

PINpoints

PROCESSES OF INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION

In this issue:

The Russia-Ukraine Conflict



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COLOPHON

PINPoints

PINPoints is the biannual publication of the Processes of International Negotiation Program (PIN)
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PIN is a non-profit group of scholars and practitioners that encourages and organizes research on a broad spectrum of topics related to international negotiation seen as a process. The PIN network includes more than 4,000 scholars and practitioners of international negotiation. The organization is presided over by a Steering Committee, which organizes its many activities and edits the PINPoints.

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Disclaimer & Editorial

Disclaimer

PIN convenes international scholars interested in the use of negotiation to prevent violent conflict, and where it has erupted to bring it quickly and effectively to an end. As a loose grouping its members frequently differ among themselves as to best approach in various situations – its mission is not to produce a “PIN dogma” but to continually open up debate by bringing together scholars and practitioners with diverse opinions as to ideal approach and method, in a continuous search for better practice.

This edition of *PINPoints* is largely about the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In line with the PIN ethos, members of its steering committee make their contributions here as individuals from different angles – sometimes in contradiction with one another. We do not seek to close out the debate but rather to open it up. Our unifying concern is always the search to improve prospects of negotiation as a means of resolving differences. Negotiation approaches may include many elements: robust confrontation, hard or soft positional plays, concession exchanges, creative problem-solving, gestures of extraordinary magnanimity, and reconciliation. Russian-Ukrainian and wider international relations may see all of these in play as the road ahead unfolds. The violence and cruelty of war will have deep, long-term, residual implications for us all going forward.

Editorial

On February 24, 2022, Russian forces launched a massive multipronged attack on Ukraine, officially declaring it a “special military operation.” Its ultimate purpose was not clear, though the immediate intent seems to have been to overthrow the Ukrainian government, to take the Donbas region, and to create a land corridor to Crimea. Its ultimate purpose is still not clear. There is nervousness across Eastern Europe over the extent of Vladimir Putin’s territorial ambitions; everywhere over his willingness to use Russia’s chemical and nuclear arsenals. The West has given vigorous support to Ukraine, enabling its troops to sustain powerful resistance over many weeks and to inflict serious losses on Russia’s military forces and war machine. It is a humanitarian crisis. UNHCR estimates over 5.5 million refugees have been created, with most finding refuge in Poland,

Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova; further, 7.7 million internally displaced persons also now exist too. The Russian attack has left cities in rubble and seen a huge loss of life. There is evidence of war crimes. The outcomes of this conflict are not yet clear, but the extent of destruction and human suffering is. However threatened Putin may have felt, Russia’s attack on Ukraine has challenged the world order, flies in the face of its commitments as a member of the United Nations Security Council, and is likely to change the shape of international relations for years to come.

In this *PINPoints* we consider the conflict from various perspectives. My own contribution briefly canvases the competing narratives that gave rise to the Russian attack. Russia’s desire to restore lost influence and claim territory along with Putin’s heightened sense of vulnerability should Ukraine join NATO were clearly underestimated by Western leaders. His campaign was based on a set of rational considerations that might have led him to believe a quick victory was feasible. The scale of resistance he encountered quickly belied this – it has become a very costly misjudgment and one that soon reflected all the elements of a classical entrapment scenario. It is not easy to forecast the eventual outcome, but it is important to keep things in perspective. Russia invaded Ukraine. A Russian victory or even a negotiated settlement might see it take the whole or part of its neighbor’s territory. A Ukrainian victory would simply be one in which Russian troops were pushed out and Putin’s ambitions tempered. Its victory would be a retention of rather than any gain in territory, of political control, and an end to the loss of Ukrainian lives. Wars have no winners of course – future risks include massive further loss of life, a resisted occupation, possible famine, destruction of property, escalation involving neighboring states, or even World War III – not to mention the dreaded scenario of nuclear weapons being used. Issues of humanitarian corridors, then a workable ceasefire, a functional peace, followed by dilemmas of accountability, reconstruction, reparation, and reconciliation all lie before us. Gideon Rachman (Financial Times May 16, 2022) recently reminded us that major powers tend to lose wars involving the invasion of smaller countries – Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq stand as examples – and they can have ruinous long-term economic, political, and social costs for both the invaded and the invader.

Rudolf Schuessler shakes out a few scenarios for the future of the war and a negotiated settlement of some description. He suggests protracted hostilities could see a famine in the winter with terrible humanitarian consequences. The situation is too fluid at the time of writing to see a clear outcome, but he urges all parties involved to keep communication channels open – not least for the purpose of frequent reality checks.

Guy Olivier Faure argues that a negotiated settlement of the conflict is dependent on how parties frame the problem. Using game theory, he considers various possibilities regarding reframing: the zero-sum game; the chicken game; and prisoner's dilemma. With the parties holding to maximalist positions, rigid mindsets, and mutual demonization, he is pessimistic over current possibilities of reframing – not least because the situation remains far from a mutually hurting stalemate.

Paul Meerts and Dan Druckman go a step further, positing a possible negotiated solution based on the potentials of a mutually hurting stalemate being recognized by the warring parties and a lowering of sights by both in the need to save lives. For Ukraine, it would mean assuming an official neutrality, giving up a defense of the country “at all costs,” and ceding the eastern parts of the country; for Russia, it would entail accepting the independence of what remains of Ukraine along with various security guarantees. The unknowns, of course, are the extent to which parties are prepared to bear pain before recognition of a mutually hurting stalemate, and where the red lines really are in terms of any proposed territorial claims. Under pressure, Ukrainian resistance has certainly hardened though.

Bill Zartman considers whether Putin had a clear or adaptable plan in mind when he invaded Ukraine. The intermediate approach is to understand his planning as incremental over time, with each step contingent on earlier interactions – how the West responded to those shaped his subsequent choices. His conclusion is that of a history of weakness exists. Soft responses to a series of earlier situations meant that Russia's reaction to a harder Western approach was never tested. He doubts the logic of a neutral Ukraine. A genuinely neutral buffer zone between Russia and Europe would require a “sanitizing of Belarus.” Russia and other NATO members have shared borders without problems in

the past. One major issue was NATO's open-ended invitation to Ukraine to join the alliance at some point in the future – an implicit “hanging” challenge to Russia that kept relations unresolved but threatening. The Minsk agreements failed to resolve fundamental differences over sovereignty between Ukraine and Russia, allowing Russian ambitions over the acquisition of eastern Ukraine at least to remain alive. The United States' response to Putin's nuclear threat, Zartman argues, was one of acquiescence rather than deterrence. Instead of standing up with “we can also go there, remove the threat” it was “we must be careful in case he implements his threat.” In this approach, the opportunity for deterrence was fundamentally lost. Zartman's views are contrary to those of Meerts and Druckman; they take us into questions of coercion and deterrence raised by the subsequent contributor.

Taking a much broader perspective in his contribution, Mikhail Troitskiy explores how the term “strategic stability” in US-Russian relations has undergone a “runaway” evolution from its original simple definition leaving much room for (mis)interpretation – and the increased risk of nuclear confrontation. The conflict in Ukraine has brought these ambiguities and threats under the spotlight. Pointing out that nuclear arms might be used for purposes of coercion or deterrence, Troitskiy explores the risk of the two becoming confused – when parties at a certain point in an escalating conflict begin to see their offensive actions as defensive, when coercion is understood as deterrence.

A fundamental change is upon us in terms of the rules that have cohered global society since the second world order – a return of the appeasement debate and games of chicken may regrettably be here now, having profound implications for understanding negotiation going forward.

In closing we offer the second of Meerts' three-part contribution, in which he shares some of his international experiences and insights vis-à-vis training diplomats and others in the arts of diplomacy and negotiation.

Our association with the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) is coming to an end. To all those who have so willingly lent their time and expertise to PIN projects during our period of collaboration we are deeply grateful. Thank you.



Russia in Ukraine: Entrapment Dilemmas

The images on our television screens every day of bombed cities, human suffering, and destroyed tanks as well as other military vehicles offer evidence of the conflict but not understanding. They evoke emotional responses of horror, sympathy for those caught in fighting, not to mention anger and

actions? Simply labeling perpetrators “monsters” or “lunatics” does not get us very far. This *PINPoints* offers some conceptual tools to assist understanding of how such violent conflicts arise: how historical narratives inform thinking about justice; how leaders make choices off their reading of contextual factors, perceptions of capacity, and emotional commitment to a cause; and, how the character of individual leaders influences such choices. It explores also opportunities lost, and possible future scenarios vis-à-vis this most violent conflict.

and narratives on the region and group relations. In the nation's long and complicated history lie competing narratives of nationalism, claims to territory, perceived threats, as well as feelings



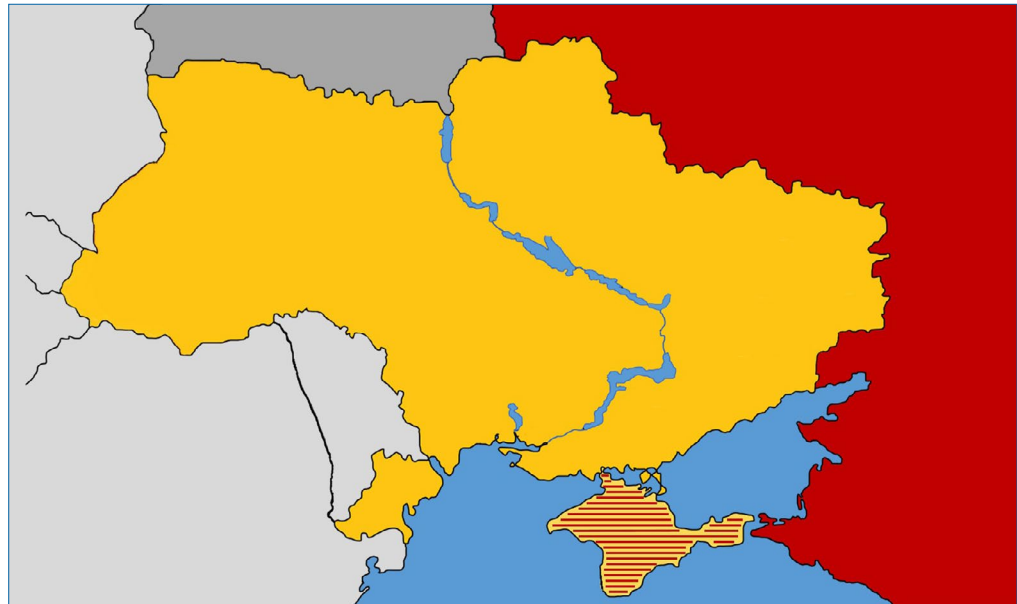
of anger and vengeance – factors all too closely informing the current crisis. Western Ukraine was never under Russian control before the Bolshevik Revolution. In medieval times the region – as the state of Kievan Rus – was overtaken by the Mongols, then Poland and Lithuania. In 1648, the Cossacks rebelled against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. A failed agreement led to the Russo-Polish war of 1654–1657 and the contested Treaty of Perpetual Peace (1686) in which the east of the Dnieper River would be ruled by Russia and the west by Poland. But the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth fell apart; following a series of wars, Prussia, Russia, and Habsburg Austria distributed the region among themselves in the Polish partition agreements con-

cluded between 1772 and 1795. The Russians took control of Crimea in 1783.

Present-day Ukraine fell under Austrian and Russian control until the period of revolutionary turmoil between 1917 and 1923, which saw the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, a Russo-Ukrainian war, and a civil war in Ukraine won by the Ukrainian Bolsheviks. In 1922, Ukraine became a founding republic of the Soviet Union – thus preserving the Ukrainian language and culture. Agricultural centralization policies under Russian guidance gave rise to the great famine of 1932–1933 (known as Holodomor), with 75 percent of the 6–8 million people who died doing so in Ukraine. There is a narrative among Ukrainians that the planned nature of this catastrophe, as part of Stalin's Great Terror, was a Soviet genocide intended to suppress a Ukrainian independence movement. In 1954, Crimea was transferred by Russia to Ukraine. The USSR collapsed in 1989, and Ukraine assumed independence in 1991. Successive governments' desire to align with the European Union have been bitterly resisted by Russia. In February 2014, when President Viktor Yanukovich suspended preparations for an impending association agreement with the EU following a counterproposal by Russia, the Ukrainian parliament impeached him and he fled to Russia. Russian forces immediately entered eastern and southern Ukraine (Yanukovich's traditional support areas), and annexed Crimea. A long war of attrition began in the Donbas region in the east between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian militias supported by Russia.

Western powers see Ukraine as being an independent nation since 1991, with full rights of sovereignty – including its political ideology, economic interests, and alliances and international

ing deliberately expanded to threaten Russia's borders per se. The Russian population is being led to understand that its forces are on a heroic mission to save a Ukrainian people facing Nazi



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memberships. Russian leaders see the Ukrainian population as kin with a shared historical identity, and as having been hijacked by a Western-leaning group that has misled the wider population. Ukrainian sovereignty is accepted only to the point that it does not revoke its historical Russian affiliation, or see the country become a formal ally of the “old enemy” in a form that might bring military danger directly to its own doorstep. Different pictures of the conflict are being presented on respective sides. Western leaders see Russia obstructing Ukraine's sovereign right to membership of NATO; Russian leaders see the latter as not only having reneged on an understanding in which it and the Warsaw Pact would be dissolved, but as hav-

genocide; the West sees an unlawful Russian invasion wreaking destruction on the lives of ordinary Ukrainians.

Cognitive Rationality: Perceptions of Capacity

Putin's decision to send forces into Ukraine was not an irrational one. Motivational psychologists, I suspect, would see a leader desperate in the context of history to regain lost honor and empire (a high-value goal) who made a bad judgement call. At the time he had reason to believe he would quickly succeed in overthrowing the Ukrainian state to install a friendly regime, while taking the east of the country. The impulse to predation (Pinker 2011: 509–515), uncluttered by concerns over lawfulness or morality,

is simply about practical efficiency in protecting or furthering one's own interests. Putin had a massive force amassed on the border, annexed Crimea in 2014, and has fomented rebellion in the eastern part of the country without consequence since; it made sense to invade before Ukraine became a member of the EU or NATO, limiting the risk of a larger-scale war. An optimal moment arose. Putin saw a gas-dependent Europe in the midst of winter, a wider Western alliance struggling with issues of internal coherence and economies battered by COVID-19, and a United States signaling a loss of interest in overseas military ventures following its chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan. The goal was important; a quick military victory seemed feasible. Ukrainian resistance and the international response, however, quickly exposed this as a misjudgment. Predatory actions, it seems, are often informed by an overconfidence on the part of aggressors (Pinker 2011: 512).

Overcommitment and Entrapment

The justification and rationalization processes typical of such situations now kicked in. A counter reality of massive destruction, loss of life, refugees, poor military-campaign management, wider regional disruption, and international censure had to be managed. And so did the deepening problems of polarization, hatred, desire for revenge, and longer-term problems of reconciliation, accountability, and reparation. The Russian leadership became entrapped by the violence it had initiated. The commitment factor changes

in entrapment scenarios: the value of the prize and perceptions of feasibility might be what drives an original action choice, but as a conflict escalates so do the desires to cut costs, save face, and inflict punishment on a resistant opponent. The dynamics typical of such entrapment scenarios are explored below.

At root, perhaps, Putin's leadership group still sees Ukrainian people as Russian, with those elements seeking alignment with the West perceived to have betrayed their identity. The dynamics of identity groups are such that while alternative belief systems may be tolerated if they are nonintrusive, those felt to betray a group identity are seldom forgiven – especially if they bring threatening ideologies and alliances (EU and NATO) to the door. Misjudgment is not psychosis, but psychologists suggest that certain personality types are prone to exacerbating their errors. Pinker for instance argues that the definition of the narcissistic personality disorder “fits tyrants to a T” (2011: 520–521): namely grandiosity, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy, making for a disregard for the rights of others.

In positions of power such characters have the capacity to unleash enormous violence on anyone who criticizes or opposes them, or acts in ways that thwart their fantasies. Overconfidence makes for flawed judgement calls; a grand utopian ideology embeds commitment to a cause, taking root in individual and group needs for social dominance; a lack of empathy removes the brakes on violent action.

“Combine narcissism with nationalism, and you get a deadly phenomenon that political scientists call resentment [French for resentment]: the conviction that one's nation or civilization has a historical right to greatness despite its lowly status, which can only be explained by the malevolence of an internal or external foe” (Pinker 2011: 524–532).

Revenge is a psychological urge common to individuals across cultures who perceive themselves as victims of others. It evokes feelings of pain, disgust, and anger – the core elements of hatred (Sternberg and Sternberg 2008). It impedes empathy, and enacted as vengeful punishment it serves as a deterrent – warning opponents of dire consequences for any danger posed. Putin's threat that all those who sought to oppose him would likely face consequences “never experienced before in their history” was especially chilling coming from a man with a capacity to unleash nuclear attacks. His history of ruthless punitive action in the Caucasuses and in assisting the Bashar Al-Assad regime in Syria lent credence to his threat.

Prior to the invasion Putin had room to continue a play that the buildup of forces was simply one of military exercises while assessing Ukrainian responses and those of the international community. There would have been no loss of face in a withdrawal of

forces. But once the invasion was triggered victory was required, the escalation dynamic was live, and his own entrapment in it set. In the buildup to the Second World War, Hitler in his desire for German imperial expansion originally had no intention of taking on Great Britain or France, but the invasion of Poland ensured their involvement and there was no stepping back (Overy 2021). In short, initial poorly judged acts of aggression can lead to much larger responses than hoped or planned for – and a perpetrator finds itself engulfed in a bigger conflict from which it is hard to withdraw without a loss of face.

Intergroup interactions must be understood as twin processes: both between the respective sides involved and also within them. As conflicts escalate, warring parties typically harden their positions, double down on communicating their commitment to them, and become further polarized. Problem-solving or offers of compromise become difficult as each fears signaling weakness to the other. As mutual damage is inflicted, movement becomes difficult in a hardening mix of anger, fear, disgust, and the desire for revenge. Prospects of mutual understanding and empathy diminish. A with-us-or-against-us logic kicks in, each pointing to the intransigence and cruelty of the other. Moderate voices are marginalized as the use of the language of “enemy” increases. To sustain an image of defiance and strength in the face of a hostile opponent, as well as the internal coherence necessary to continue the fight, leaders manipulate flows of information within

and between their respective sides, concealing or rationalizing their own atrocities while embellishing those of the other camp. Russia banned certain news media; made it unlawful to use the language of “invasion” in domestic reporting on a process it wished framed as a humanitarian venture to protect innocent citizens; and, arrested Russian citizens protesting these events. It downplayed the numbers of its troops and vehicles of war lost in the campaign. Ukrainians used the media to portray the brutality of Russian attacks, the extent of misery caused, the injustice of an attack on innocents in a nation that offered no threat to anyone, while at the same time lauding the courage of the fightback and the spirit of nationalism that inspired it. Typically groups in conflict dehumanize and demonize one another, lauding the heroism of their own while fostering feelings of disgust, contempt, fear, and anger vis-à-vis opponents (Pinker 2011: 327; Sternberg and Sternberg 2008).

To deal with “cognitive dissonance” we have a huge capacity for rationalization. Once committed to a position it becomes very hard to step away from it even in the face of objective counter facts, and particularly so in an honor-based society. The need to sustain a positive self-image saw George Bush and Tony Blair, for example, switch their rationale for invading Iraq from destroying weapons of mass destruction (which did not exist) to deposing a tyrant and bringing democracy to a repressed population (Tavris and Aronson 2008: 3). Our desire for a positive self-image makes us feel increasingly negative to those we mistreat:

“We are good people so they must deserve it.” “We were under threat [...] they forced us into defending ourselves and reprisals.”

“Our actions were not nearly as brutal as claimed by our critics.” “We simply did what was necessary to defend ourselves, and to protect our kin [...] if we did not act, who would?”

All cultures develop narratives about themselves and others, usually eulogizing the positives of courage, kindness, and superior qualities of their own identity group while denying or rationalizing any negative history. And narratives inform our understanding of the current day. Taking control of the media, making external news unlawful, or rendering the use of words such as “invasion” unlawful enables a culturally comfortable picture to be presented to a general population wherein acts of brutality are reframed as ones of heroism and humanitarianism (Tavris and Aronson 2008; Zartman et al. 2012). Cognitive dissonance plays out in what Pinker terms the “moralization gap” (2011: 537), characterized by the tendency of perpetrators to downplay the impact of their inflicted cruelties and victims embellish the extent of their suffering.

And the Future ...

Parties embarking on a war are usually gripped by expectations of victory or a desire to survive – they seldom consider the dynamics of peace

negotiations or future reconciliation. But even if a clear victory is achieved by a particular side, a peace with the defeated must eventually be sought. A resisted occupation or puppet state is not a clear victory. Those who mobilized against the other must find ways to persuade their people that peace is now required. This necessitates a rolling back of all the hate-based strategies used until that point. The cost in human life across sides may oblige a ceasefire being enacted at some point, but this is not the same as a peace agreement. A mutually hurting stalemate may eventually see a political agreement negotiated, but it will be no guarantee of sustainable peace – indeed, 40 percent of such agreements fail within a decade. The legacies of mass killings, destroyed lives, and the ruining of cities will live on in residual sentiments of revenge, and in this context, possibly, in unrequited calls for accountability too.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is in clear violation of international law. It may have been rooted in security fears and an alternative framework of understanding regarding the world order but the consequences have been immense – destroying the lives of Ukrainians and indeed many others too. Would-be mediators would do well not to confuse impartiality in peace negotiations with condonation of such acts. Helping a perpetrator to cease brutality is not to condone cruelties committed – as Zimbardo (2009) points out, it may be foot soldiers who carry out atrocities but it is leaders who create the contexts and incentives for them to do so in the first place.

Accountability

The principles of human rights, national sovereignty, and accountability for war crimes are guidelines for bringing sense to a situation. But there are power realities in play here which temper any utopian ambitions. The slow-moving, expensive, and bureaucratic International Criminal Court may not have sufficient reach to enable immediate accountability. Even if there is sympathy for Russian threat perceptions, justice requires accountability on the part of its leaders for the destruction of life and property in Ukraine. It may be recalled that Nikita Khrushchev was removed from office despite his success in leveraging the Cuban Missile Crisis to have US missiles removed from Turkey. His brinkmanship that brought the world to the edge of nuclear war was simply too dangerous.

Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Reparation

Viewing the wreckage of cities and the suffering experienced by Ukrainians at the hands of Russian invaders it may seem churlish to think about reconciliation. But longer term one must hope that the domestic populations will find ways to rebuild relations across borders. Much will depend on how peacekeeping and peacemaking processes are carried out. This is where early signals of reconciliatory intent are conveyed: namely whether humanitarian corridors are honored and the respective sides are able to demonstrate some empathy for each other's fears, hopes, and interests despite the pain and anger they feel. Germany distanced itself

from the Nazi regime after World War Two in relations with Israel and committed to long-term reparations. Russia's leaders of the future will need to separate themselves and the wider domestic population from the decisions leading to the war while seeking to rebuild kinship and other ties between the two nations. Russia will face immediate massive reconstruction and reparation costs if it wishes a narrative of reconciliation to take root in future relations. A mutually hurting stalemate may be required to kickstart peace talks (Zartman 2000), but mending relations will require much, much more. A significant amount will depend on the nature of outcomes. At the time of writing, the latter might take any number of forms: a Russian victory, Ukrainian success in repelling the invasion, a temporary ceasefire, an agreement to withdraw troops and disengage, territorial annexation or reclamation. Each eventuality will shape relations and prospects of accountability, reconciliation, reconstruction, and reparation going forward.

One significant outcome of Russia's attack on Ukraine has been an immediate commitment to strengthening NATO. Turkey has dropped its veto of Sweden and Finland as members, and there is to be an increase of NATO high readiness military forces from 40,000 to over 300,000 across Eastern Europe. A consolidation and strengthening of forces amongst nations feeling themselves under threat is an entirely foreseeable scenario. We must hope that Russia factored this into its strategic planning; that both Russia and NATO share an understanding of be-

havioural signals and boundaries in a return to the old playbook of mutual deterrence; and that defensive intention is not misinterpreted as direct aggression. A stand off followed by a period of stand down is now required for de-escalation of wider tensions. The duration and cost of Russia's Ukrainian campaign has weakened it militarily, but it and NATO still have capacity to escalate ... it would take us closer to the "unthinkable." Some creative and careful diplomacy is desperately needed to break an expanding entrapment process.

■

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Rudolf Schuessler

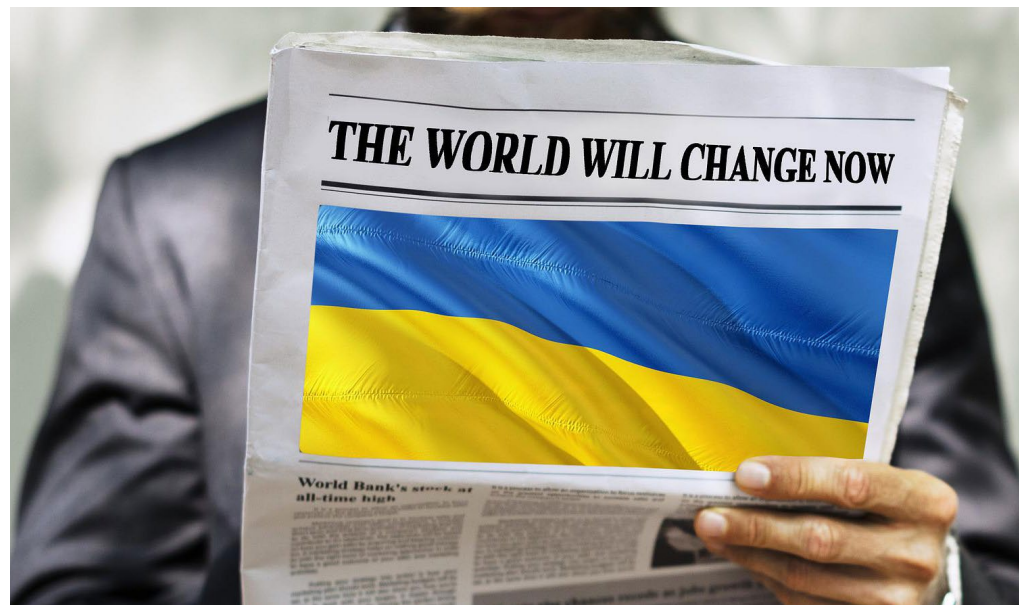
Ukraine Negotiation Scenarios

All developments around the ongoing war in Ukraine indicate that peace will be particularly hard to negotiate. It is a war waged with mutual hatred from both sides. This appears surprising at first glance given the geographical and cultural proximity of Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine is regarded as a “little brother” by many Russians, but under closer consideration this already explains much of the hatred involved. Conflicts within families, and especially with members who want to break loose from them against the will of others, tend to be more emotional than those between more distant people.

And there is the issue of sanctions. Russia faces unprecedented economic sanctions, even compared to the Western reaction to Nazi Germany in World War Two. Sanctions are typically a double-edged sword, and it is still to be seen whom they will hurt more in the long run, the Vladimir Putin regime or Europe (Russia will be heavily hurt for sure). In any case, the sanctions seem to function as a polarizing amplifier. They increase the probability that Putin will fall, with ensuing pro-Western regime change, and at the same time they increase the likelihood too that Russian elites will be forced to embrace Putin (or some other nationalist regime) in order not to perish. Both probabilities grow at the expense of those of intermediate outcomes. If sanctions were to toughen the stance of the relevant part of the Russian elites, the question arises how to reduce sanctions again to make room for a negotiated settlement. At this point, the sanctions will very likely prove hard to relinquish and render an

agreement more difficult. This is not to say that tough sanctions are predictably mistaken but only that they are a bet on a peace that is fully victorious for Ukraine and the West. They are, as one might put it, a bet on a new Brest-Litovsk agreement.

victorious peace for Ukraine might be attainable. Russia, on the other hand, has already had to bid farewell to maximalist war aims. It had to abandon its plan to bring all the economically most valuable parts of Ukraine under its control, at least for the time being. Rus-



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Given this implicit bet and the so far recognizable “heroic” posturing of the Ukrainian government, real negotiations are unlikely to start as long as a resoundingly victorious peace is still on the cards for Ukraine and its Western allies militarily. Ukrainians have, in other words, every reason to wait and see whether they can stifle the Russian offensive in Donbas. In this case, the morale of Russian troops might further diminish, and a spread of defeatism in Russia cannot be ruled out. In another turn, Russia may simply try not to lose further ground and manage to keep the political front at home stable. If Russia’s capacity for actively waging war decreases, in one way or another a

sia now struggles with even winning enough to make the war worthwhile for Putin. Does this mean that Russia will resort to negotiations if it manages to militarily secure at least the Donbas plus a land bridge to Crimea?

If we think in scenarios for negotiations, this is the first interesting question. My answer is that seminal negotiations are still unlikely under this scenario in the next months unless the United States is very eager for a negotiated peace. First, it would signal weakness on the Russian side to offer much after having won just Donbas and a land corridor. There will always be the question of reparations and of an easing of sanctions. Media-driven

It therefore makes sense to prolong the scenario to autumn and winter 2022. At this point, the scenario potentially becomes gruesome beyond what we have seen in Syria but not maybe, what we see in Yemen. Since the Ukrainian side will in this scenario not have been seriously defeated militarily, its reasons for negotiating peace may depend on economic and humanitarian concerns. Depending on the course and conduct of war, economic malaise, cold, and hunger may befall Ukraine in winter 2022 to an extent unknown since the Josif Stalin era. The question is whether Western help can ward off such a prospect and to what extent the Russian government might act to bring it about by brutal “Soviet-style” warfare in eastern Ukraine and the destruction of transport infrastructure in the west of the country. However, the real state of affairs is not the only concern that the warring sides need to take into account. Even if the humanitarian crisis fails to reach his-

It is practically impossible to predict how negotiations might unfold under the repercussions of such a scenario. Accusations of genocide, already nascent at present, will predictably become rampant, and realpolitik suicidal for Western politicians. In any case, European politicians should be prepared for this outcome and do their utmost to become independent from Russian natural resources and the Russian economy as soon as possible (which is not the same as severing ties now). Under the impact of media images of a nightmarish hunger and cold crisis in Ukrainian winter, their hands might be tied to the most hardline policies against Russia on offer.

The third scenario may offer a hurting enough military stalemate, with sufficiently large losses for both sides. Russia would not have reason to heap

further economic and humanitarian pressures on Ukraine, and it would be in a position to give some territory back too. Hence, the third scenario might be the most amenable to true negotiations, but it is obviously not an ideal outcome for Ukraine and the West. The whole thing is too close to a victorious peace in favor of Russia. The latter would have to cede much of the Ukrainian territory that was conquered at the expense of significant Russian bloodshed. It should be noted, therefore, that the West might offer Russia some compensation for handing back conquered territory by handing Finland's and Sweden's NATO membership and maybe agreements concerning the future status of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in a way that recognizes Russian security perceptions.

Needless to say, neither the Ukrainians nor the other mentioned countries would be amused. Still, my considerations are meant to show that in the second and third scenarios, and even more in intermediate outcomes between them, there is objectively some room for negotiations, but it remains unlikely that they will be feasible psychologically and politically for Western

democracies. This mainly concerns Europe, but it is difficult to see how even an emotionally more distant and more controlled US could negotiate with Putin in scenarios two or three.

In sum, none of the discussed scenarios offers even moderate prospects for successful negotiations under conditions compatible with current Western values unless the Russian war effort breaks down and a dictated peace becomes possible. This, then, is quite obviously the route on which Ukraine and its Western allies have reason to embark unless Russia manages to render the prospect of Western victory unrealistic. However, this is not to say that speaking to each other can wait until military conditions are ripe. Given the specter of a hunger and humanitarian crisis in winter 2022, all sides in the war would in my opinion be well advised to talk to each other as soon as possible. There are obvious humanitarian reasons for preventing a hunger crisis.

But there exist also good reasons of realpolitik for this, because the ensuing situation might become uncontrollable by either side (for reasons of space, I leave it to the reader to consider sub-scenarios). Neither the West nor Russia

should believe themselves able to control the course of the war and the crisis if the specter of a new Holodomor arises again. Both sides have a shared interest in preventing a hunger-crisis scenario in Ukraine, whether occurring in reality or emerging as a dominant narrative in the media. Both sides thus need to talk, instead of simply betting on an imminent, resounding victory. These, then, are the talks that already take place now behind the scenes. The question is, of course, whether both sides realize that they have a strong interest in preventing a hunger-crisis scenario. If they understand this, direct talks between Russia and the U.S. should be held behind the screen of the talks mediated by Türkiye.

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Guy Olivier Faure

Ukraine: Paradigms for Problem-Framing

With the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops a frozen conflict explodes. The European security architecture is collapsing. The classic theory of the obsolescence of major wars is held in check. The war is very expensive, even too expensive to be pursued, is no longer an argument. It is a question of interrupting the negative ratchet effect that is constantly eating away pieces of Ukraine. The challenge is how to stop a war without starting it. The basic method consists in increasing the costs for the aggressor in order to make them unbearable. However, the limits of what can be accepted vary from culture to culture. There are societies where the first death is already a tragedy and others that do not hesitate to send millions of people to the butcher's shop without the slightest remorse. Economic warfare is the other lever: weaken Russia by isolating and ruining it. It is a long-term strategy that might culminate in an impressive number of Ukrainians killed and the country destroyed. The classic formula according to which the surgery was successful but the patient is dead could be applied.

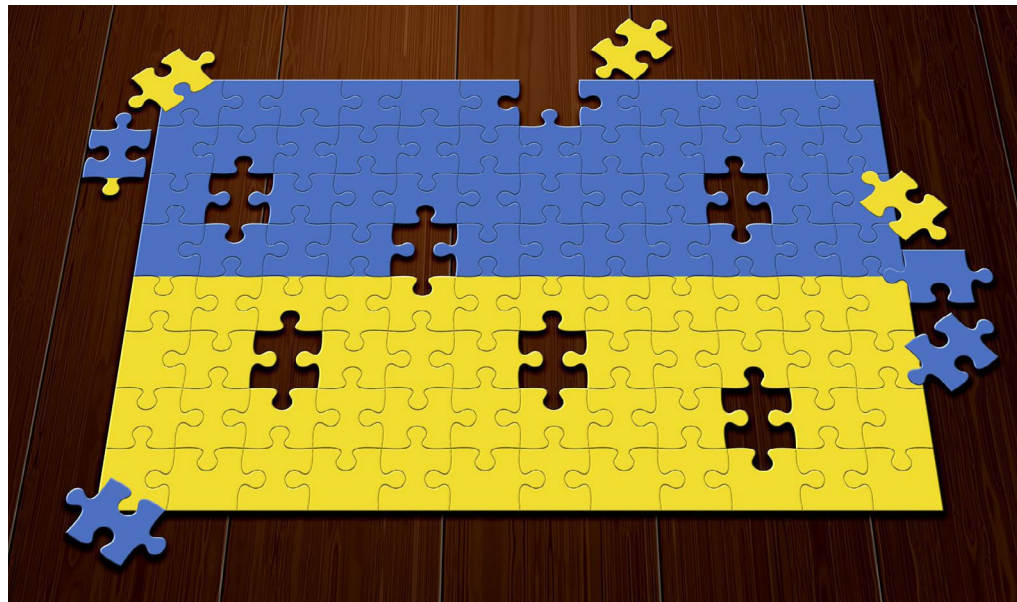
There is a shift from the war of influence that prevailed until recent months to war on the model of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – that is, based on artillery. The war of soft powers becomes that of sharp powers with a traditional conflict concerning narratives. Ukraine has embarked on an inexorable process of attachment to Europe and adherence to the model of liberal democracy. This is a model hated by Russia, China, and probably a majority of countries on this planet

who furthermore see the West as a civilizational entity in decline. Once again the theory according to which only two liberal democracies never go to war seems verified.

Considering the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a negotiated solution is very much dependent on the way both parties frame the problem. If there is no agreement on this very basic requirement – here, compatible definitions – resolution is extremely hard to imag-

security operations that are handled properly, easily, with no exceptional problems. Thus, there is nothing to negotiate. The only thing to do is to wait for the end of the friendly intervention to save the Russian-speaking population persecuted or massacred by the Ukrainian Nazis.

The Ukrainians have a totally different way of defining the current situation. It is about a conflict between neighboring and sovereign countries.



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ine. For the time being, it seems that the gap between both definitions of the situation is so wide that no window of opportunity seems visible or even conceivable.

Russia is framing the problem as a matter of security because it considers that the balance between itself and NATO has been challenged and that the old Cold War division between the two parts of Europe should be reinstated. On the ground, in Ukraine, the Russians state that there is no war, just

One has invaded the other and started killing scores of Ukrainian people and inflicting heavy destruction. Russia should withdraw from occupied parts of Ukraine, compensate for the destruction, and provide guarantees to ensure such an attack does not happen again.

If Russia wants to open the game to the integration of historical issues, its position would not be as strong as they imagine because it seems that its main concern was always to annihilate

the Ukrainian identity and massacre its population. Second, the Kaliningrad exclave issue could be reopened as this part of Europe, historically speaking, has never been Russian. Third, Siberia itself is an Asian land that has been the victim of a typically Russian colonialist and imperialist conquest. Fourth, much could be said about the Caucasus and the way Russia, then the Soviet Union and now again Russia, butchered the whole region.

On moral grounds, Russia also has a very weak position. One could not equate the victim of aggression with the perpetrator of it. It is not Ukraine that is invading and destroying Russia but the opposite. At the end of World War 2, no one would imagine it acceptable to have the SS officer in charge of a death camp sitting together with some surviving prisoners to discuss the fate of those prisoners. War crimes are not negotiable. The logic of peace is clearly opposed to the logic of justice.

On strategic and geopolitical grounds, today Ukraine must have two regrets because of its care to please Russia. One is not to have joined NATO because, in that case, Russia would have thought twice before risking starting World War 3. Second, Ukraine should not have given Russia all the nuclear weapons and equipment that were on its territory at the time of the collapse of the USSR. Today, Ukraine would have a very significant deterrent force to keep away the Russian threat.

If we consider the theory of negotiation and the different paradigms that can be used, there are three main options here. The first is the zero-sum

game; the second is the chicken game, the third is the prisoner's dilemma. If one considers first the zero-sum game, it is a paradigm typically applied to border-delimitation issues. The gains of one party are the losses of the other, and vice versa. In this case, we are in a situation where borders have already been established between Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine is an internationally recognized country, part of the United Nations, and sovereign. Theoretically, there is little to negotiate unless the objectives of Russia are something other than discussing the delimitation of borders. For example, it could be to control the whole of Ukraine, change its government, or divide this country into different zones of influence. It could also be to intimidate neighbors, an action in the ordinary panoply of Russia and previous USSR. There are very few possibilities for negotiating because, in a zero-sum game, there will be necessarily a winner and a loser. The loser, supposed to be Ukraine, does not intend to accept any deal offered by the aggressor, since the situation is clearly defined. It is not Ukraine that is trying to appropriate parts of Russia but quite the opposite. In this case, Ukraine has no interest in negotiating its own amputation, even if a limited one. The obvious strategy for Ukraine is building a balance of power that would allow the situation to be reversed or ensure that the warring parties reach a costly situation intolerable for the invader. Success, in this case, supposes that the balance of forces would reverse.

The second paradigm captures an extremely tough and risky situation, a

chicken game. Both sides push their advantage until they think the other will collapse and give up eventually. It can be a mutual brinkmanship attitude. The



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chicken game relates to a number of international crises such as the set up of Soviet missiles in Cuba with a project that was designed to issue a direct threat to major United States cities. It encompasses very high-risk situations because ultimately each side is really in a situation of displaying force, showing readiness for direct confrontation, with one party losing – or, even worse, both ending up doing so. In this paradoxical situation, there is no possibility of cooperation or a win-win outcome. In other words, with the chicken game paradigm, if NATO – who becomes then the major party to the dispute instead of Ukraine – for instance believes in the Russian threat, the whole world could end up with a world war with the use of nuclear weapons.

The only way to get out of it would be to transform the chicken game into

a prisoner's dilemma. Such a paradigm reintroduces possibilities of co-operation. It supposes to have fulfilled a necessary condition: trust. However, a minimal degree of confidence is required and still does not exist in the present situation. To transform the nature of the game, it is probably necessary to modify the balance of power and have each party change its objectives, which does not seem the order of the day – at least for the moment. Building trust seems especially difficult when one of the two parties, the Russian government, is considered as lying deliberately and cynically for years. It is very difficult to obtain a change of mindset when both parties tend to escalate on the ground and also verbally. When the Russians label the Ukrainian government neo-Nazis, it does not open the road to negotiation. Demonizing has always been a way to find an excuse for not accepting any form of dialog. Furthermore the Russians do not hesitate to resort to the nuclear threat, which is also a mode of verbal escalation.

Another obstacle to any resolution is the real reasons behind the aggression. Are they different from those invoked? Do the Russians seriously

believe that Ukraine is governed by a group of neo-Nazis planning to attack Russia?

If what is at stake is a conflict between liberal democracies and dictatorships, it is a conflict of values that cannot be solved as there is not much to negotiate in this domain. One cannot split values in the same way as can be done with quantifiable goods. A value is met or not met. An identity is respected or not respected. A country exists or does not.

There is also a misconception problem. Vladimir Putin regards NATO not as a purely defensive alliance but as a coalition whose intention is to one day attack Russia. It is particularly long and arduous to change perceptions because these are built as much on emotions and beliefs as on objective facts.

If we consider the situation today, it is not realistic to consider any negotiation package because the situation is far from corresponding to a mutually hurting stalemate, one painful enough to annihilate any desire to prevail over the other. Every party will only agree to negotiate in a situation of strength – a condition that is not met today. The escalation has not reached its parox-

ysmal peak point. The Russian army is caught in a trap, doomed to carry on its siege warfare against cities on the basis of gigantic artillery duels or exchanges of Javelin and Stinger missiles versus thermobaric bombs. The volatility of the situation adds to the difficulty faced. In view of international rules and standards, such a package should include not only the return of all territories occupied by the Russian army and its allies but also reparations for the destruction caused by bombardment and other acts of war. Compensation for mass rapes perpetrated by Russian soldiers should also be considered. Finally, it will also be a question of thinking about the longer term and deterring Russia from attacking again after a few years. After a certain time, a formal apology from Russia should be made in order to create the necessary conditions to reach the forgiveness stage. History has demonstrated that it is possible in the long term. However, we are very far from meeting all these conditions in the present conjuncture. Reestablishing peace and cooperation might, indeed, be a matter of generations.

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Daniel Druckman and Paul Meerts

War or Words: How to End the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine places the world on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, we have an intense nationalism expressed by the Ukrainian government and its citizens. On the other, we are faced with an authoritarian political system in Russia that legitimizes Vladimir Putin's uncontested rule. When pitted against each other, as in the current war, a deadly conflict of wills arises. Complicating the situation is the substantial difference in military power between the two countries. That power imbalance is on display now, as Russia has devastated much of Ukraine. These are the factors that have fueled the intractability evident to date.

Given this state of affairs, is there a plausible negotiated solution to the crisis? Several elements augur some optimism. One is the difference between the nationalism expressed by the two countries. For Ukrainians, the ties are to territory and culture – referred to as “civic nationalism.” For Russia's leader – if not its citizens – such ties are rather to a larger ethnic community. The civic form is more flexible than ethnic attachments, and thus more amenable to negotiation (Kupchan 1995). Another is the realization of a hurting stalemate on the ground as a result of Ukrainian resilience, Western sanctions, and the delivery of modern weaponry. For this to motivate the parties to enter negotiation it needs to be mutual (Zartman 2000). Clearly, the Ukrainians are suffering more than the Russians although there are signs of disappointment – albeit falling short of regret – on the part of Putin and a loss of morale among Russian troops. A third cause for op-

timism is the desire on both sides to achieve certain goals: For Ukraine, this now consists of ending the war and keeping their government and their democratic system intact. For Russia, this means, at the very least, Ukrainian neutrality and securing the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine. The challenge is to offer a proposal that would satisfy the needs of these governments.

has not been sufficient to turn the tide. Nor does it appear that NATO will join the fighting on the ground or from the air, as this might escalate the conflict into World War III. Despite the devastation wrought by its army, it is clear that the Russian campaign is taking much longer than planned and its losses are accumulating each day. Reining in their earlier goals would seem prudent.



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Goals change as wars unfold. The maximalist goals going into the invasion were a quick takeover of the Ukrainian government by the Russians and a protection of its government and territorial integrity by Ukraine respectively. Increasing costs for both sides have altered these goals. Despite some gains in and around Kyiv, there is little doubt that the Ukrainians are taking the major blows in the war. President Volodymyr Zelensky has been pleading for support from all members of NATO, the European Union, plus Australia and Japan. The support to date

This, together with NATO and EU sanctions which hurt the Russian Federation severely, is the basis for negotiation.

A critical juncture in the war has been reached. As the hurt becomes increasingly mutual, both governments may be considering a switch from a gain (strive to win) to a loss frame (strive to prevent losses) – or, more helpfully, to preserving some gains (De Dreu, Lualhati, and McCusker 1994). For Ukraine, this means giving up the desire to defend the country at all costs to end the war. For Russia, this means

lowering its sights on replacing the sitting Ukrainian government to focus on extending its reach into the eastern provinces instead. Although Russia stands to benefit more from these trades, the ultimate gain is the saving of lives and therefore hope for a better future. Risks are unavoidable – if not inevitable – in any negotiated settlement. They can, however, be reduced by institutional guarantees, particularly from the United Nations Security Council – which includes Russia.

Important procedural decisions would need to be made during a pre-negotiation period. These include the stakeholders, venue, format, language, and guarantees vis-à-vis implementation. The talks would need to be between the two presidents. Putin has the sole power to enter into or dissolve any agreement made by his country. Emissaries are beholden to him and have no authority to sign agreements on behalf of their country. Zelensky, on the other hand, is subject to the checks and balances of Ukraine's parliament. This difference in the political systems would test Putin's patience and could lead him to abandon any proposal or retract any agreement.

For reasons of security, the talks should be virtual and recorded rather than in-person. The question of language could be a sticking point because of symbolic status issues. Nonetheless using Russian, which both speak, avoids the use of interpreters, which would pose other problems. Enforcement rests with a third-party institution that needs to be acceptable. Each of these decisions could well be deal breakers. But there needs to be

a vision of what an agreement might look like.

Here is one such outlook. We propose a possible agreement based on the idea of trading territory in eastern Ukraine for the preservation of a sovereign democratic republic.

Ukraine agrees:

1. To accept the Russian demand of neutral status similar to the Swedish model. This is a critical demand made by the Russians. Note that the Finnish example would not work as the Finnish government had to take Soviet wishes into account during the Cold War.
2. To cede the eastern part of the Donbas oblasts (provinces) to Russia: the population is dominated by Russian separatists and Russian forces have already made significant incursions to create a situation verging on a fait accompli.

Note that Russia will probably demand all of the Donbas provinces as they continue to increase their control over this terrain. Indeed, they are now revising their aims to focus attention on this region.

3. To provide a land bridge – a corridor on sovereign Ukrainian territory – between Donbas and Crimea: this would connect the two annexed regions.

Note that it is obvious that the Russians would like to have all of the eastern coast in order to control the shores of the Sea of Azov, which would then be a Russian inland sea. For Ukraine this seems to be a no-go.

The Russian Federation agrees:

1. To accept an immediate cease-fire while calling back Russian troops and ending the war: this is the critical demand by Ukraine. For some time there might be a demilitarized zone installed and guarded by peacekeeping troops of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), for example from the Central Asian countries and Mongolia.
2. To provide security guarantees for no further invasions and the acknowledgement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine: this is critical to sustain the agreement. The permanent members of the UNSC plus countries like Turkey and India should act as guarantors of Ukraine's security and independence. It would need to improve on the 1994 CSCE Budapest Document.
3. To provide opportunities for the safe return of Ukrainian refugees in neighboring countries: this would bring the Ukrainian population close to its pre-invasion level and relieve the burden on the countries that have absorbed those fleeing.
4. To provide reparations for the damage inflicted on the country: while agreeing in principle, the difficulty will be working out the details for degree and type of support. If the Russian Federation does not agree to this, the EU and perhaps the United States and Canada will instead have to support the Ukrainian economy in getting

back on its feet and help repair the damage done.

This proposed agreement could, above all, end the war while satisfying some of the purported objectives of the Russians. The territory ceded to Russia is a big ask, but would also reduce considerable tensions between the Ukrainian government and the separatists living in the eastern provinces.

Of course this agreement would not fly without backing from an institutional guarantor. It is important to learn lessons from this disaster in Europe. Lesson one: the US should not have invited Ukraine and Georgia to become NATO members. Lesson two: the European Defense Community of 1952 – signed by the governments of the then European Economic Community, but never ratified by its parliament – should be implemented by the EU as soon as possible (see Kunz 1953). Never waste a good (or, more appropriately, a bad) crisis. Lesson three: it is of the utmost importance to support democratic groups in Russia, as an authoritarian

Russia will remain a threat to its neighbors and indeed to its own people.

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I. William Zartman

Missed Opportunities?

Determining whether there were missed opportunities for the West to stop the flow of events in 2022 is a function of Vladimir Putin's intentions. Putin himself is no public authority on his own intentions; notably, for one, he said he would not enter Ukrainian territory militarily, which as either a prediction or as an intention was untrue. But there are two conceivable scenarios: Either Putin had it all laid out in his mind from the beginning to the end, culminating in a blitzkrieg that would put in power a pliant stooge. Or he tested the water only step by step, going ahead or not depending on the reactions encountered. Various well-informed interpreters argue for each view, but we do not know for sure – although there is now public confirmation that Western intelligence was quite aware of Putin's plans (Strobel 2022). There is much to argue for the first, since Putin has had a long career over which to form his views and strategies. But others say that he recalculates rationally at every step.

There is an intermediate image that ties the two views together, and that is what he expected the West to do. Game theory tells us one thing, if nothing else, and that is that actions are interdependent – one's action depends on the other's. And there can be little argument that the West has been anywhere between weak and cowardly in its previous policies. President George H. W. Bush's Christmas warning of 1992 over Kosovo, President Barack Obama's red line over chemical weapons in Syria, President Donald Trump's illusionary negotiations, and then President Joe Biden's total rout in Af-

ghanistan and subsequently welcome of Nord Stream 2 (later finally reversed) were certainly watched with incredulity from the Kremlin (and from the European and Chinese capitals). Meanwhile NATO allies, from Hungary to Britain, were treating foreign policy as a college debating club contest.

There was a way to test the reality of the two views of Russian strategy. That would have been to try a hard reaction to see if it produced hesitancy in the steps, and then compare the results with the response to a softer reaction. But there was no test because each step produced a soft Western reaction. Throughout the crisis, the United States was leaving from behind, while the Europeans were debating between a soft reaction and a softer one. Russia's step-by-step strategy must have come close to a long-step view, rationally, instead of hesitant short steps. And yet, only with a step-by-step approach would there have been lost opportunities, since a tough commitment by Putin would have treated any reaction – hard or soft – as proof of the correctness of his strategy: if they are soft, we can push ahead; if they are hard, we must push ahead. It is interesting that the *Wall Street Journal* article of April 2–3 by some close experts, "Putin Targeted Ukraine for Years. Why Didn't the West Stop Him" expands this statement authoritatively but never actually answers the question.

So, it may be foolhardy to try to do so – but, after all, bravery and heedlessness are two sides of the same coin. The earliest point when a solution was aired was a mixed moment, after contentious but positive negotiations

on December 5, 1994, over the denuclearization of Ukraine. The result was the monumental Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances whereby the US, United Kingdom, and Russian Federation

"reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine [and] reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,"

but also agree

"to refrain from economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by Ukraine of the rights inherent in its sovereignty and thus to secure advantages of any kind."

Of course the first commitment was broken by Russian two decades later with the seizure of Crimea from Ukraine.

The idea of a buffer zone, or march, or glacis, or cordon sanitaire, or État tampon is as old as geopolitics itself: used between England and the rest of the disunited kingdom and by the Romans in similar locations; Afghanistan was a buffer in the midst of the Great Game between Russia and British India, and may still be; Finland is a buffer, until it joins NATO. In fact, a smaller buffer zone was established by the 2014 Minsk agreements discussed below. And the Soviet satellite states served as a sort of buffer (or at least protection) for the USSR, illustrating the weakness of the concept: the buffer state must be strong enough to assert its own identity (like Finland) or else one of the strong buffered neighbors will assume that it is merely a glacis or protective shield (like Belarus). Russia's maximalist goals involve occupation of perhaps half of Ukraine and the installation of a puppet government. It is this prospect that raises doubts about the workability of any neutralization: Russia would expect to control the government, as it has on occasion since independence and was rejected by popular outbursts – Orange and others.

So along Russia's western border, the idea of a buffer zone is wonderful checkerboard game material but just plain unreal: north to south, the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea, there are three NATO members, a Russian satellite seeking union with Russia, then Ukraine. For a real cordon sanitaire, Belarus would have to be equally sanitized to start with, an option unreal at the time and never raised. On the other hand, NATO and (Soviet) Russia have been common neighbors since Tur-

key (1952) and the Baltic states (2004) joined NATO without border problems (but with a Georgian buffer for the Turks after 1991).



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Instead, the US was more interested in having Ukraine as a member of NATO – an ambition reduced at the 2008 NATO Council meeting to an imprecise statement only that it “will become [a] NATO member” at some undisclosed date in future and without a Membership Action Plan. There was also some discussion of overlapping Ukrainian membership in the European Union economic zone and the Russian trade arrangement, but it was decided that the two were incompatible – so Ukraine later joined the EU economic arrangement (that Russia may have seen as contrary to the Budapest commitments). The NATO decision was a compromise compared with the membership drive, but it was also a challenge to Russia compared to no NATO at all.

It is hard to judge whether there was an opportunity to be missed, but it is likely that, of the three options available – NATO membership, no mention

thereof, the unimplemented offer of membership someday – the last, which was chosen, was the worst. By some internal criteria, a membership so contrived that it would not upset Russia would have been ideal but impossible; having no institutional links to Europe would have been undesirable to Ukraine and would have left it open to economic integration with Russia, as already on the table. Politics is the art of the impossible, but the opportunities here are hard to discern.

The next lost opportunity could have been the Minsk agreements. They were negotiated as a Protocol by the Trilateral Contact Group (Russia, Ukraine, OSCE) mediated by France and Germany; signed on September 5, 2014, based on a pro-Russian “15-point peace plan” proposed by

Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko; revised according to a Franco-German plan and signed again on February 12, 2015, thus continually rediscussed and breached since the first version. The agreements provided steps that would confirm and legalize the autonomous status of Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine). The previous year, Putin's aide on Ukrainian policy had indicated that the country

“can be reformed as a confederation, with a lot of freedom for the regions to decide things by themselves, with a lot of freedom for the regions to decide things by themselves”

according to the Minsk agreements – which “legitimized the first division of Ukraine” in a “reconquest [...], the first open geopolitical counterattack by Russia [against the West]” (Foy 2021). Minsk II at any stage was too much for Ukraine because it did not contain a firm commitment to territorial integrity and independence (which Russia has already breached), and too little for Russia, because it did not contain a veto from the two oblasts on any pro-European foreign policy. Two competing integration attempts were at play and at odds; the idea of membership in two competing customs unions was impossible by trade rules, as the EU pointed out.

The result on the ground was two scabs on the eastern border, containing part of the oblasts, which Russian eventually recognized as independ-

ent states on February 21, 2022, as it has the other scabs in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria. With the subsequent offensive Russia set out to conquer the oblasts completely. The fact that these areas have many Russian-speakers is as illegitimate as the basis for a claim as would be any territorial claim on mixed-language neighbors in Maine, Denmark, Italy, or Kosovo. International law has been clear that national self-determination does not mean ethnic cleansing or linguistic self-determination. As the war has progressed, it is clear (even if not everything else is) that the minimum Russian goals include conquest of at least the coast from Donetsk to Crimea, and perhaps of the rest of the coast to the mouth of the Dnieper and Bug Rivers and Odessa beyond them to cut off Ukraine's outlet to the sea. It is hard to see how these goals offer the basis of any missed opportunity for negotiations. Indeed, if there were doubts about Russian long-term goals, it would be hard to explain its interest in establishing the Transnistrian scab on Moldova – hitherto not contiguous to any Russian territory.

One very specific missed opportunity of a very different sort was the nuclear threat issued by Russia. Negotiations are carried out through offers and counteroffers, but also against alternatives and expectations. A mutual threat hanging over the parties was MAD – the nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction that makes any use of nuclear weapons suicidal. But that said, while the threat unissued is mutual, if one side grabbed it and swings it around, the challenge becomes unilateral to

the other side. To restore its mutuality, the US should have said simply: “OK but remember I have one too. So let's just sweep this off the table.” Instead, the US immediately adopted the threat as addressed to it and said (publicly): “We must be careful what we do, not be involved directly or bring in NATO, lest he carry out his threat.” And the mutuality was gone. Putin never considered not invoking nuclear weapons lest they be used on him, for the mutuality was gone and the West let it go. A missed opportunity, indeed.



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A number of sources have proposed a grand bargain for settlement. It would involve Ukrainian neutralization and Russian annexation of the eastern and southern regions, in exchange for which Russia would withdraw (but not from Donbas and Crimea) and provide damages and reparations and security guarantees (as in Budapest, which it broke). The naivete of the proposals is astounding, even if it were to be accepted (including reparations): it pro-

poses that Russia get all it wants and offers Ukraine a return to status quo, amputated, devastated, and having suffered genocide, with renewed broken security guarantees that it will not happen again, to live like good neighbors ever after. The identification of the best deal available, agreeable to only one side, defines why the previous moments discussed were not missed opportunities: the distance between the two sides was unbridgeable, no Zone of Possible Agreement in sight.

To comprehend the situation, one has to leave the formulas of negotiation analysis and return to another framework: that of *Verstehen* of Weber, understanding the cultural situation, including the visceral, emotional, stone-rooted feelings of the respective parties. The equal cake-cuts of concession or the give-to-get exchanges of compensation are off the table, and the creative construction of reframing falls on missile-deafened ears. It takes war to make peace possible and victory to make terms acceptable. Until then, there are no opportunities to miss. The only intermediate scenario that contains a mutually atrociously

hurting stalemate is borne of fatigue. Even then, amputation and annexation can still not be on the table.

But it is not only *Verstehen* of the parties' mindset that exceeds the usual analytical structure-and-process framework of negotiation in this case. It is the landmark revolutionary importance of the event, too (Kissinger 1964). It is not simply that "there is a big country and there is a small [sic] country," as Vice President Kamala Harris says; it is that the norms of the liberal international system of world order have been trashed: respect of territorial sovereignty (whatever the past history); condemnation of genocide; illegitimacy of threats and use of war, unacceptability of nuclear threats and use; and recourse to negotiation and mediation. These are basic principles of international order that make conflict management and resolution and normal diplomacy possible. These norms, of course, have not been perfect – no norms are – but past breaches have been condemned and sanctioned. Only when the status quo well ante is restored can the regular practice of international negotiation return.

For the moment, the agenda is war and the reversal of destruction. Thereafter and concomitantly, the challenge of international negotiation will be the reconstruction of a new order, where abnormal behavior is made less likely – even though it will never be removed. We pray that that will not be a missed opportunity.



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Mikhail Troitskiy

Negotiating Strategic Stability: First Lessons of the Ongoing Crisis

Stability in relations between major nuclear-armed powers has regrettably made its way back to the top of the agenda of world politics – for the first time since the height of the Cold War in the early 1980s. This essay evaluates how and why the definition of “strategic stability” has evolved over the course of three and a half decades of United States-Russian negotiations, and what it means in the current crisis.

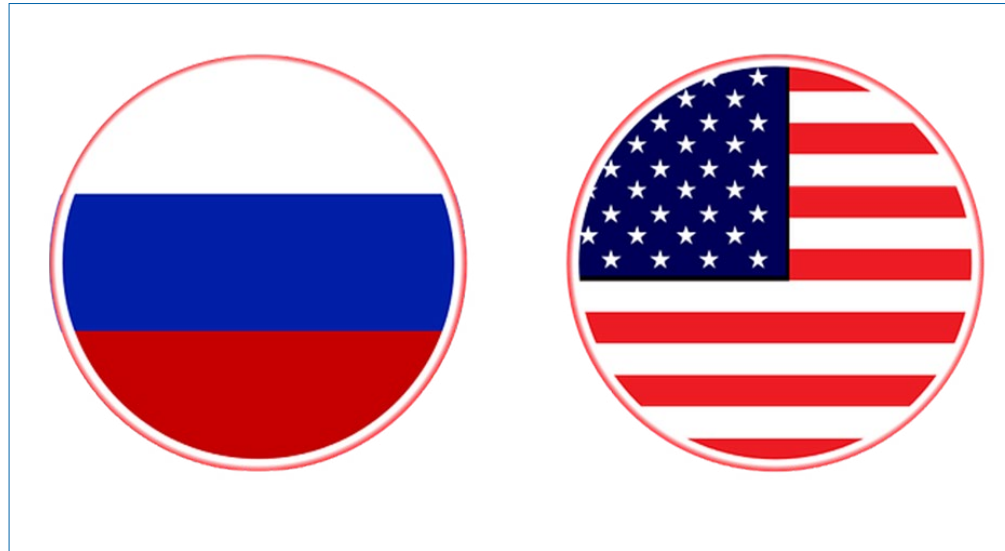
The Origins of Strategic Stability

Moscow and Washington first defined strategic stability in their Joint Statement issued in June 1990 (George Bush Presidential Library and Museum 1990). The original definition was firmly grounded in the logic of mutual assured destruction (MAD), as the purportedly best source of stability. However, the sides unconditionally committed to reducing the likelihood of using nuclear weapons. What followed in US-Russian negotiations over the subsequent three decades was a runaway expansion of the working concept of strategic stability (Troitskiy 2021). The understanding of strategic stability changed from just making sure nuclear weapons are never used in a conflict to an unmanageable concept that looked to marry cybersecurity with regime-change concerns, and new conventional-weapon technology with information warfare. With so many moving parts, verifiable commitment to an increasingly complex concept of strategic stability has become impossible.

For the concept to preserve its original value as a credible signal of the

unacceptability of nuclear use – which was a possibility before the start of Russian-Ukrainian hostilities in February 2022 – Russia and the US had to

conflict in Europe the sides chose to expand the meaning of strategic stability in a runaway manner, trying to add new types of weapons and means of



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revert to the original meaning of strategic stability, given their assumed shared responsibility for global security. That is, at least before February 2022, Moscow and Washington could buttress their position as champions of nuclear moderation and avoidance of a nuclear war by renewing their 1990 pledge to minimize the risk of the first use of nuclear weapons. Having done that, the sides would have been able to spend as much time as they wanted looking for consensual expanded concepts of stability in their bilateral relationship – understood mainly as the lack of incentive for aggressive and/or surprise actions.

While as of June 2022 achieving strategic stability no longer seems to be a relevant goal for Moscow and Washington, the question still stands as to why even before the start of the armed

statecraft to the balance that underlies strategic stability. The answer is two-fold (Troitskiy 2021): First, both Moscow and Washington were looking to hedge against a surprise and hugely impactful use of nonnuclear means of statecraft. Russia complained about custom-made cross-domain technologies of regime change that needed to be deterred as much as the use of nuclear weapons. The US raised concerns over Russia's asymmetric capabilities in the cyber domain, its stockpiles of tactical nuclear weapons, and their potential use on the battlefield in order to up the ante dramatically and force an adversary into submission.

The second reason why Russia and the US diluted the elegant post-Cold War definition of strategic stability – with it focusing simply on averting the use of nuclear weapons – was the tempta-

tion to use such weapons as a political instrument of influence in the new strategic environment. For example, in its 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the US did not rule out their use against proliferators (US Department of Defense 2018). In 2022, the Joe Biden administration, like the Barack Obama one a decade earlier, decided against adopting the “sole purpose” principle that would have effectively prevented the use of such weapons for reasons other than retaliating against or preventing imminent nuclear aggression against the US (Gordon 2022). Washington believed such self-imposed restrictions could embolden adversaries that might consider using nuclear weapons against US allies and partner countries. Eventually, strategic-stability negotiations ground to a halt toward the end of the 2010s, only to resume for a short period in the wake of the June 2021 US-Russian summit in Geneva (The White House 2021).

Russia’s approach to nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War era has appeared ominous. Like the US, Moscow reserves the right to first use in case the country’s survival is at stake. But there seemed to be more in play here: Russian policymakers also believed in nuclear weapons as a means of coercion. Such a position implied resistance to raising the threshold for resorting to nuclear weapons, as the Joint Statement aimed to do in 1990, and reluctance to denounce related brinkmanship as a posture increasing the chances of an outbreak of an actual such conflict.

As a result of three decades of US-Russian post-Cold War strategic-

stability negotiations, the willingness to minimize the risks of confrontation seem to be waning. Despite dramatic cuts in the US and Russian nuclear-weapon stockpiles, both maintain sufficient capacity to destroy the world. In 2022, this paradoxical outcome has been brought under the spotlight during the tragic armed conflict in Ukraine. A core question for nuclear-strategy research in the coming months and years is whether this conflict adds anything to our assessment of the effectiveness of nuclear coercion. The jury is unfortunately still out on that, but several thoughts can already be offered.

Deterrence versus Coercion

Before 2022, the historical record seemed to suggest that nuclear weapons are quite effective in deterrence, but much less so in coercion. To what extent does the evidence from the conflict in Ukraine confirm this trend? The question is being asked with a view to understanding what the endgame in the conflict may look like based on what we know about the purposes of nuclear weapons.

How strong was the deterrent effect of Russia’s nuclear weapons? On the one hand, high risks of nuclear escalation with Russia prevented NATO countries from sending troops directly to fight for Ukraine. Those risks also factored into the decision to refrain for some time from providing Ukraine with some types of weapons – ones the US and allies called “offensive” – such as tanks and military aircraft. Engaging with the Russian military in Ukraine was apparently seen as a move that

could increase the likelihood of nuclear use – should Russia find itself confronted by a nuclear-wielding alliance. At least for some time, Moscow successfully deterred certain forms of interference in the conflict by NATO.

Did Russia’s nuclear arsenal prove useful for coercion? The known challenges to nuclear coercion have been laid out by Todd Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann (2017) in their recent book, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*. The authors argue that the usefulness of nuclear weapons for coercive diplomacy is limited, because such goals may often be achieved by nonnuclear means instead; because it may be difficult to convince the adversary that the coercer’s vital interests are so at stake so that it will not shy away from an actual nuclear attack; and, because declaring readiness to resort to nuclear weapons may result in a massive blowback from other players that consider such declarations reckless and unacceptable.

All of these challenges appear to have played out during the Ukrainian conflict. First, Russia thought that coercion goals that it set vis-à-vis Ukraine may have been achievable using only conventional weapons. Second, despite all the assertive rhetoric on the Russian side, it proved difficult to convince Ukraine that Russia’s vital interests were indeed at stake in the conflict. Indeed, Moscow chose to portray the campaign as an operation limited in scope and intensity, falling short of a full-fledged war. And, finally, hints at the potential for nuclear escalation on the part of Russia during the conflict proved to be particularly cost-

ly. The policy of the US and its European allies evolved between February and June 2022 from limited involvement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict to providing Ukraine with heavy weapons – suggesting, furthermore, that such weapons may be used not just on the battlefield in Ukraine but on Russian soil as well (Mauldin, Colchester, and Norman 2022; Faulkner 2022). The heat from the sanctions against Russia was turned up at an unprecedented pace during the first two months of the conflict. So, if anything, nuclear coercion – even if planned – has not worked so far. The developments in and around the conflict from February through June 2022 aligned well with Sechser and Fuhrmann's propositions.

The Upshot

While the use of nukes for deterrence purposes under critical circumstances is considered legitimate and nuclear coercion is assessed as ineffective, the challenge arises from the blurred lines between coercion and deterrence in the real world. Indeed, there have not been many precedents of a nuclear-weapon state first attempting coercive goals and then moving to minimizing losses. The US used nuclear weapons against Japan in August 1945 for coercive purposes. The real coercive impact of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings has been contested. There is an influential view that it was not the US nuclear attack that ended Japan's resistance (rather, the Soviet entry into the war against Japan), and that Japan was signaling its surrender even before these bombs were dropped (Wilson 2014). More than two decades later,

the Richard Nixon administration considered using nuclear weapons during the Vietnam War. This happened well before US forces were routed from South Vietnam in 1975, so the purpose behind such use would have been coercive. Luckily, no decision has been made to resort to nuclear weapons since 1945.



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Given this ambiguous record, the question stands: What are the risks of use if at some point a nuclear-armed state begins to think it is deterring the adversary, not coercing it? US and Russian doctrines allow for the use of nuclear weapons to deter adversarial actions that pose existential threats. The notion of “existential” may be stretched to include seemingly nonvital threats potentially perceived as triggers of chain reactions that may lead to grave consequences, such as the loss of territory or destruction of a political regime. In such cases, the likelihood of nuclear use by the party forced to shift from coercion to deterrence is

raised – and, most importantly, difficult to assess.

If such a state believes that it is now acting to prevent a chain reaction occurring that may affect some of its vital interests, such as territorial integrity or regime security, then the likelihood of nuclear use becomes higher. What initially started as a means of coercion

ends in a heightened risk of nuclear confrontation as it shifts into the deterrence phase. The upshot for negotiators dealing with a disgruntled nuclear-weapon state is that they need to tread carefully in order not to miss the moment when coercion morphs into perceived deterrence. Escalation at the time of such a shift is a clear possibility in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

As the armed hostilities unfolded, the rhetoric focused on the levels of nuclear alert and the prospects for a (nuclear) “Third World War” visibly escalated. Some observers interpreted it as a sign of Moscow's utter dissatisfaction with its battlefield progress and

anger with massive supplies of military equipment coming to Ukraine from the West.

While the lesson for negotiation practice to be gleaned from the Russia-Ukraine conflict is to look out carefully for shifts in perceptions on the part of nuclear-armed stakeholders, the key lesson for theories of strategic stability and the corresponding concept of “tacit negotiation” is that it is difficult to reliably detect the moment when coercion becomes deterrence – and, indeed, even to distinguish between these two forms of action. First, the lines between coercion and deterrence can be blurred for outside observers. While Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had all the trappings of a coercive measure, some were inclined to present Russia’s actions as deterrence against NATO expansion into post-Soviet Eurasia (Chotiner 2022).

Second, the respective sides may hold different views as to which stage of the conflict they are currently in. While Moscow initially claimed it was deterring Kyiv from an alignment with the West and against Russia, Ukraine clearly held the view that it was deterring Russia from extending its operation and potentially a spillover into NATO territory. At a later stage of the conflict, Russia moved to claim that it was not just coercing Ukraine to

change its behavior, but in fact deterring a proxy campaign by the West against Russia. Because coercion may at a certain point in the conflict unnoticeably morph into deterrence, making the situation a whole different game, the claim that nuclear weapons can be effective for deterrence and not for coercion purposes may need to be adjusted and sharpened to account for ongoing developments.



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The secretariat of PIN will be hosted at the GIGA until August 2022. We wish the PIN Steering Committee the best of success for their upcoming move.



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Paul Meerts

Training Travelogue, Second Decade (2000–2010)

This contribution to *PINPoints* 51 is part of a triptych of the author's negotiation-training experiences in more than three decades from the Fall of the Berlin Wall till the Rise of COVID-19. The first decade was published in *PINPoints* 50 already, the third will be printed in *PINPoints* 52.

Ulaanbaatar, 2000

Ever since I was a boy in high school, I have been fascinated by the Mongols, the Turks, and the Turkic peoples. My early interests were in the Mesopotamians, the Greeks, and the Romans, until I found a book about Genghis Khan, whom I greatly admired because of his strategic and tactical insights. Nowadays, I see him instead as a mass murderer, but that is another topic of conversation. In 1969, I wrote a letter to the government of the Mongolian People's Republic, but never got an answer. Who would guess that the State University of Ulaanbaatar would later grant me an *honoris causa*? The gates to Mongolia first opened when I met Khureid Bayasakh (2016), Professor at and Director of the School of Foreign Service of the National University of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar. We met at a conference of the International Forum on Diplomatic Training (IFDT) in Cairo. I invited him and his colleague to The Hague. They came in 1992. One day we went into town to buy a winter coat for Bayasakh's colleague. When we left the shop, Bayasakh said something to his friend, who started to laugh. I asked what he had said. Bayasakh replied: "I said, now you look like a gentleman, but we both know there is still a Mongol inside."

Later, in 1993, I visited Ulaanbaatar and gave a negotiation seminar for civil servants of the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and university students. It was quite a trip. In Beijing, I got stuck for eight hours at the old airport. There was no transit lounge, and I did not want to sacrifice my Chinese visa, as I wanted to visit Beijing after my return from Mongolia. A customs officer had the solution: I gave him my passport and came back after

minutes to dress up for an official welcome dinner downstairs.

For three days, the Mongolians looked at me without a trace of enthusiasm or criticism on their faces. On the fourth day, it was time for a closing ceremony, which would be a festive lunch in a ger (the Mongolian name for a yurt, a tent). Bayasakh and I left Ulaanbaatar in the morning in a Zill limousine, picking up a Mongolian lady who would, as Bayasakh said, serve



Paul Meerts in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia)
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eight hours to get it back. I then had to find the gate for Mongolia, but as everything was in Chinese this was not an easy job. In the end I found the plane, with the help of a Lufthansa flight attendant, who knew some Chinese and told me that the gate for Ulaanbaatar, which was at the very end of the airport, would close in a few minutes. Bayasakh came to the airport and brought me to the Mongolian government's guesthouse, giving me fifteen

lunch to us in the ger. First, we went to the ruins of a monastery; then we proceeded to the ger. However, the lady never served anything and instead participated in dancing. The band played Mongolian songs and suddenly one of the participants started to weep and all the other course members joined him. It appeared that this was a song about the Mongolian mother. The man who started to weep first had lost his mother the year before. To me this was

amazing: while showing no emotion during the seminar, nobody had any problem with weeping in public. After lunch, going back to Ulaanbaatar, it became clear that our lady had been hired to serve me that night. I declined. The next day Bayasakh and I drove to the airport. Professor Bayasakh suggested that I could buy the Zill and he would see to it that it would be transported by ship through China. Again I declined.

Then, in 1999, the Maastricht School of Management was awarded a three-year European Union project to train the Mongolian civil service. We had a British project leader: Richard Lucking. For me, this meant I had to be in Mongolia every two to three months. In the year 2000, I flew from Berlin with MIAT Mongolian Airlines via Moscow to Ulaanbaatar. It was a quiet morning flight. Sitting in the back of the plane, still buckled in my seatbelt, I felt the plane falling into an air pocket. It seemed it lasted minutes, but it probably only happened in seconds. With an enormous shock, the plane hit a lower airstream. Many passengers, who were out of their seats to go to the toilets or simply to stretch their legs, bumped their heads on the ceiling. The breakfast wagons went up as well and tomato juice and milk dripped from the ceiling. The plane flew on in very calm weather. Nothing came from the cockpit, nor was there any excuse offered on landing in Ulaanbaatar. We were riding the Mongolian way, after all. At the airport, the visa office was still closed and somebody had to call the border police officer, who was still in bed in the city. Moreover, my bag had

apparently been taken out of the plane in Moscow and arrived a few days later.

That week I felt more tired than could be. At the end of the day on Friday, while everybody was collecting their belongings to start the weekend, I suddenly started to shake and sweat. My head fell on my desk and the Mongolian staff panicked. They took me to the hospital of the Russian Embassy, which was the infirmary they normally went to. It would have been better to take me to the modern Korean hospital. Arriving in the hospital, I was taken to the upper floor, for heart diseases, but we had to wait until mechanics came to repair the lift. Once upstairs, the Russian heart specialist started to treat me. Actually, he was not a specialist at all, but a general practitioner. He had been posted from Moscow to this faraway outpost in Mongolia, which was in a way still regarded as part of the Soviet Union, even though the USSR had already been dead for nearly a decade. The Russians gave me the kind of clothing used for prisoners and treated me like that. One week later I was picked up by an American doctor. He flew me to Beijing, where I stayed next to the swimming pool of the Dutch ambassador. Three days later, a nurse arrived from the Netherlands and accompanied me to Amsterdam. After being checked into a Dutch hospital, I learned that I did not have angina pectoris after all. Instead, the plane's sudden fall had caused a body trauma resembling heart failure. Lessons learned:

a correct diagnosis can be life-saving; the same is true in diagnosing the problems

that a negotiation process has to overcome.

Damascus, 2001

At the request of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Syria, I flew to Damascus to teach young Syrian diplomats, believing it would be better for them to learn how to negotiate than to fight. The students were very interested in the seminar, more so than the institute's staff. At the end of the course, I asked the students what they had learned. A young woman raised her hand, saying: "I learned that we Syrians are self-defeating." After this, they did not invite me again until 2011, by when they had forgotten about the incident. Again at the invitation of the Dutch Embassy, I trained Syrian diplomats – mid-career this time. It was a strange feeling to be able to walk in and out of the Syrian MFA without any problem in 2011; in The Hague, our MFA was already looking like a fortress. At the end of the seminar, I rented a taxi and driver and drove around Syria, all the way to Aleppo. The idea had been that I would deliver a speech at the Syrian State University close to Homs, but the insurgency had started and I had to go back to Damascus, for they did not want a foreigner to speak to the students. Many years later, representatives of the moderate Syrian opposition were trained at Clingendael Institute in preparation for talks with the Syrian regime in Geneva. It did not help, as the negotiations failed. Lesson learned: the effects of training can be like a raindrop in the ocean.

Bonn and Berlin, 2002

For a decade I taught young German diplomats at the Diplomaten Schule in Ippendorf, on the outskirts of Bonn. Once I took my eldest son, Edo, with me and met with the Academy's Deputy Director, Michael Schäfer, who later became an advisor to Joschka Fischer, German Minister of Foreign Affairs and, inter alia, Germany's ambassador to China. One day I needed more photocopies, so he said: "Join me in the basement and I will copy the pages." I found this quite astonishing, as the staff of the photocopying department were sitting there smoking cigarettes. "Why don't you ask them to make the copies?" I asked. His answer was: "No, no, it is lunchtime, and I don't want to risk a clash with the trade unions."

In 2002, Schäfer took the young diplomats to Berlin to see the political sites there. He asked me to join and to deliver a seminar in the old building of the Foreign Ministry of the German Democratic Republic. A few years later this building was demolished. He told us that in the main hall, where we did the negotiation training, the West Germans had been blackmailed by the East Germans during the Cold War: "Pay, or the East German people will be hungry." The building had a very interesting structure. It consisted of two parts: to the right the Foreign Office, to the left the East German external secret police. There was only one way to go from the right side to the left side: on the top floor where the ministers resided. Lesson learned:

don't be open to blackmail.

Snezhinsk, 2003

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) both does and does not exist. As the treaty has not been signed and ratified by a quorum of member states, there is only a skeleton staff in Vienna, the most active part being the training department. To gain impetus, this department became very active in training inspectors who should be able to act if countries do – against the treaty's rules – test nuclear weapons underground. One thing that these experts had to do was to negotiate themselves and their instruments into a country that might have infringed on the (not yet existing) treaty. Was it an earthquake or a bomb? One of our negotiation-training sessions on so-called Table Top Exercises was taking place in a sanatorium in the Urals at the invitation of Russian nuclear experts. The sanatorium was close to Snezhinsk, a forbidden city until the downfall of the Soviet Union. We were there with (potential) inspectors from many countries, including Israelis who were in charge of the CTBTO training department, as well as French, British, American, and other colleagues – including an expert from Iran. He had a problem when we were invited to the famous Russian sauna. He decided to join us but to keep on his underwear, which of course drew much attention from the others. Yet he went with us into the steam bath, very courageously. Later on, PIN got involved and this resulted in the PIN book Banning the Bang or the Bomb, with a chapter on "Table Top Exercises" (Melamud 2013). Lesson learned:

whatever your culture, you are human and therefore you can cooperate. If you wish.

London and Brussels, 2004

"Prepare the Brits for their EU Presidency!" With this, my dear friend John Hemery (2006), one of the best course organizers and trainers I ever met, asked me to join him in a series of training sessions on chairmanship and negotiation in London and Brussels and to take my eldest son Edo along. We started at Lancaster House in London. This famous building, where for example the Zimbabwe/Rhodesia issue was



Paul Meerts in Sana'a (Yemen)
© Paul Meerts

settled, looks very posh downstairs, a typical place for diplomatic and political negotiation at the highest level. Taking the elevator to the attic, however, revealed a completely different playing field: the other side of British-

ness, which you find in hotels that have not been refurbished since the 1960s. In short, a mess. Carpets with holes, lights that did not function, chairs that broke when you sat on them. The British civil servants: the same. As it was the middle of summertime, they participated in shorts and sandals. Interestingly, however, when they did their negotiation exercises, they were exceptionally polite to each other, yet in a very filthy way – offending each other while using very nice manners. I learned a lot about British negotiation culture. It struck me in Brussels that the civil servants at the Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom were as Europhile as the Germans or the French. They understood the importance of the EU for the UK, contrary to their politicians in London. Lesson learned:

simulation exercises reveal negotiation behavior.

Vienna, 2005

From 1985, I took part in the Annual Meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Academies and Institutes of International Relations, also known as the aforementioned International Forum on Diplomatic Training (IFDT) – a new name proposed by John Hemery and myself at a Deans and Directors Conference in Brasilia in the early 1990s. We wanted to democratize the meetings a bit, but we got no further than a name change. I would participate in all of the meetings until 2015, in Baku. Interestingly, this also gave me a network of consumers for my negotiation seminars. Diplomatic academies

used retired ambassadors to teach diplomatic negotiation, but they found that training was much more effective than lecturing. Thanks to these colleagues, I could travel the world and learn about different cultures and negotiation styles. As years went by, I worked with many directors of the Austrian Diplomatic Academy – including Ernst Sucharipa. Sucharipa was a very special man. Being a social democrat, he represented Austria at the United Nations in New York, but when a conservative government came to power in Austria he had to be withdrawn to Vienna, where he was appointed director of the Diplomatic Academy. Once, at an anniversary of the Academy, he organized a conference in Vienna Town Hall where he awarded the Academy's diploma to an 85-year-old lady, a former student who now lived in Israel. In 1938, she had been removed from the Academy by the Nazis.

Teaching at the Academy in the week of Sucharipa's death, I was invited to attend his funeral in a village outside Vienna, together with my daughters Iris and Clarissa, who had joined me on this trip. Being director of the Academy was not a full-time job and Sucharipa had been asked to negotiate with United States Jews about the real estate and other commodities they had lost during the Nazi era. While doing this, he, a Catholic, found out that he had a Jewish great-grandmother from Slovakia, when it was part of the Hungarian portion of Austria during the nineteenth century. At his funeral, a Catholic priest blessed his coffin. After him, a rabbi recited Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the deceased. A coming

out at his funeral! All of Austria's political and diplomatic elite were present, and fell absolutely silent. I felt Austria's past boiling from the earth, smelling like a swamp. Across the coffin my eyes met the eyes of a former director of the Academy, who had once told me that his father was a staunch Nazi and anti-Semite, who had supported Adolf Hitler in the Anschluss. Hitler had wanted to reward him for this. He was to be promoted to an important post in the government, but the regime found out that he had a Jewish grandmother. The father of my diplomatic friend could not live with that and had shot himself. Lesson learned:

the shadow of the past will not wither away overnight.

Prague, 2006

During the 1990s, Michael Schäfer, Raymond Saner, and I developed the idea of bringing together young diplomats from EU countries for a yearly program split into several modules. The Germans said: "We have to get the French in as one of the initiators of such a program." Saner warned them: "If you do that, they will kill the idea and later on present it as their own proposal." And so it happened.

However, it did not matter, as the idea became true at the turn of the century in the form of the European Diplomatic Programme, as mentioned earlier. One of the program's elements was a training course in international negotiation to be handled by the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna and my Clingendael Institute. For over a decade, Bob Weibel, a star trainer from Switzerland, and I

worked side by side. We each worked with half of the group, using our own approach, then after one-and-a-half days we switched. One of the training modules was held in Prague. The topic was European security. As I did not have a topical exercise on that subject, I searched for a relevant simulation exercise at Clingendael. One of Clingendael's researchers, an expert in NATO affairs, had one on the shelf. I took it to Prague. While explaining the game on day one, I found out that the exercise was not up to date at all and was bedeviled by many procedural mistakes. The participants already had years of experience in Brussels and heavily criticized the game. During the first lunch break, I left the Czech MFA to get my act together in the fresh winter cold. One way or another I managed to get through that afternoon and the following morning, using different exercises in the next round with the other group of participants. A very nasty experience. Lesson learned:

*do not trust the experts at
face value.*

Oman, 2007

I always loved to go to Muscat. Very hospitable people, my loyal Egyptian interpreter Nabil, and an interested crowd of Omani diplomats and other civil and military officers. Being there twice a year, I got used to the Omani habits and, as a member of the Omani Diplomatic Academy's advisory board, I felt in a comfortable position. In one of my sessions, I used a Saudi-Yemenite simulation exercise. This time, there happened to be a participant who was

not happy with the written introduction to this simulation, which gave some background information – putting the exercise in the context of Islam and its role during the Arab conquest at the time and age of the Prophet and the Caliphate(s). My critic was of the opinion that I had depicted his religion as being aggressive, while to him Islam meant “peace.” He became more and more emotional and shouted at me: “You Christians, you always see Muslims as aggressors.” He then finished with his accusations. All of the Omani in their white robes and turbans looked at me. I said: “You perceive me as a Christian, but my mother is Jewish” (I did not tell him my father was raised a Catholic). The silence was more than could be. I said: “Religion is part of politics, so what is the impact of religion on negotiation?” The Omanis went into an emotional debate and, when it was over, one of them came to me during the break. He said: “Professor, most of us are Shiite, but the man who offended you is a Sunnite. He wanted to show to us that he was ready to defend Islam.”

On another occasion, we had a meeting of the advisory board of the Diplomatic Academy. One of the members said that it was very important to bring the Academy's program up to date. He told me this in the corridors. I fully agreed. However, when the formal session started, he had none of it and declared that the most important lesson the young diplomats should be taught was to be loyal to the Sultan. That evening, I was invited to the residence of the Dutch ambassador. I told him about the strange behavior

of my fellow board member. “Ah,” the ambassador said, “he is ambassador-at-large now, but a few months ago he was the commandant of the Omani air force. He was imprisoned with 350



Paul Meerts and Victor Kremenyuk in Isfahan (Iran)

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others who wanted reforms, but they released him, under the condition that he should behave well. And so he did.” Something like that happened the year after. The Academy's deputy director wanted to modernize the institute, but the director did not. When I arrived to start my lessons, I saw the deputy director in his room and wanted to say “hello.” I was told that I should not do this as the deputy was confined to his room. He was forbidden to speak to anybody, to use the phone, or write anything down. He just had to be present every day. Lesson learned:

*look behind the screens
and be yourself.*

Bruges, 2008

From 2006 to 2016, I had the privilege of teaching twice a week, four times a month, at the College of Europe in Bruges, with very interested students from all over the world – China included. Every year there were more Chinese students and, in 2008, also one who would be extremely involved. He asked several questions in each session. The students of non-Chinese origin started to show irritation as yet another remark, masquerading as a question, slowed down our collective work. One day we dealt with culture and the question: Do different cultures have different negotiation styles? Our Chinese student and his compatriots were so interested in my opinion that they asked me if they could continue after class. I said of course, if they still allowed me to catch my train back to The Hague. The consequence of this was that I walked all the way from the college buildings to the train station with a group of Chinese students around me, debating Chinese negotiation style. It felt something like the fairytale of a boy called Hans who had a swan and everybody who touched it became glued to it. In the end, a string of people followed Hans through town. Lesson learned:

*be careful while telling
people about their own
culture.*

Lillehammer, 2009

Like all other European countries, the Norwegians have an institute dealing with forestry and thereby with timber.

One of the countries not living up to international rules is the Netherlands, because the Dutch import and export timber without adequately controlling where it comes from or whether it comes from sustainable sources. As the Norwegian institute would hold the presidency of the European Forest Institute, they invited me to come to Norway. I was picked up at Oslo airport and taken to Lillehammer, a few hundred kilometers to the north. Why? Because they said they wanted to be away from their colleagues, preventing them from distorting our seminar. At least, this is what they said. We ended up in a beautiful chalet next to a fantastic lake. As it was the middle of winter, we were surrounded by snow. It now became apparent that all ten participants had taken their skis with them and they negotiated a special arrangement with me: to have a late start to our seminar so they could ski before breakfast; to have an extended lunchbreak in order to ski before lunch; and, to have a late dinner, as it would allow them to ski again before dinner. Lesson learned: snow might be more attractive than negotiation, depending on the circumstances.

Taipei, 2010

While teaching negotiation in Taipei, I was taken sightseeing – among other places, to the Memorial Hall of Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Nationalist Party who had fled mainland China with a million soldiers to seek shelter in the old Dutch colony of Formosa (Taiwan). As I wanted to be polite, I admired the enormous statue of the former president. My guide was an-

gry, however, and I asked her why. She said: “This was our oppressor.” Once back at Clingendael Institute, the Taiwanese “ambassador” and the head of the Taiwanese Tourist Office came to me for a debrief. They were both from the ruling nationalist party Kuomintang (KMT) and not from the opposing Democratic People’s Party (DPP). The nationalists wanted to reconquer China, while the democrats were striving for an independent Taiwan. As the ambassador’s Mercedes left Clingendael Park, the head of the tourist office confessed: “I am a member of the KMT, but I vote DPP.” Lesson learned:

be ready for surprises.

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Journal Preview

International Negotiation

A Journal of Theory and Practice

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International Journal of Conflict Management

Guest Editors: Andrew Owsiak, Sinisa Vukovic, Dan Druckman

Introduction

International conflict management research has long engaged the complexity of conflict, including the hostile relationships (or rivalries) involved, the ebb and flow of a (usually militarized) conflict, and the demand for and supply of various conflict managers (e.g., the United Nations) and strategies (e.g., mediation). More recently, however, scholars study this complexity in new and pathbreaking ways. What packages—whether combinations or sequences—of conflict management efforts prove most effective? What role does conflict management play in hybrid conflicts (i.e., cases where the conflict spills from military to non-military domains)? And how can actors manage conflicts with both an interstate and intrastate component, with particular attention to how progress along one dimension (e.g., the interstate level) affects progress along the other (e.g., the intrastate level)?

Notwithstanding the advancements made, the field needs still deeper engagement with the complexities of contemporary international conflict. This special issue therefore builds and expands upon the above questions, offering some answers and exploring novel avenues. Its contributors examine various conceptual and empirical considerations that affect the management of international conflicts (broadly defined). In doing so, each engages with some aspect of conflict complexity, using a broad definition of conflict. The goal is to understand better the conditions under which conflict management “succeeds,” to chart a path forward from any conceptual challenges posed to empirical study, and to ascertain where the field lacks sufficient insight about contemporary conflicts.

List of topic areas

The role of emotions in managing conflicts; Managing the post-conflict environment; Managing the interstate-intrastate nexus; The role of civil society in managing conflicts; Corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs, whether global or regional) as conflict managers; Conflict management and organized crime; Cyber tools in conflict management; Managing the cyber dimension of conflicts; The role of artificial intelligence in managing conflicts; Applying conflict management theories to contemporary conflicts (e.g., Ukraine 2022)

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Key deadlines

Closing date for abstract submission: 01/07/2022

Email for submissions: Andrew Owsiak, aowsiak@uga.edu

Opening date for manuscripts submissions: 01/08/2022

Closing date for manuscripts submission: 31/12/2022

You can find more information on submission at

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