

# The war in Ukraine

Scientists for Peace (online), 28 June 2023

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- The war by Russia is immoral, illegitimate, and illegal
- Terrible consequences for the people in Ukraine (cfr media)
- What is lacking = peace initiative(s) by international community
- Consequently, the war may go on for a long time. In whose interest ?



# War narrative in West = dominant

- The culprit = Putin
- The victim = the Ukrainian people
- Solution:
  - 100% behind Ukraine: humanitarian aid; refugee support; military support (intel; arms delivery;...)
  - Russia has to lose: heavy economic sanctions; leave annexed regions; Ukraine membership of EU and NATO in future
- Who ?
  - Public opinion, media in West: based on emotions, idealism (human rights, democracy)
  - The US, NATO, EU, Timothy Snyder,...: based on Western (esp US) interests (esp US primacy)



# Criticism

1. reductionist, simplistic
2. extremely dangerous because of:
  - Putin's/Russia's motivation (cfr supra)
  - Nuclear weapons of Russia, and its preparedness to use them, especially if Russia is pushed into a corner



# What is lacking is a peace narrative

- The culprit = Russia and the West
- The victim = the people of Ukraine, but also of Russia, Africa, Europe
- The solution: to support Ukraine in order it can defend itself and not lose; a diplomatic initiative leading to a peace agreement that will be a compromise: a neutral Ukraine, the Crimea as part of Russia, Eastern Ukraine ?, Zelensky can stay
- Who ? Henry Kissinger, Noam Chomsky, Jürgen Habermas, John Mearsheimer, Stephen Walt, Jeffrey Sachs, Anatol Lieven, Jolle Demmers, Emmanuel Todd, Tom Sauer, RAND, China, India, Turkey, Global South (based on Real politik/pragmatism, and idealism in the form of peace)



# Criticism

- 'Will not succeed'
- 'The one who is to be blamed, wins'



# How to explain Russia's behavior ?



# Three possible explanations

1. Russia wants more power and is expansionist
2. Domestic political reasons: the Kremlin is afraid of democracy
3. Russia wants a buffer state for its security



# 1. Expansionist Russia (*Radislaw Sikorski*)

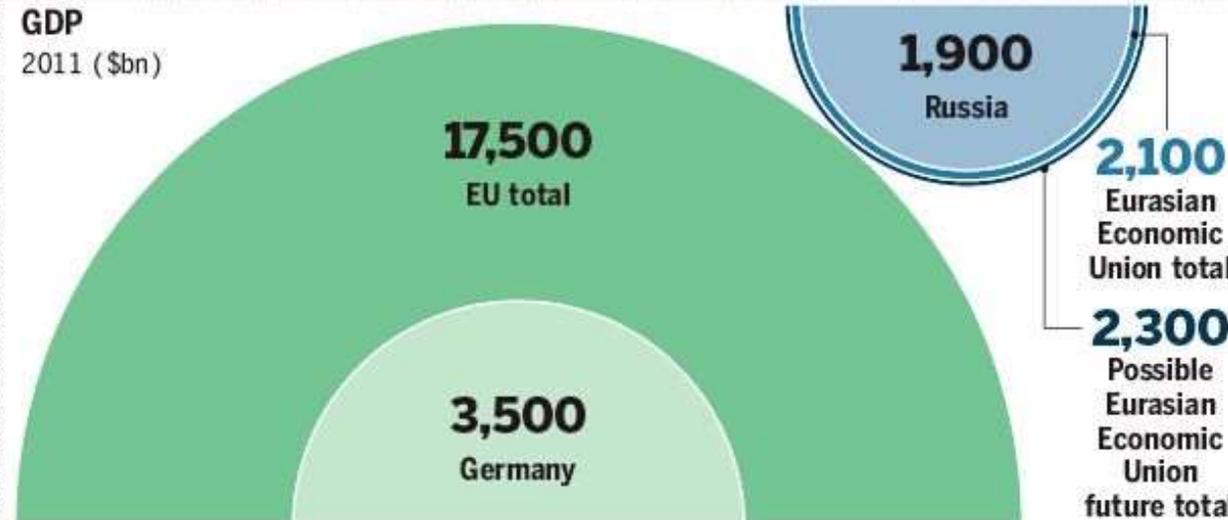
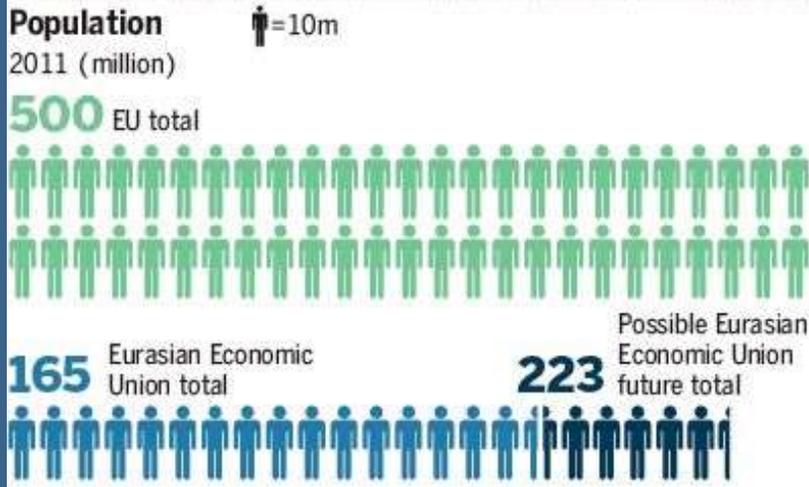
- A big state that annexes parts of a smaller state (like in ancient times)
  - Imperialism (Hitler)
  - Cultural-historical explanations (tsarist empire, Russkiy Mir,...)
- Prediction: also Baltic States



# Criticism

- Be careful with historical analogies: Putin is not Hitler
- No Russian expansionism in period 1989-2022, except the Crimea
- Not enough Russian troops (190 K) to occupy Ukraine
- Not enough (economic and military) power to be able to attack, annex, and occupy other states





Source: IMF forecasts



# Defense expenditures

Europe:

350 bn \$

US:

850 bn \$

Totaal: 1,200 bn  
\$

Russia:

85 bn \$



## 2. Fear of democratic revolution *(Michael McFaul)*

- Colour revolution in Georgia (2003)
- Colour revolution in Ukraine (2004)
- Colour revolution in Kyrghizia (2005)

Organised, financed by the West ?



# 3. Security constellations amongst great powers

- World war
- Interstate war
- **Balance of power**
- **Collective security**
- Security community
- Sustainable peace



### 3. Security constellations amongst great powers

- World war: --
- Interstate war: -
- **Balance of power: +/-**
- **Collective security: +**
- Security community: ++
- Sustainable peace: +++



# Balance of power

- Power of states = central for survival (and power fluctuates on a permanent basis); it determines the hierarchy amongst great powers
- (Temporary and unstable) balance(s) of power, leading to miscalculations and war
- Arms races
- Alliances (= collective defense organizations)
- Spheres of influences and buffer states (cfr Monroe Doctrine; Vietnam; Cuba)



# Collective security

- Cooperation amongst great powers, also in the field of security, despite power inequalities
- Collective security organizations (UN, OSCE)
- No place for alliances (NATO) or spheres of influences and buffer states
- Limited arms acquisitions
- Stable due to rules and therefore a safety net, and less chances for misperceptions, miscommunication and miscalculations



# Turning points in history

- After major/world war
- Opportunity to move to a 'better' security constellation (e.g. from war to collective security)
- In the form of a peace treaty that may include the establishment of a (new) collective security organization



# Four key moments in last 200 years

- Napoleonic wars and the Congress of Vienna (1815)
- WW I and the Treaty of Versailles (1919)
- WW II and the creation of the UN (1945)
- End of Cold War (1989)



# Four key moments in last 200 years

- Napoleonic wars and the Congress of Vienna (1815): +
- WW I and the Treaty of Versailles (1919): -
- WW II and the creation of the UN (1945): +
- End of Cold War (1989): ?



# Congres of Vienna (1815)

- Establishment of a “Concert Européen” between Prussia, Russia, Austria, UK and France: a collective security system against expansionist states (and revolutions)
- That included France (the loser) (= inclusion)
- Result: decades of peace (apart from colonialism)



# Treaty of Versailles (1919)

- Establishment of the League of Nations (first global collective security organization)(*lessons learned, W.Wilson*), but institutionally weak
- Great powers dropped out
- Germany (= loser of WW I) was excluded; war reparations; 'Das Diktat'
- Result: balance of power game, and even expansionism; instability leading to WW II



# Establishment of UN (1945)

22

- First successful global collective security organization
- Thanks to special competences of great powers (permanent membership and veto in UN SC)(*lessons learned*)
- Cold War starts (1948): balance of power (incl. alliances) that paralyses the working of the UN
- Germany and Japan (= losers of WW II) included in West and in UN
- Result: stability



How did the international  
community act in 1989/1991  
?



## Two possible scenarios

- 1) Integrate Russia in a new regional collective security organization, that would yield stability and peace
- 2) Exclude Russia: *de facto* balance of power game incl. spheres of influences, that would yield instability and war



No other organization can  
'replace NATO as the  
guarantor of Western security  
and stability',

*President Bush (Sr), 1990*



# Was Russia interested in joining NATO ?

- Gorbachev (1990)
- Yeltsin (1993)
- Putin (2001)



# What went wrong with Russia and the West ?



# What went wrong ?

- First frictions: Balkans ('91-'95)
- Biggest problem: NATO expansion, including missile defense
- Unilateral military interventions by the West without UN SC resolution: Kosovo ('99) and Iraq ('03)



# NATO's eastward expansion

**1990**



**2009**



# In addition, Western promised NOT to expand NATO

- Promises made in the framework of the German reunification talks (Febr 1990)
- Be it oral promises



'it is for NATO to declare unequivocally: irrespective of whatever happens within the Warsaw Pact, there will be no expansion of NATO's territory to the East, that is, closer to the borders of the Soviet Union. Such security guarantees are important for the Soviet Union',

*Hans-Dietrich Genscher (West German Minister of Foreign Affairs, speech in Tützing, 2 February 1990)*



'After hearing these repeated assurances, Gorbachev gave West Germany what Kohl later called 'the green light' to begin creating an economic and monetary union between East and West Germany – the first step of reunification',

*Mary Elise Sarotte, in:  
Foreign Affairs, 2014*



## A lot of critics of NATO expansion

- US Secr of State W.Christopher, SOD Les Aspin and Perry (Clinton administration)
- Former diplomats: George Kennan, Paul Nitze
- Former generals: John Galvin
- Academics:
  - Realists: Michael Mandelbaum, Karl-Heinz Kamp,...
  - Liberalists: Charles Kupchan,...



'We won the Cold War, but we're losing the peace after the Cold War. There is no doubt in my mind about it. We do not think about the Russians enough, about whom they are and what they're doing. We don't think much about the way they think of us ... We should consider folding NATO in a bigger organization ... We need a whole new organization that brings the Russians on board',



*Gen. (ret.) Galvin (1995)*

# Timing NATO expansion

- Decision by President Clinton in 1994
- Formal decision by NATO in 1997 (incl NATO-Russian Founding Act)
- First round of NATO expansion in 1999:  
Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic
- Decision second round in 2002 (incl NATO-Russia Council)
- Second round (rest of E Europe, incl Baltic States): 2004



## The betrayal continues...

- After 9/11, Putin is first leader calling Bush
- Bush acts unilaterally:
  - War in Afghanistan (Oct-Nov 2001)
  - Withdrawing from ABM Treaty (Dec 2001)
  - Axis of evil speech (Jan 2002)
  - War against Iraq (2003)
- Russia also feels betrayed by EU



# Russia felt betrayed

'Of particular annoyance to Russia's political class were systematic deceits and hypocrisy, broken promises, and declarations that the very idea of the existence of spheres of control and influence in world politics was outdated and no longer corresponded to modern realities and concepts. The West never missed a chance to expand its own ostensibly non-existent sphere of influence',

*Sergei Karaganov (2014)*



'We were quite grateful for Putin's support after 9/11, but we didn't show it very much. I used to spend a great deal of time trying to persuade people that we needed *to give as well as take* . . . I think the Russians felt throughout that [on NATO issues] they were being fobbed off. And they were.'

*Sir Francis Richards, head of GCHQ (= British National Security Agency)*



# Change of Russian attitude (2003)

- Putin does not believe anymore in cooperation/collective security
- Distrust vis-à-vis the West grows, also as a result of the colour revolutions
- Falls back on balance of power thinking (including spheres of influences and buffer states)
- Booming economy helps



# Russia behaves more assertively in 2007

- Putin's speech at the Munich security conference in Febr 2007
- Russian cyberattack against Estonia (April 2007)



# NATO Summit in Bucharest (April 2008)





# Russian perception of Ukraine

- Large buffer state for Russia against attacks by the West (Napoleon, Hitler)
- Mixed marriages; Russian language in East
- Trade
- Granary of USSR
- Production of missiles of USSR
- Port of Sebastopol

Concl: Russia regards Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence, as a buffer state



'Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of all red lines for the Russian elite (not just Putin)'... 'Russia will react'.

*William Burns, US Ambassador in Moscow, 2008*



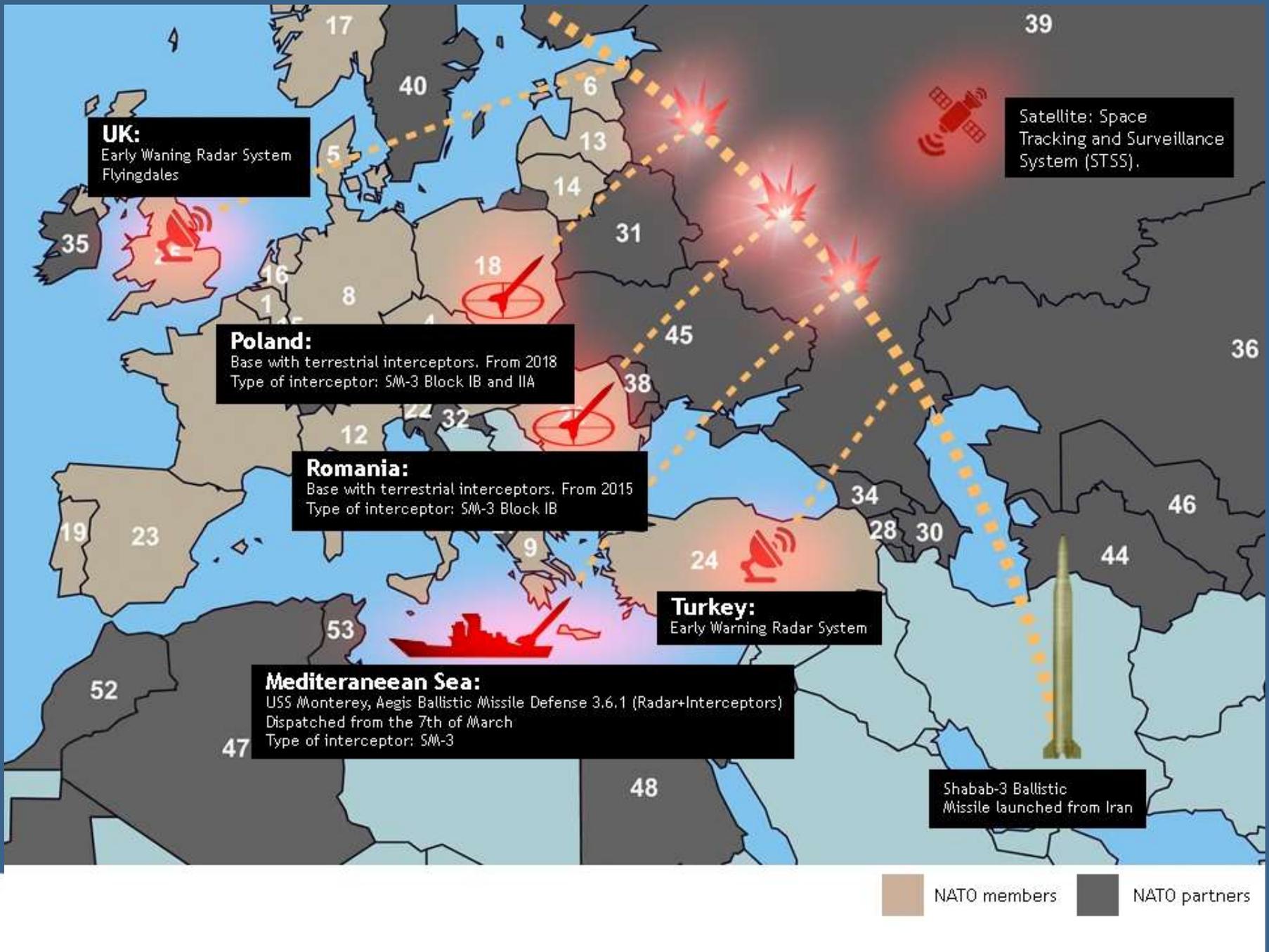
Putin warns Bush, Jr during the summit that if Georgia and Ukraine are admitted to NATO, that Russia could separate the Crimea and the Eastern part of Ukraine



# The West did not take Putin's warnings into account:

- 3<sup>e</sup> gulf of NATO expansion:
  - Croatia and Albania (fast)
  - Georgia and Ukraine (“will become member”)
- US missile shield in Europe “against Iran”





# Russia provokes Georgia into war (August 2008)



# Maidan and the Crimea crisis (2013-2014)





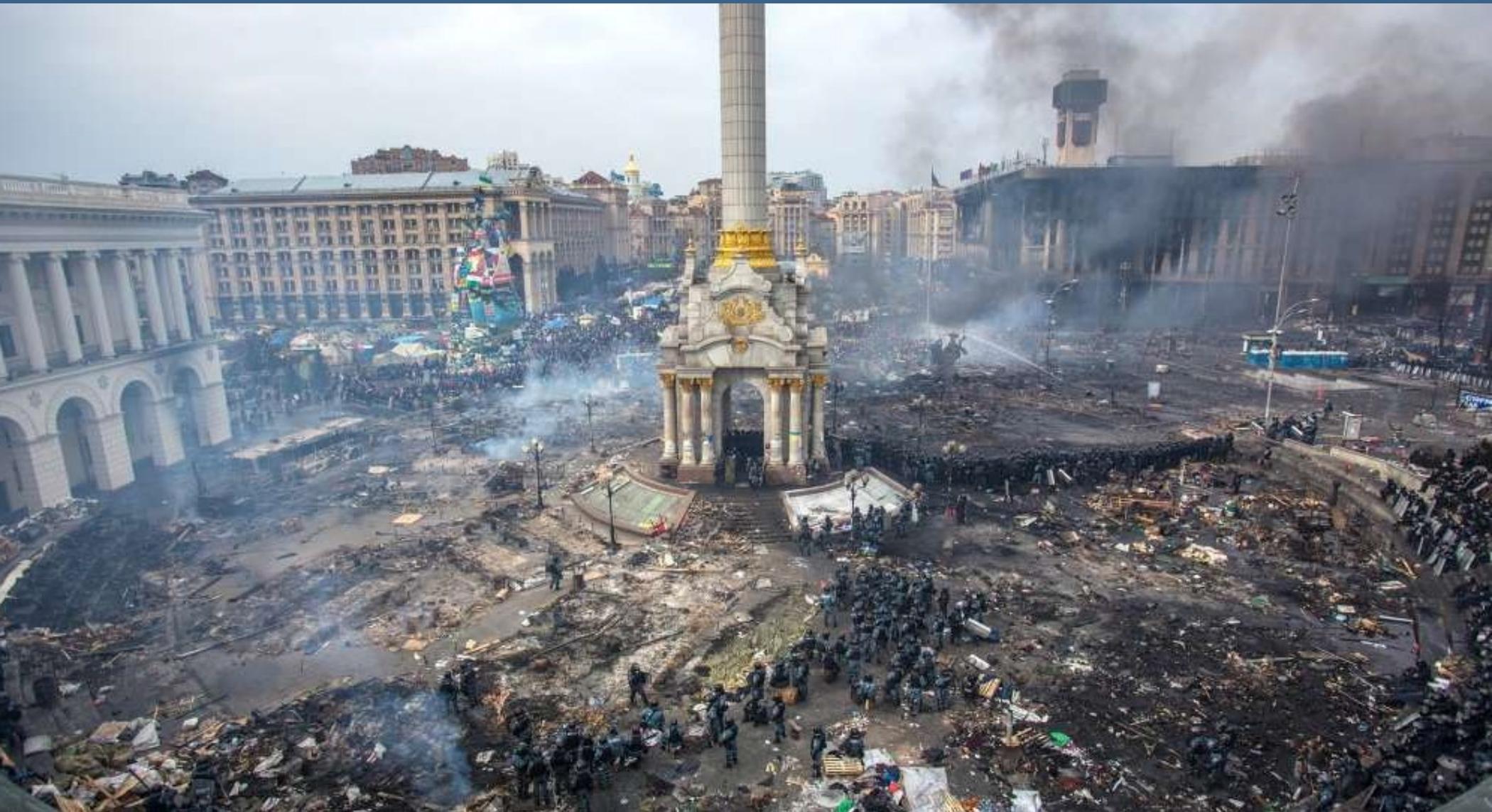
- Viktor Yanukovich in power since 2010
- Trade and Association agreement negotiations EU-Ukraine in 2013 (incl. security clauses), not compatible with ECU/EEU according to EU
- Yanukovich changes his mind: chooses Russia and ECU/EEU (and not EU) in November 2013
- Maidan protests



# Western politicians support protest



# Maidan





# Interim conclusion



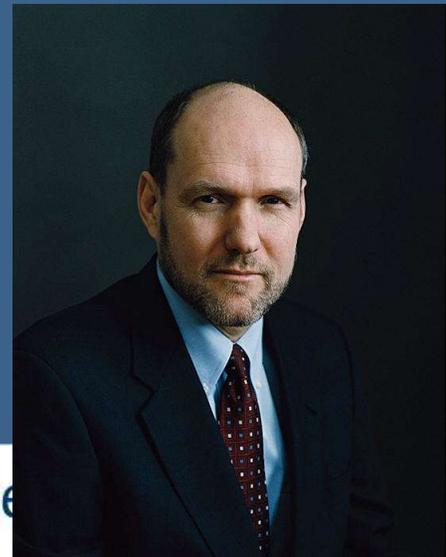
'The Ukraine crisis did not begin with a bold Russian move or even a series of illegitimate Russian demands; it began when the United States and European Union tried to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and into the West's sphere of influence ...Russia is not an ambitious rising power ... it is an aging, depopulating, and declining great power',

*Prof Stephen Walt (Harvard University)(2015)*



'The failure of US diplomats to anticipate Putin's heavy-handed response [in Ukraine] was an act of remarkable diplomatic incompetence',

*Prof Stephen Walt (Harvard University, 2015)*



'I think that we have underestimated the humiliation. It is about perceptions. They matter. This is no legitimation of Putins actions. But I do say: we could have acted more intelligently with respect to the Russians'

*Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, NATO SG  
2004-2009 (in Volkskrant, 2015)*



'Russia never said it wanted a sphere of influence in Ukraine! Had they said so, we would have approached the issue differently',

*EU official*



Crimea crisis is symptomatic: part of a re-active policy by Putin

Putin likes to show us a mirror (by imitating the West): Ivan Krastef en Stephen Holmes, *The Light That Failed*, 2019



<b>West</b>	<b>Russia</b>
Supports secession of Kosovo from Serbia	Supports secession of the Crimea from Ukraine
Supports colour revolutions in neighboring states of Russia	Supports extreme-left and extreme-right political parties in Western Europe
Lies about NATO expansion	Lies about Ukraine
Happy after implosion USSR Intervenes in Iraq	Happy after Brexit Intervenes in Syria
Supports Ukraine	Supports Venezuela

## Ukraine becomes more and more Western

- Under Obama (2009-2016): Comprehensive Assistance Package to Ukraine (July 2016)
- Under Trump (2017-2020): also export of deadly weapons
- Only Ukrainian language (since 2019)
- Under Trump and Zelensky (2019-...): NATO's Enhanced Opportunity Partner Status (June 2020)
- Ukraine attacks with Turkish drones (October 2021)
- US-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership in November 2021



# Triggers for the war (24 February 2022) 63

- Ukraine became more and more under Western influence, also militarily
- Opportunity: weak West:
  - Weak US:
    - Falling power with focus on China instead of Russia/Europe
    - Weak President Biden: his health, domestic problems, withdrawal from Afghanistan,...
  - Divided EU + Merkel gone, high gas prices



# Miscalculation by Putin

- expected to be received as heroes in Ukraine
- expected that Zelensky government would fall immediately
- expected that his troops would win easily
- did not expect a united Western reaction



# Five phases in the war (2022)

- First phase (Febr-May): not going well for Russia
- Second phase (May-Aug): Rusland occupying more territory
- Third phase (Sept): succesful counteroffensive by Ukraine in North and later on South, that led to partly mobilisation by Russia, referenda and annexation, and (new) nuclear threats
- Trench war (Winter 2022/2023)
- New offensive by Ukraine (May 2023)

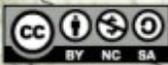
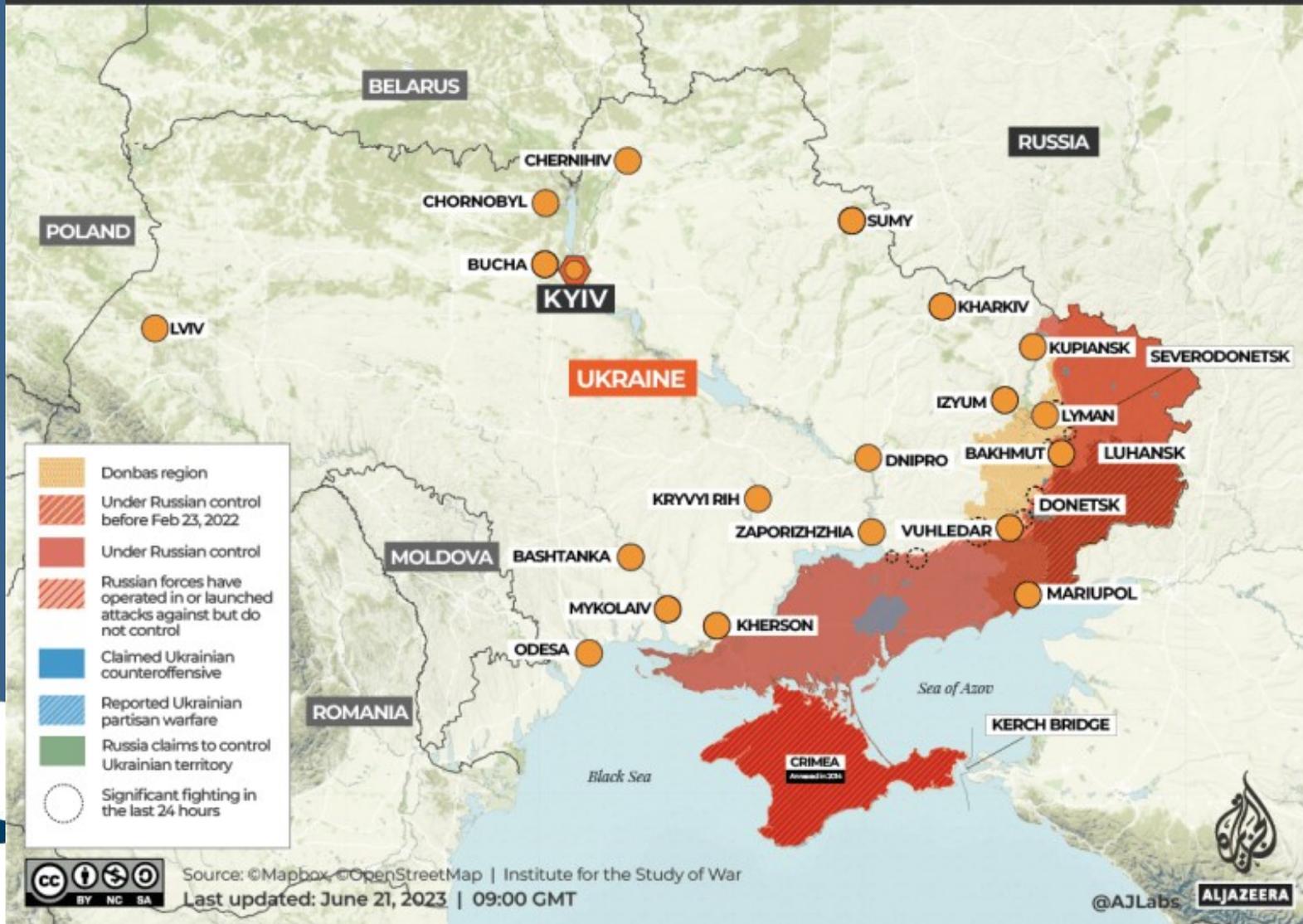


# RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

## Who controls what in Ukraine?

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Ukrainian troops are destroying Russian forces in two main areas of the conflict, in the east and south, while Moscow launched a major drone assault on Kyiv and other cities.

Day 483 - June 21 | 09:00 GMT



Source: ©Mapbox, ©OpenStreetMap | Institute for the Study of War  
Last updated: June 21, 2023 | 09:00 GMT

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# Future ?



## Worst-case scenario

- Too many (heavy) weapons by US to Ukraine (to weaken Russia ?)
- Russia pushed into a corner
- NATO becomes involved in the war
- Nuclear war



# Ideally

1. Both parties understand that they have more to win with diplomacy than by war  
*Spoilers: US, defense industry,...*
2. Cease-fire (to be controlled by UN or OSCE)
3. Diplomacy leading to a peace agreement. Who mediates ?
4. Gradual lifting of the sanctions, and normalization



# Peace agreement

- Sovereign and democratic Ukraine (but smaller)
- Neutral Ukraine; no membership of NATO, nor of Russian alliance; no foreign troops; security guarantees from E and W
- Trade with E and W; EU membership if all criteria are fulfilled
- Territorium: Crimea 'de facto' of Russia; E-Ukr ideally part of Ukraine, but with autonomy (cfr Minsk); international control
- Plan for reconstruction Ukraine and gradual suspension of economic sanctions against Russia
- Idea of a stable Euro-Atl collective security order in term



## Broader recommendations

1. Peace narrative should prevail, also in media; stop the war asap;
2. European interests, incl. another security architecture in term (incl Russia)
3. Let's do it better with China in the future than with Russia in the past



# Questions ?

