what we are talking about here. Of course, moral education may also be more challenging than just training and discipline. Apart from that, you need well-educated generals and officers. Soldiers watch how they behave, how they speak, how they make decisions. From what we can see, Russian generals are often rather brute, frequently cursing and swearing, for example. This always creates a certain atmosphere in an army.

The war in Ukraine shows us once again where what I call "moral destruction" of people can lead to. Trying to impose rules and teaching soldiers empathy – although this may sound like a contradiction – will not rescue us from war. But at least it can make it more humane.

Dear Professor Gailiené, thank you very much for the interview.

Questions by Rüdiger Frank.

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The next issue on Resilience will be published on June 15, 2023

IMPRINT

The e-journal “Ethics and Armed Forces” (ISSN 2199-4137) is a free-of-charge, non-commercial, digital publication containing journalistic and editorial content. It is produced by Zentrum für ethische Bildung in den Streitkräften – zebis, Herrengraben 4, 20459 Hamburg. Director of zebis: Dr. Veronika Bock

Note: The published articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editors and publishers.

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Katholische Soldatenseelsorge (KS)

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Date of Publication: 15 June 2022



ethicsandarmedforces.com



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