



## **The Playbook of Russian Military Actions: Eurasianism and National Messianism**

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### **Editor's note:**

*The views expressed in this article represent the personal views of its author, rather than the official position of the World Academy of Art and Science.*

### **Abstract**

*How is it ever possible to experience such a cruel war in Europe? Why has Ukraine been attacked by Russia? What are the credible details? Why did international institutions fail to prevent tensions from becoming cruel? What are the sociocultural roots and the underlying paradigms of this conflict? To what extent was it planned? Based on over a hundred concrete press references, this article answers as much as possible these questions and suggests a way out in a brief concluding fourth section. Apart from encouraging individual responsibility (single soldiers or commanders) and national responsibility (generating paradigms and narratives of collective identities), it is useful to perceive a level of planetary responsibility that cares for effective in-time rescue in derailed disastrous situations, namely when institutions and procedures failed to keep peace. UN bodies and OSCE exist but have not been fully effective. The article thus calls for effective functioning of systems at the individual, national and global levels.*

For over three months we have seen this full-scale war<sup>1</sup>—the largest in Europe since WWII—on sovereign Ukraine, instead of for three days, as might have been planned initially. Meanwhile, more clarity arose to my perception, as a person working on global themes for over three decades and actively for two decades on supporting the self-responsible democratising process in Central and Eastern European countries.

Let us shed light on (1) implementation details, (2) on motivations for this vast war, (3) ways how it is perceived and (4) facilitating a way out.

Wherever possible in this article, information is corroborated by authentic Russian news media—which mostly are forced outside the country, or else by (automatically translatable) international media.

### **1. On the ground**

*Why was all this needed?*

The small town of Bucha<sup>2</sup>, 25 km west of Kyiv, was held by the invaders<sup>3</sup> for a month<sup>4</sup>. After their retreat, three hundred dead<sup>5</sup> bodies were found: civilians. Now this is a case for an international court of justice<sup>6</sup>.

A German news service reported on intercepted phone calls<sup>7</sup> between soldiers of the occupant's army speaking about killing civilians in an everyday language tone, as if this was

nothing exceptional (but could be habitual). In one incident, a soldier reportedly spoke to his commander about civilians and the captain answered: “kill them”. In another incident, soldiers had a conversation on Ukrainian soldiers: “first we interrogated them, and then we shot them”. Within those marching under the sign of a half-swastika ‘Z’<sup>8</sup>, this shows a culture<sup>9</sup> across several ranks of military where there is no respect for keeping international martial law, and no understanding of its meaning. These commanders’ names are known<sup>10</sup>.

Trustworthy international bodies<sup>11</sup> such as OSCE did assess war crimes<sup>12</sup> in Bucha. What did Russian government do, however? It awarded these illegally killing and looting<sup>13</sup> occupant troops with military honours.

Existing documentation suggests that shooting civilians<sup>14</sup> is performed on a regular basis to frighten<sup>15</sup>, subdue and terrorise the population. The image emerges that these acts are deliberate, planned, and intentional. The same events occurred in other cities as well, still worse e.g., in Borodyanka<sup>16</sup> near Kyiv, 900 dead in Manhush<sup>17</sup>, massively in Mariupol with its maternity clinic<sup>18</sup> (incorrectly named as ‘staged’)<sup>19</sup>, and over 50 refugees dead in Kramatorsk railway station<sup>20</sup>.

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*“Why should one state try to destroy another when there are pressing global problems such as COVID, global warming and economic insecurity?”*

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In the meantime, the city of Mariupol (where even a field hospital was attacked by Russian troops) is completely Grozny-fied: razed to the earth, including civilians’ apartments, after deliberate attacks on hospitals and maternity clinics were waged.

During the UN Secretary General’s visit to Kyiv on 29.4.22, residential apartments<sup>21</sup> (not military targets) in this city again were attacked by rockets—what a disrespect towards international institutions and their highest representative!

Originally, this population<sup>22</sup> was mostly Russian-speaking. Who out of them should still feel any sympathy with Russia, its state or culture? This population was thought to be “saved” or “cured” (from what, actually? they lived in peace)—instead they were intentionally killed in a pre-designed aggression<sup>23</sup>. Should the km<sup>2</sup> of soil be “liberated” after having been “cleaned” from its population? Is the only target to create hatred<sup>24</sup> against oneself, unnecessarily?

What an act of cultural self-definition to delete<sup>25</sup> from the face of earth one’s cousin population (5.5 million Ukrainians already had to flee), and to still pretend<sup>26</sup> that this is legitimate or serves any positive purpose!

Is it attractive to intimidate and kill a brother nation and to deny their right of statal existence?

## (2)

*Why is this needed?*

The occupied country Ukraine did not plan to attack anybody<sup>27</sup>. It actually did **not** attack another country or prepare to do so, but was attacked<sup>28</sup>.

However, Ukraine started to develop a democratic system<sup>29</sup> and moved away from an earlier authoritarian rule<sup>30</sup>. This emerges as a profound reason<sup>31</sup> for Russia or any dictatorial nation to destroy democracies<sup>32</sup>.

Rather, in a staged and camouflaged<sup>33</sup> action, Ukraine state territory was already occupied<sup>34</sup> by proxy forces who actually belonged to the military secret services of the occupant<sup>35</sup>. This pattern has lasted for 8 years now<sup>36</sup>, and this period was used to systematically fabricate fake videos in high number<sup>37</sup> to influence the public at home: to create a seeming guilt<sup>38</sup> and to create an “alternative reality” which now serves as an excuse<sup>39</sup> for having started a huge terrible war, endangering infrastructure and global food supply<sup>40</sup>.

The last few decades in Russia led to an echo chamber and to an information bubble (fuelled by expansionist myths<sup>41</sup>) from which nobody escapes. Russia consumes its own news, and “truth” is no more “coincidence with reality” but what is wrongly believed to serve its own interests<sup>42</sup>.

Did the number of Russia’s friends and partners in the past decades increase or decrease?<sup>43</sup>

Earlier and now, e.g., Belarus’ leader says: this is not my war<sup>44</sup>. Armenia became disappointed<sup>45</sup> and Kazakhstan avoids contributing to this war.

China feels this situation as highly painful<sup>46</sup> because it wishes to not deteriorate relationships with the free world, and Chechen communities<sup>47</sup> support Ukraine.

Why should one state try to destroy another<sup>48</sup> when there are pressing global problems such as COVID, global warming and economic insecurity?<sup>49</sup>

History’s key law is: whoever in Eastern Europe lived under Soviet umbrella<sup>50</sup> will never slip under it again. This is the key message<sup>51</sup> received with my own eyes during my entire lifetime. Russia isolates itself on this planet<sup>52</sup>, Russia (or its lonely person)<sup>53</sup> North-Koreanised itself, remaining within the limits of its own self-perception<sup>54</sup>.

The pretended reason for this (unlucky, unsuccessful, miscalculated) war<sup>55</sup> is the occupant’s own security and safety. What is safety? It means to be sure to be not attacked. If we live in an apartment, would we buy or even occupy our neighbour’s apartment<sup>56</sup> to feel safe, by creating a geographical distance? No. We would try to build trustful relations<sup>57</sup>.

Whenever we exert a hostile action<sup>58</sup>, the neighbour will start to protect himself—and this is a basic law for any human action. Only trust-building can create safety<sup>59</sup>, not waging an aggressive war. Within Europe, there are no schlagbaums any more to mark frontiers; they are even forbidden by law—trust replaces them. Thus, Russia would be safest when trust<sup>60</sup> is created in all directions.

Unfortunately, this was not done but the incorrect mental self-image of “being constantly attacked”<sup>61</sup> was created unnecessarily (during decades of clandestine war preparation)<sup>62</sup>, leading now to global self-isolation<sup>63</sup>.

The aggressor states that he must “heal” the neighbour from a so-called “disease” (which is not noted by anyone else, by the way). Would we select a doctor who kills us in order to “cure” us? Such a doctor immediately loses all trust and benevolence everywhere and will never again be visited.

What wishes does such a country have to offer to other nations<sup>64</sup>—apart from war and

destruction? Does tremendous killing create sympathies<sup>65</sup>? In which respect should Russia now be attractive to anyone on this globe?<sup>66</sup> Is killing attractive? Which path will Russia take in the future?<sup>67</sup> What future does Russia<sup>68</sup> offer its own youth? Should they all leave<sup>69</sup>, as did already over 300,000, including artists<sup>70</sup>, painters<sup>71</sup>, singers<sup>72</sup>, students<sup>73</sup>, chess players<sup>74</sup>, Nobel-prize winners<sup>75</sup>, clerks<sup>76</sup>, priests<sup>77</sup>, university lecturers<sup>78</sup>, teachers<sup>79</sup>, relatives<sup>80</sup>, journalists<sup>81</sup>, news-workers<sup>82</sup>, scientists<sup>83</sup>, and best-qualified persons<sup>84</sup>?

In reality, any authoritative system needs<sup>85</sup> an external enemy for self-legitimation. But how can 3%<sup>86</sup> of global GDP rule the world?

States, companies, and individuals continue to run away. With whom will they trade<sup>87</sup>? Self-isolation<sup>88</sup> is on a planetary scale.

From Russian public, almost no other voice is heard<sup>89</sup>. A status of being non-retrievable<sup>90</sup>? Possibly a huge majority consent? My generation asked my grandfather's generation: what did you do eighty years ago<sup>91</sup>? Were you deaf and blind<sup>92</sup>?

Responsibility extends to tacitly consenting as well.

All depends on whether we select a mindset of cooperation or a mindset of fear<sup>93</sup>—leading to oppression of others<sup>94</sup>. A religion of dignity or a religion of subordination<sup>95</sup>. Even an entire church can delegitimise itself by favouring a war and supporting an attack on a brotherly people.

As a high-ranking Russian official said<sup>96</sup>: “If Russia considers itself an empire, why not become attractive<sup>97</sup> to its neighbours by developing the country instead of by forcing their loyalty?”

The results of such self-delegitimation will last for decades, or longer.

### (3)

*What will be needed?*

The root cause<sup>98</sup> is intentional disinformation for many decades<sup>99</sup>. No deviating opinion was admitted<sup>100</sup>. No alternative view was allowed<sup>101</sup>.

However, from a system dynamic view, a living entity can only continue to live when flexibly taking into account outside signals.

On its streets, any dissenting view<sup>102</sup> is sanctioned within minutes by arrest<sup>103</sup>. The best of youth<sup>104</sup> are arrested by the own country. Journalists are jailed, arrested, fined, and forced outside<sup>105</sup>. We see demoralised troops<sup>106</sup>, friends<sup>107</sup>, soldiers, sailors<sup>108</sup> and high cadres<sup>109</sup> fear the top of the pyramid. News outlets are crushed<sup>110</sup> through financial handcuffs. People are arrested only for showing 3+5 asterisks<sup>111</sup> on a paper or for holding up the book cover of Tolstoy's book “War and Peace” in the streets.

Does the population still wish to be truly informed? Or does the population gladly prefer<sup>112</sup> to receive “guided info within a guided system”?<sup>113</sup>

Ukraine<sup>114</sup> and Kyivan Rus' are being deleted from history<sup>115</sup>, and I saw this with my own eyes in the starting room of a 2019 exposition at VDNKh, to which I devoted 2 full days.

Nobody can understand: why is there still anyone believing in biased news<sup>116</sup> offered to the Russian population? In a highly educated nation, critical attitudes<sup>117</sup> should prevail. Instead, Russian citizens do not even believe in what their Ukrainian relatives<sup>118</sup> report to them—they

prefer to believe state-led<sup>119</sup> media.

Where is human dignity? Where is scientific truth—or can “anything be said”<sup>120</sup> or “nothing is true”? What about flight MH17?

A good and rational example is the behaviour of occupant soldiers in Chernobyl<sup>121</sup>, near the ruins of the atomic power plant which co-nurtured the crumbling into pieces of the Soviet system.

Russian soldiers dug<sup>122</sup> trenches into the radioactively contaminated earth, inhaled this dust for weeks and continuously lived on that bare ground. They just were not aware of the enormous dangers. This shows clearly that commanders on all levels are not even informed about the world’s gravest environmental catastrophe, do not care, and do not protect their subordinates. Life does not count, not even their own soldiers’ life.

One profound root of this Russian<sup>123</sup> crisis is certainly: “what is truth?”<sup>124</sup>—While after Enlightenment most of the European population thought that a societal consensus is needed as basis for any society, but not the interest-led concept of those in power, a population accommodated to authoritarian<sup>125</sup> rule might think that what is received as state-led communication<sup>126</sup> ought to be viewed as truth, and patiently admitted as such—under a fading idea of individual dignity and of fact-based authenticity<sup>127</sup>.

While Aristotle stated 1600 years ago: “truth is the coincidence of reality and its mental representation”, this concept might have been replaced for too long by what the same-name newspaper normatively wrote.<sup>128</sup> During the last few years, all journalists and scientists writing non-Pravda<sup>129</sup>, either emigrated<sup>130</sup>, were dismissed<sup>131</sup>, killed<sup>132</sup>, tried to be poisoned<sup>133</sup> or bluntly shot.

For Europeans with a century-long history of liberation wars, it is not clear how 140 million prefer to comfortably trust<sup>134</sup> Pravda more than reality. By necessity, Russian citizens must first understand<sup>135</sup> what happens. In this sense, Ukrainians are more self-defined<sup>136</sup> Europeans than self-defined Eurasians<sup>137</sup>.

A 40-year-old person in Russia now passed an entire life under this type of guided press and ‘guided democracy’.

One root cause of the present crisis of culturally European Russia is a paradigmatic decision made towards loneliness, self-isolation<sup>138</sup>, anti-Europeanisation<sup>139</sup> (by sending Aleksandr Dugin’s<sup>140</sup> and Ivan Ilyin’s<sup>141</sup> geopolitical books to all oblast governors) and against<sup>142</sup> enlightenment—“man’s emergence from his self-inflicted immaturity” according to Kant, having resided his entire life in Kaliningrad, now on Russian territory. The option to follow Kant is open for every citizen of this country. Now.

#### (4)

*There is a way out:* raising awareness concerning this anti-human historic catastrophe.

Russia should trustfully<sup>143</sup> live as a healthy state among brotherly and equal states and remain intact<sup>144</sup> in its international borders.

As Russian youth<sup>145</sup> put it: “We need a lot of self-reflection on what it means to be Russian. We have stopped taking responsibility for what is happening in our country, and our country has launched the worst war in its history. We must correct these mistakes.”

A “New Russia” actually means a humanitarian Russia in dignity, dialogue and mutual esteem.<sup>146</sup> Given that this journal and this article call for a worldwide perspective, we recall that this article’s purpose is not to vilify Russia but to “cite recent events as a striking current example of the misuse of power and crimes against humanity that must be universally condemned regardless of the perpetrator”. These events’ wider relevance lie in how political actors can be convinced to aligning their actions to what is acceptable to their geographic and global neighbours. Such understanding makes us realise that what is dealt to others will affect the perpetrator too, as the laws of systems dynamics suggest. These natural laws function independently of a chosen set of ideologies and pertain to all single economies in the world. Even when one functions within a ‘tit-for-tat’ level of ethics (theoretically, this may be seen as even legitimate for any government), the consequences of acting as a perpetrator (against what is held as ethically correct in the eyes of most others) are so huge because of a massive destruction of trust. Trust is actually the non-material basis of any materialised exchange, including trade and economy. Hence, destroying trust into oneself destroys one’s own economy. Further on, even one’s own sociocultural existence can vanish when a country’s citizens do not trust their own state and state narrative. The nation then just falls apart into smaller entities, even without any external action. To me personally, disintegration of the Russian territory into smaller geographic entities is fundamentally undesirable, as I have pointed out earlier in the article.

Therefore, I fight for true credibility of self-constituting Russian narratives and for a sound, transparent, healthy and respectful statehood of Russia which functions in dignity, acting towards her own well-being and other nations’.

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