Russia’s invasion of its western neighbor Ukraine on February 24th was perhaps the most telegraphed invasion in all military history, given Russia’s multi-year warnings about Ukraine’s anti-Russian policies and Russia’s slow, multi-month military buildup on the eastern border. The Biden Regime in recent months claimed it was imposing economic sanctions on Russia to deter an invasion; if true, the policy failed utterly (like all other Biden policies). Now the Biden Regime and its innumerable, allied war mongers in the media breathlessly contemplate and discuss an all-out Western war with Russia. They seem to want WWIII. How convenient it is for these wreckers to pivot from the carnage they left in the wake of their Covid lockdowns, their two-year “public health” war on the American economy and psyche.

Despite Russia’s much-expected invasion—following upon its 2014 annexation of Crimea (in Ukraine’s south)—the corrupt, inept, anti-Russian Ukrainian leadership failed utterly in exercising the main duty of any legitimate sovereign: to provide a national defense. Ukraine’s alleged “leader,” the defenseless and feckless president Zelensky, is an ex-comedian and populist, a 44-year-old man-child who took office devoid of political-militarily experience. Zelensky was elected in April 2019 with a mere 30% of first-round votes. 70% of voters wanted no part of him. Being ridiculous, irresponsible, and now disreputable, naturally Zelensky is now widely hailed as a folk hero. Today’s alleged “statesmen” are either clowns or sociopaths. Zelensky now plays the victim, as his people suffer (due to him); Ukrainians are suddenly saintly, while Putin and the Russians are deviously devilish.

Ukrainians were foolish to elect Zelensky in 2019. He had no political experience or seriousness; he was, literally, a comedian who played the president on TV; through his production company he became a millionaire. He campaigned as an anti-Russian, anti-corruption populist. What could possibly go wrong? Zelensky then proceeded to oppress millions of pro-Russians in two republics in eastern Ukraine. In a BBC summary of the 2019 election (see also Appendix A), Zelensky’s defeated opponent, Mr. Poroshenko, “told voters that Mr. Zelensky was too inexperienced to stand up to Russia effectively.” The BBC added:

With no previous political experience, Zelensky’s campaign focused on his differences with other candidates rather than on any concrete policy ideas. . . Throughout the election campaign, Zelensky avoided serious interviews and discussions about policy, preferring instead to post light-hearted videos to social media. . . The pressure will now be on Zelensky to demonstrate that he knows what he is doing. . . Mr. Poroshenko, who has been in power since 2014,
said the result of the election “leaves us with uncertainty [and] unpredictability.” In a tweet, he said “a new inexperienced Ukrainian president . . . could be quickly returned to Russia’s orbit of influence.” Other Zelensky critics “are skeptical about his credentials, many expressing concern about his close links to billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, and they doubt that he will be able to take on the country’s influential oligarchs and stand up to Russian President Vladimir Putin.1

As predicted by his election foe, incumbent president Poroshenko, Zelensky’s subsequent inexperience, weakness and Russo-phobia certainly did “quickly return (Ukraine) to Russia’s orbit of influence.” The comedian-populist is a joke, after all—and now all “his people” suffer for it. Is Putin having the last laugh?

Zelensky now begs the U.S., NATO members, and the EU to bail him out, to send him money, aid, food, armaments, tanks, guns, jets, medicine, and anything else which he (and his corrupt, inept predecessors) failed to provide over the past decade. In short, he wants non-Ukrainians to sacrifice their economy, their liberty, their security, and themselves to fight Russia’s military.

Zelensky also has forbidden every Ukrainian male aged 18-60 to leave the country; he is conscripting them, forcing amateurs to fight, foisting on them sophisticated weaponry which few know how to use, many of which will be wielded, soon enough, by brutal Russian soldiers (just as the U.S. armed the Taliban in Afghanistan). Conscription plus the exit of 1.5 million Ukrainian women and children (so far) means Zelensky’s ineptitude is tearing apart hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian families. He is ensuring a proliferation of hundreds of thousands of displaced out-of-country widows and orphans. This is what happens when naïve voters play with politics and elect feckless populists who taunt dangerous neighbors.

Today’s apologists for Zelensky insist that Ukraine is more “democratic” than Russia, that the latter is “autocratic.” It’s a contrived distinction, a mere surmise. Both nations have had presidential elections in recent decades, including parliamentary elections. Putin was elected in 2000 with 53% of the vote, re-elected in 2004 with 72% of the vote, elected again in 2012 with 64% of the vote and yet again in 2018 with 77% of the vote— an average vote share of two-thirds.

There is no evidence that these elections fraudulent, unfair, unfree, or uncompetitive. In each case Putin faced rivals (and rival parties), some of them multiple times. In 2000 four of his rivals got 42% of the vote; in 2018 the second largest vote count went to a Communist Party candidate (do Russians want autocracy?).

1 “Ukraine Election: Comedian Wins Presidency by Landslide,” BBC, April 22, 2019. See also APPENDIX A, p. 6
The third most votes went to a Liberal Democrat Party candidate. Russia has a working Parliament with diverse views and regular elections.

In truth, Putin is no autocrat—and Russia is no autocracy. If autocracy truly reigned in Russia, it would have no periodic elections, opposing parties, or independent Parliament. Liberty lovers may rightly despise Russia’s electoral options or election results, but most Russians are free to speak, run for office, and vote. That’s all “democracy” ever promises, really—mere majority rule, even if by an illiberal majority eager to be coddled, disciplined, and ruled paternalistically.

Ukraine has had seven presidential elections since achieving its independence in 1990, but if majoritarianism is democracy’s essence, as most agree, the nation has become less democratic in recent decades. Like Russia, Ukraine has a multi-party parliament system with many candidates on the ballot, so it’s rare that any one of them gets more than 50% of first-round votes. Second-round run-offs are necessary.

Putin gets more than 50% of the vote, so no second rounds have been needed, but Ukrainian presidents rarely achieve this. In 1991 Kravchuk won with 62% of the first-round votes, but in 1994 won re-election with only 38%. Kuchma won in 1999 with 36% of first-round votes while Yushchenko won in 2010 with 40%, and Yanukovych won in 2010 with 35%. Petro Poroshenko got 55% of the vote in 2014 (no second round needed), but in 2019 Zelensky won the presidency in the second round after getting only 30% of the first-round vote. 70% of voters didn’t want him. His party had no ideology or democratic principle in its name but only a populist slogan, “Servant of the People”—the name of his TV show. How well is he serving them now?

Zelensky’s “democratic” regime in Ukraine has sought to convict of “treason” his main political opponent in the 2019 election—former president Poroshenko (the only Ukrainian president since 1991 to receive more than half of first-round votes). Now 57, Poroshenko was Ukraine’s president from 2014 to 2019, upon winning 55% of the first-round vote. Before that he was a long-time Ukrainian businessman, then became Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009-10) and Minister of Trade and Economic Development (2012); for five years he also headed Ukraine’s National Bank.

Russia’s four presidential elections results since 2000 (all favoring Putin) have been far more majoritarian (democratic) than Ukraine’s. Russia isn’t per se more “autocratic” merely because it keeps re-electing a strong man with vote proportions that routinely exceed 50%, any more than Ukraine is more “democratic” because it rarely re-elects presidents at more than 50%. It’s only minorities of voters in Ukraine who get what they want.

Zelensky is a failure, a loser, and a now a global moocher who has only pretended to rule or defend Ukraine, while exposing his citizens to harm. Naturally, then, he’s beloved today by the world’s innumerable “humanitarians.” In America, Republicans and Democrats alike are now happily rediscovering bipartisanship, as they push jointly, eagerly, and aggressively for the U.S. to get into yet another quagmire war it can’t and won’t win. Politicians and media outlets of every stripe now praise and lionize Zelensky, almost as much as they previously disdained and demonized populist U.S. president Donald Trump (2017-21). Like Zelensky, Trump was a politically inexperienced media star, but unlike Zelensky he had sufficient knowledge, skill, and realism about the world (including towards Russia) to succeed in foreign policy.

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Putin rightly finds Ukraine to be a danger because it accepts NATO aid and rule (even though it’s not a member of NATO) and because NATO, a *military* alliance formed in 1949 by a dozen nations (led by the U.S.), as the Western side of the “Cold War” (1945-1991), has been expanding eastward, toward Russia, for most of the past two decades (see Figure one). NATO membership is now 30 nations—and Ukraine has wanted to be the latest. It should be obvious that there has been no need for NATO since the Cold War (and the Soviet-led “Warsaw Pact”) ended 32 years ago. Its only purpose is to render 30 allegedly “sovereign” nations dependent for its security on the Pentagon and maintain a threatening posture toward against Russia. President Trump learned soon enough during his presidency that few of the non-U.S. NATO members were willing to carry their own weight; they act recklessly, then look for U.S. military bailouts. WWI and WWII weren’t enough, apparently, for Europe’s wimps and brutes; they also seem to want WWII.

Russia has been more than patient (and quite naive) about NATO and U.S. intentions over the last three decades. In recent years, we’ve all seen American Democrats demonize Putin and Russia, accuse them of invading U.S. elections and policymaking, installing Trump, calling him a Putin puppet. Russia’s military leaders are not blind to this charade, these veiled threats.

Putin also knows that no such American harangues are directed at China, so he deftly brings China into his alliance against Ukraine and NATO. What will the war-mongering Democrats say now? That Putin remains guilty and a threat, while Xi Jinping remains innocent and innocuous? The irresponsible, anti-science Democrats have not even been willing to hold Xi, China, and U.S. NIAID Director Fauci accountable for funding the ghoulish Wuhan lab experiments, which led to the release of Covid, and which, so far, has killed six million people globally, including nearly one million of them Americans.

Putin and Russian military leaders also know—as most Americans don’t (and Republicans rarely recount)—that every major war involving the U.S. has been invited or initiated by Democrats. Democrat President James Madison weakened the U.S., provoked war with Britain in 1812-14, and left the White House to burn. Democrat President James Polk started the Mexican/American War (1846-48) after he annexed Texas in 1845. Pro-slave, pro-south Democrats started the American Civil War in 1861-65 (675,000 died; 2.1% of the population, equivalent to 7 million today, or 80% of the current the population of New York City). Roughly 116,000 American were killed and 200,000 wounded when Democrat President Woodrow Wilson (together with a 55-45% Democrat majority in Congress) involved the U.S. in the last two years of WWI (1917-18).

Democrat President Franklin Roosevelt knew in advance of Japan’s pending attack on Pearl Harbor (1941) but

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**“America Descending, Russia Ascending”**

*Putin is More Populist Than Socialist*

A glimpse of the real promise and prowess of Russia and her economy has been possible only after 1991, when socialism was finally abandoned, but mostly since 2000, when the alleged “despot” Putin first became Russia’s president. He’s been in control continuously since then, including during the contrived, 5-year interregnum of his protégé, Medveded (Figure One, page 1). Whereas Western intellectuals in the 20th century denied or excused the evils of Lenin, Stalin, Khushchev, and Brezhnev, they now claim Putin is similar. Meanwhile American Democrats, seeking to excuse humiliating election losses, portray him as a master-global puppeteer. It’s all nonsense.

Putin doesn’t care a whit about the complexion of U.S. political leadership; he sees America in long-term decline regardless of who leads it, and not because he’s a Marxist who can’t forecast well but because he’s a realist who can acknowledge plain facts. He wants to be seen historically as the man who launched a revival of the Russian (not Soviet) Empire. To be sure, he’s more a populist than a prince; he’s certainly no Peter the Great. But he’s also no socialist—and no despot. Putin’s been responsible for much of Russia economic-financial revival since 2000 and seems likely to continue in that capacity (and duly elected) for at least another decade. He would have spoken plain truth in that 2005 speech had he said, instead, that “the breakup of the Russian Empire in 1917 was the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th Century.” But that’s not a popular view today; socialism remains popular. Yet Putin – ex-KGB chief – seems to know better.

**“Russia’s Economic-Financial Performance Since the Demise of the U.S.S.R.,” The Capitalist Advisor, IFI, December 27, 2017.**
left the US exposed, then got the U.S. involved in WWII (ending in 1945), which killed 420,000 Americans and wounded 671,000 others. Democrat presidents also got the U.S. into the Korean War (Truman) and Viet Nam War (JFK, LBJ). Exceptions include the Bush presidents; Bush I got the US into the Gulf War, while Bush II exposed the U.S. to the horrific Islamic assaults of 9/11. For eight years (2009-17) Democrat President Obama kept the US military in Afghanistan, in a war that was lost in disgrace to the Taliban under Democrat President Biden in August 2021.

In 1991 NATO leaders were asked by Russia to disband the alliance, since the U.S.S.R. had disbanded, but NATO refused; as a second-best case, Russia asked that NATO at least not expand, and certainly not expand eastward toward Russia’s western border (as far as, say . . . Ukraine). NATO in 1991 pledged that it wouldn’t expand eastward. But it did so, repeatedly—for decades. NATO lied. It recruited, accepted, and funded more than a dozen new member nations—many formerly part of the Warsaw Pact.

The military-industrial complex (MIC), of which NATO is a part, won the day yet again. Members of the MIC believe strongly in munitions—in war—war everywhere and always—preferably costly, interminable wars—wars the U.S. can’t or won’t win (or quickly, cheaply).

As discussed, Ukraine lately has been both anti-Russian and pro-NATO. We know the U.S.-backed military alliance wasn’t dissolved in 1991, that it thereafter violated its pledges by repeatedly expanding toward Russia.

The U.S. won the Cold War but thereafter refused to deal with the vanquished in a non-threatening way. Disgracefully, the U.S. and NATO refused to win gracefully. Russia was a peaceful trading partner with the U.S. and the West for nearly two decades (1990-2008); thereafter, Barack Obama, Hilary Clinton and their Democrat allies launched anti-Russia tirades.

Imagine if, after the end of the Cold War in 1991, NATO disbanded but Russia insisted on keeping and ruling the Warsaw Pact, then Russia promised not to expand the Pact westward but for decades did so anyway, expanding westward to the Atlantic and the U.K., adding a dozen members. Who wouldn’t see all that as nefarious, as a provocation? Which U.S. military leaders would counsel passivity and appeasement?
Putin, knowing Russia would face sanctions, ostracism, and some military pushback over its invasion of Ukraine, struck a deal with China. It was announced and described openly at a joint meeting at Beijing on February 4th.

The mutual statement of Putin and Xi included this: “The new interstate relations between Russia and China are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era. Friendship between the two States has no limits, there are no ‘forbidden’ areas of cooperation.” “Russia and China stand against attempts by external forces to undermine security and stability in their common adjacent regions, intend to counter interference by outside forces in the internal affairs of sovereign countries under any pretext, oppose color revolutions, and will increase cooperation in the aforementioned areas.” By “color revolutions” they mean independence movements and secessions (even though Putin in 2014 welcomed the declarations of independence by Donetsk and Luhansk, in eastern Ukraine, which he used as a pretext to annex Crimea that year, and for the recent invasion as well). Kyiv has severely oppressed those separatist republics since 2014, including under the “democratic” Zelensky.

It’s clear now that Russia’s February 24th invasion wouldn’t have been possible without China’s backing (given explicitly and publicly on February 4th). The U.S. and NATO—having avoided a “hot” war against either the U.S.S.R or Mao’s Communist China (1949-1991), having won the Cold War (thanks to pro-capitalists Reagan and Thatcher), and having watched Russia and China become less autocratic and more trade-oriented (1991-2005)—nonetheless managed to alienate both nations (Trump’s trade wars didn’t help), inducing each to make anti-U.S. alliance (soon to include Iran). Figure Two makes clear that China is Russia’s most important trade partner, from both directions; it can easily maintain or even increase trade with the rest of the world by trading through China.

Putin’s motives may be nefarious, but neither ridiculous nor opaque. He says what he thinks, thinks historically-strategically, and does what he says he’ll do. Thus, it’s important to read what he says, as a guide to what he may do. Almost no one does this today, perhaps because they assume he’s a liar and propagandist (much like what we’ve seen this century in America from Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden). But the stakes today are high, and WWIII is not impossible. So, it’s well worth reading Putin’s talks on geo-politics, national security, nuclear weapons, including his fear and hate of the “unipolar” model. In Appendix B we provide text (with highlights) of his talk last week (February 22). Appendix C does likewise for his talk in March 2007. Putin’s main themes have not changed much over the fifteen years. Yet much changed geo-politically since 2007, as NATO kept expanding, Ukraine welcome it into its own territory, and American Democrats became increasingly (and opportunistically) hostile towards Russia (just as Republicans became increasingly hostile towards China).

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The Capitalist Advisor

February 28, 2022

Putin and Xi Close Ranks Against the West on Ukraine and Taiwan,” Bloomberg News, February 4, 2022. Excerpt: “Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping closed ranks against the U.S. and its allies on key security issues as they declared that there’s no limit and ‘no forbidden zones’ in the friendship between Russia and China. At their first in-person meeting in more than two years, Putin and Xi said in a joint statement that China ‘treats with understanding and supports’ Russia’s demand for binding security guarantees from the U.S. and NATO in the standoff over Ukraine, and backs Moscow in opposing expansion of the Western military alliance. Russia endorsed China’s policy on Taiwan, saying it opposed Taiwanese independence ‘in any form.’ The two powers also said they were ‘seriously concerned’ about the AUKUS security partnership formed by the U.S., Australia and the U.K., warning of the risk of an arms race in the Asia-Pacific region. The summit meeting lasting almost four hours in Beijing was a conveniently timed show of solidarity on the sidelines of the Winter Olympics and the Russian leader used the occasion to court his increasingly powerful neighbor to help offset the U.S.’s alliance network.”
Three Motives and Scenarios

Reading Putin’s two key speeches (Appendixes B and C), you find he has two main perspectives, or premises, hence two main motives, which are partly contradictory.

First, Putin wishes to restore at least part of the glory (and territory) of the Russian Empire, especially the version once called “New Russia” (Figure Three, page 6). This is not, obviously, the gargantuan and brutal Soviet Empire of 1917-1991, but it includes the premise that Ukraine is part of Russia. This motive is born of nostalgia. The Czarist-governed Russian empire (1721-1917)—with Peter the Great (1682-1725, ruler from 1721 to 25), Catherine the Great (1729-96, ruler from 1762 to 1796), Nicholas I (1796-1855, ruler from 1825 to 1855), Alexander II (1818-1881, ruler from 1855 to 1881), and Nicholas II (1868-1918, ruler from 1894 to 1917)—was influenced by the 1700s Enlightenment (pro-reason, pro-science, pro-commerce). For decades, especially in the late 1800s, the monarchical-parliamentarian Russian Empire moved toward Western-style governance, even toward capitalism. Alexander II abolished serfdom in the Empire in 1861, the same year the Lincoln Republicans began doing so in the American feudal-slave South. Unfortunately, the gains of the Russian Empire were arrested and reversed after the anti-capitalist Marxist Bolsheviks took over in 1917; Lenin, Stalin, et al. ruled and ruined Russia, until 1991.4

From his recent talks, Putin, albeit an ex-KGB thug, clearly disdains what the Bolsheviks did, including its purges and failed central plans, but especially how, he says, the U.S.S.R. allowed its satellites (colonies) too much independence. He omits mention of Soviet tanks

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rolling into rebellious Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and elsewhere.

Second, Putin has a much-expressed fear that a “unipolar” world with a single superpower is undemocratic, unstable, and unsafe—most notably for Russia (if America is the sole superpower). He believes the world was a far better place during the Cold War, because there were two counterbalancing superpowers, with countervailing political-economic systems.

This premise, which has been common for many years (even in the West), is that no nation and no world, should be dominated exclusively either by pure capitalism or pure socialism. Both are rejected as “extreme,” non-centrist, hence unbalanced, unsustainable, and dangerous. This ignores three basic facts: capitalism is good, socialism is bad, and you can’t have “too much” of a good thing.

Wielding the “anti-extreme” perspective, Putin extolls not only the Cold War period but its military doctrine—“Mutually Assured Destruction” (M.A.D.)—in which the U.S. and U.S.S.R. deliberately aimed their nuclear weapons at each other’s cities and exposed populations. No anti-missile systems were to be installed by either side. Putin believes the M.A.D. doctrine deterred nuclear exchanges during the Cold War. None occurred even as the Cold War was ending. The Cold War never became a Hot War. Putin has long-despised the fact that NATO has anti-ballistic missile systems in Europe; he says their placement falsely presumes Russia is hostile; he says they’re not truly or solely defensive, but disguised offensive weapons aimed at Russia. He fears (or claims to fear) that the U.S. will intimidate and overrun other nations, even those (like Russia) wielding nuclear weapons.

Given Putin’s premises, motives and likely economic-political-military responses globally, three scenarios seem possible over the coming weeks, months, and years.

Scenario A: Russia Makes a Limited Incursion, Controls Ukraine

Given its moves so far, Russia seems likely to move beyond a mere recognition of the independence declared in 2014 by Ukraine’s pro-Russian eastern republics (Donetsk and Luhanske), and an occupation of the Donbas region where they are located. Putin’s army is moving into other Ukrainian territory, establishing military strongholds, setting up convoys, and controlling both communications and energy stations. In this scenario its aim would be to keep advancing, as brutally as necessary, to topple the Zelensky regime in Kyiv and replace it with a pro-Russian regime of the type that exists north of Ukraine, in Belarus. If this works, it’s likely that 72-year-old Viktor Yanukovych, Ukraine’s pro-Russia president from 2010 to 2014, would replace Zelensky. If this occurred, Russian troops would thereafter withdraw; the already frail Ukrainian army, or what’s left of it, would be “reconstituted” along Russian lines. It’s unlikely this will elicit military intervention by the U.S. or NATO. The problem is that if Russia controls Ukraine, it can say then say it truly has a NATO member on its border (Poland) which, it has said, is unacceptable. This is the most likely outcome and the one least harmful to U.S./NATO interests.

Scenario B: Russia Makes a Broader Advance Eastward, Takes Moldova and/or Romania

In this scenario Putin completes Scenario A, meets with no material resistance from NATO, and proceeds westward to invade and subjugate Moldova (not a NATO member). Next it invades Romania, west of Moldova, to gain full access to the Black Sea. But Romania is a NATO member; if Putin is willing to do this, he’s willing to fight NATO. Russia alone can’t likely succeed versus NATO without the help of China. NATO knows this but also seems unwilling (and unable) to fight Russia and China simultaneously. Here is revealed the importance of the Russo-Sino alliance declared on February 4th. In this scenario Putin risks being humiliated (or deposed/killed) by a NATO counteraction on behalf of Romania. If NATO is too weak, divided, or indecisive to act on behalf of Romania, this scenario could work for Putin, especially if Romania, like Ukraine, were taken over without large-scale destruction and treated as a friendly satellite (colony) of Russia. This is the second most likely outcome but also more threatening and harmful (than Scenario A) to U.S./NATO interests.

Scenario C: Russia Invades Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Poland, and the Baltic Nations (WWIII)

This scenario is remote but not improbable. Over the course of a year or so, Russia invades and controls Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Poland, and the Baltic nations (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). All but Ukraine and Moldova are NATO members. If NATO is both willing and able (assume it is), it moves aggressively against Russia. But China joins in on Russia’s behalf. There is the start of World War III. All major combatants possess stockpiles of nuclear weapons, but China and Russia are more willing than the U.S. or NATO to use them. This is the least likely of the three scenarios, but the one most threatening and damaging to U.S./NATO interests.

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With nearly all ballots counted in the run-off vote, Mr. Zelensky had taken more than 73% with incumbent Petro Poroshenko trailing far behind on 24%. “I will never let you down,” Mr. Zelensky told celebrating supporters. Russia says it wants him to show “sound judgement,” “honesty,” and “pragmatism” so that relations can improve. Russia back separatists in eastern Ukraine. The comments came from Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. He said he expected Zelensky to “repeat familiar ideological formulas” used in the election. “At the same time, there is a chance to improve relations with our country.”

Mr. Poroshenko, who admitted defeat after the first exit polls were published, has said he will not be leaving politics. He told voters that Zelensky was too inexperienced to stand up to Russia effectively.

Mr. Zelensky, a political novice, is best known for starring in a satirical television series “Servant of the People,” in which his character accidentally becomes Ukrainian president. He plays a teacher who is elected after his expletive-laden rant about corruption goes viral on social media. He ran under a political party with the same name as his show. Despite this, he won the first round with 30% of the vote — almost double what Mr. Poroshenko (the incumbent) got in second place.

Ukrainians are waking up this morning and discovering that the last few months were not a dream. They really have elected a man who currently stars in a TV series as the president — as the country’s next real president. And it wasn’t even close. The pressure will now be on Mr. Zelensky to demonstrate that he knows what he is doing. Throughout the election campaign, he avoided serious interviews and discussions about policy, preferring instead to post light-hearted videos to social media. He’s got about a month before the inauguration. Then the comedian-turned-president will be faced with a complex in-tray that includes a simmering war with Russian-backed rebels in the east. Mr. Poroshenko, who has been in power since 2014, said the result of the election “leaves us with uncertainty [and] unpredictability.” “I will leave office, but I want to firmly stress — I will not quit politics,” he said. In a tweet, he said “a new inexperienced Ukrainian president... could be quickly returned to Russia’s orbit of influence.”

What do supporters think of Zelensky? Analysts believe his informal style and vow to clean up Ukrainian politics resonated with voters who are disillusioned with the country’s path. Eschewing traditional campaign tactics, Zelensky channeled his on-screen persona by promising to stamp out corruption and loosen the grip of oligarchs on Ukraine. Experts say his supporters, frustrated with establishment politicians and cronyism, have been energized by his charisma and anti-corruption message. His critics, meanwhile, are skeptical about his credentials, with many expressing concern about his close links to billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky. They doubt that he will be able to take on the country’s influential oligarchs and stand up to Russian President Vladimir Putin. What’s the reaction been? French President Macron congratulated Zelensky in a phone call, as did Poland’s President Andrzej Duda. In a tweet, U.K. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said: “You will now truly be the Servant of the People.” The U.S. embassy in Ukraine tweeted its congratulations while European Council President Donald Tusk said the EU was “determined to continue its support” for Ukraine.
UKRAINE ISN'T JUST A NEIGHBOR BUT PART OF RUSSIA

THE SITUATION IN DONBAS [EASTERN UKRAINE] IS BECOMING CRITICAL. TODAY, I'M ADDRESSING YOU DIRECTLY, NOT ONLY TO TALK ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING, BUT ALSO TO INFORM YOU ABOUT THE DECISIONS WE'RE MAKING ABOUT POSSIBLE STEPS IN THIS REGARD. ONCE AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSCORE THAT UKRAINE IS NOT JUST A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY TO US. IT IS AN INHERENT PART OF OUR OWN HISTORY, CULTURE, AND SPIRITUAL SPACE. THEY ARE OUR COMRADES, RELATIVES, COLLEAGUES, AND FRIENDS BUT ALSO OUR FAMILY. PEOPLE WE HAVE BLOOD AND FAMILY TIES WITH.

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE FROM ANCIENT SOUTHWESTERN RUSSIAN LANDS WERE CALLING THEMSELVES RUSSIANS AND ORTHODOX. THAT WAS HAPPENING UNTIL THE 17TH CENTURY, WHEN PART OF THESE TERRITORIES REJOINED THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, THE RUSSIAN STATE. WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THIS, BUT WE NEED TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS HAPPENING TODAY, TO EXPLAIN THE MOTIVES AND AIMS THAT RUSSIA HAS. WE NEED TO SAY A COUPLE OF WORDS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THIS MATTER.

BOLSHEVIK COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARIES (1917) CREATED UKRAINE

I WOULD LIKE TO START BY SAYING THAT MODERN UKRAINE WAS COMPLETELY CREATED BY RUSSIA – TO BE MORE EXACT, BY BOLSHEVIK COMMUNIST RUSSIA [1917-1991]. THIS PROCESS STARTED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE 1917 REVOLUTION. LENIN AND HIS SUPPORTERS DID IT IN A ROUGH WAY. IF WE TALK ABOUT RUSSIA, THEY WERE ALIENATING PARTS OF HISTORICAL TERRITORIES OF RUSSIA AND ALIENATING THE
Millions of people who lived there. Obviously, no one asked anything. Then before the Great Patriotic War [WWII], Stalin added to the U.S.S.R. and handed over to Ukraine some lands that belonged to Poland and Hungary. As compensation, Stalin gave some ancient German lands to Poland. In the 1960s, Khrushchev decided to take Crimea away from Russia and give it to Ukraine. That's how the territory of the Soviet Ukraine was formed.

Now, I would like to draw your attention to the initial stages of the establishment of the U.S.S.R. [1917-1922] I think it's of utmost importance for us, because we have to start from afar. After the October Revolution of 1917, and the civil war that followed, the Bolsheviks started building a new state. They had some differences among them. Stalin, who in 1922 was secretary general of the Soviet Communist Party and the Peoples Commissar on ethnic marriages, decided to build the country on the principles of autonomy. This gave the republics administrative units with wide authority, when they were supposed to join the state. Lenin criticized this plan [by Stalin] and suggested making concessions to the nationalists, as he called them back then, advocating independence. Basically, the idea as to create a confederation and give the right of self-determination to every nation [in the Soviet sphere]. That was the basis of the Soviet state, which formally began in 1922. This system was enshrined in the declaration on the establishment of the Soviet Union.

U.S.S.R. Constitution (1922-24) allowed too much independence

After the death of Lenin [1924], this system also was enshrined in the constitution of the U.S.S.R. of 1924. Right away, here we have a lot of questions. The main question is, why were they making all kinds of concessions to the nationalists, at the outskirt of the former [Czarist] empire? Why give, to the haphazardly formed administrative units, huge territories that often had nothing to do with them? They were giving territories with the population of historic Russia. The administrative units were given status of state entities. Once again, this begs the question; why did they have to make such generous gifts, which even the most blatant nationalists never dreamed of? At the same time, why give the republics the right to withdraw from the new state [U.S.S.R], without any preconditions? At first glance, it doesn't seem clear. It seems like madness, but only at first glance. There is an explanation.

After the revolution [1917], the main goal of the Bolsheviks was to keep power, to stay in power at any cost. For this, they went to any length, including accepting humiliating conditions of the truce. Germany was in a dire economic situation and the outcome of World War One [1914-1918] was already almost decided. The Bolsheviks granted concessions to the nationalists inside the U.S.S.R. from the point of view of the historic destiny of Russia and its people. Lenin's principle of building the U.S.S.R. state [while condoning both nationalism and potential separatism] wasn't a mere mistake. It was much worse than a mere mistake. After the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, this has become absolutely obvious.

Of course, what happened in the past cannot be changed, but at least we have to talk about it in an honest and direct way, without any political agenda, without giving any political color to it. The ideas of the current political realities, no matter how beneficial they might seem, under no circumstances can it or should it be a ba-

NOW IN EASTERN UKRAINE THEY ARE DEMOLISHING ALL THE STATUES AND MONUMENTS TO LENIN. THEY CALL IT “DECOMMUNIZATION.” YOU WANT DECOMMUNIZATION? WELL, WE ARE QUITE HAPPY WITH THAT. BUT DON'T STOP HALFWAY. WE ARE READY TO SHOW YOU WHAT ACTUAL DECOMMUNIZATION WOULD MEAN FOR UKRAINE.


IN REALITY, THE SOVIET REPUBLICS HAD NO SOVEREIGN RIGHTS. NONE. WHAT WAS CREATED WAS STRICTLY CENTRALIZED AND UNITARIAN IN ITS CHARACTER. STALIN IMPLEMENTED NOT LENIN'S IDEAS BUT HIS OWN IDEAS OF HOW STATES SHOULD BE BUILT. BUT HE MADE NO CHANGES IN THE FOUND-ING ACTS, TO THE CONSTITUTION [OF 1922]. LENIN'S PRINCIPLES ABOUT BUILDING THE SOVIET UNION [WITH SEMI-INDEPENDENT NATIONALIST REPUBLICS] WERE NOT CONSIDERED. TECHNICALLY, IT SEEMED [TO STALIN] THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THIS UNDER TOTALITARIAN REGIME, AND AUTHORITARIAN REGIME. EVERYTHING WORKED WELL AND LOOKED NICE FROM THE OUTSIDE, EVEN MORE THAN DEMOCRATIC.


STILL, IT'S A SHAME THAT FROM THE FORMAL FOUNDATIONS THAT OUR STATE WAS BUILT ON, THEY DIDN'T CLEAR OUT THIS OBVIOUS UTOPIA [OF SEMI-INDEPENDENT NATIONALIST REPUBLICS] BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE REVOLUTION, BUT INSTEAD INDULGED DESTRUCTIVE FANTASIES. NO ONE THOUGHT ABOUT IT. COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT THEY HAD BUILT A STRONG GOVERNING SYSTEM. USING THIS POLICY, THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD MANAGED TO FINALLY RESOLVE THE NATIONAL ISSUE, BY MANIPULATING PUBLIC MOODS. BUT THE INFECTION OF NATIONALISM DID NOT DISAPPEAR. LIKE A BOMB UNDERMINING THIS STATE, THE INFECTION OF NATIONALISM WAS JUST WAITING FOR ITS HOUR TO COME. ANY REPUBLIC HAD THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE U.S.S.R.

PORT. EACH STARTED TO ENCOURAGE NATIONALISM. THEY WERE PLAYING WITH IT, PROMISING ANYTHING. WHEN THEY TALKED ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN THE FUTURE, IT WAS BASED EITHER ON THE MARKET ECONOMY OR A PLANNED ECONOMY. IN REALITY, [THE SOVIET] PEOPLE WERE GETTING POORER AND POORER, AND THEIR DEFICIT GOT STRONGER.

NO ONE IN AUTHORITY THOUGHT ABOUT TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES. THEN THEY WENT DOWN A PATH OF SATISFYING THE AMBITIONS OF NATIONALIST ELITES IN THE PARTY. THE COMMUNIST PARTY DOESN'T HAVE THESE TOOLS ANYMORE, WHICH IS GOOD. BUT BACK THEN THE PARTY COULDN'T KEEP THE POWER AND COULDN'T USE TOOLS LIKE DICTATORSHIP OR PURGES. EVEN THE GOV-


UKRAINIAN NATIONALISTS TOOK UNDUE CREDIT FOR INDEPENDENCE

RADICALS AND NATIONALISTS, ABOVE ALL IN UKRAINE, TOOK CREDIT FOR WINNING THEIR INDEPENDENCE, BUT THAT IS NOT THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER. WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR COUNTRY [1989-1991] WAS CAUSED BY THE MISTAKES OF COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS, DIFFERENT TYPES OF MIS-


BACK THEN, EVEN THOUGH RUSSIA WAS IN A DIRE SITUATION, IT TRIED TO HELP ITS PART-
NERS FROM THE CIS [COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES, IN EASTERN EUROPE], INCLUDING ITS UKRAINIAN PARTNERS. STARTING FROM THE MOMENT THEY PRO-
CLAIMED INDEPENDENCE, THEY BEGAN TO REQUEST MATERIAL SUPPORT. RUSSIA SUP-
PORTED THE SOVEREIGNTY OF UKRAINE. ACCORDING TO THE ESTIMATES OF EXPERTS, IT IS PROVED BY LOOKING AT PRICES FOR OUR ENERGY AND ENERGY CARRIERS, BY OUR LOANS AND TRADE PRACTICES. RUSSIA GAVE UKRAINE THE TOTAL PROFIT FOR ITS BUDG-
et FROM 1991 TO 2013, ABOUT $250 BILLION.

RUSSIA SERVICED MOST OF THE U.S.S.R. DEBT, UKRAINE DIDN'T HELP

BUT THAT IS NOT ALL. BY THE END OF 1991, THE DEBT OF THE U.S.S.R. WAS AROUND $100 BILLION. INITIALLY IT WAS THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE SERVICED BY ALL THE REPUB-
LICS OF THE U.S.S.R., IN PROPORTION TO THEIR ECONOMIC POTENTIAL. BUT RUSSIA TOOK THE BURDEN OF SERVISING THE ENTIRE SOVIET DEBT – AND PAID IT OUT, EVENTUALLY, COMPLETING THE PROCESS IN 2017. OTHER SOVIET REPUBLICS HAD TO RE-
NUENCE RIGHTS TO SOVIET ASSETS, AN AGREEMENT SIGNED IN LATE 1994 WITH UKRAINE. BUT THEY'RE LEGISLATURE DIDN'T RATIFY THIS AGREEMENT. LATER, UKRAINE RE-
FUSED TO IMPLEMENT IT. THEY TALKED ABOUT GOLD RESERVES AND ALL ASSETS OF THE FOR-
MER U.S.S.R. HELD ABROAD.

DESpite the known problems, Russia has always cooperated and worked with Ukraine in an open and honest man-
NER, WITH RESPECT TO ITS INTERESTS. OUR TIES IN MANY AREAS WERE DEVELOPING. IN 2011 OUR MUTUAL TRADE WAS MORE THAN $50 BILLION. TRADE BETWEEN UKRAINE AND EU COUNTRIES IN 2019, BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, WAS SMALLER THAN $50 BILLION. UKRAINE AUTHORITIES PREFERRED HAVING ALL THE RIGHTS AND NONE OF THE OBLIGATIONS WITH RUSSIA. BY UKRAINE ASSUMING NO OBLIGATIONS, IT WASN'T A REAL PARTNERSHIP. UKRAINE WAS TRYING TO GET MORE FROM US. RECALL ITS BLACKMAILING IN THE GAS TRANSIT CASE, STEALING GAS EVEN. THEY TRIED TO USE DIALECT WITH RUSSIA AS A TOOL TO BLACKMAIL THE WEST. THEY SAID THEY'D GET CloSER TO RUSSIA [UNLESS THE WEST HELPED THEM]. UKRAINE TRIED TO WIN PREFERENCES [FROM THE WEST], SAYING THAT IF NOT, RUSSIA’S PRESENCE IN UKRAINE WOULD GROW. THEY STARTED BUILDING STATEHOOD BY RENOUNCING EVERYTHING THAT WAS BRINGING US TOGETHER. THEY WERE TRYING TO TWIST THE HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE GENERATIONS, OF PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN UKRAINE. SO, IT’S NO SURPRISE THAT UKRAINE THEN FACED GROWTH IN RADICAL NATIONALISM WHICH BECAME RUSSO-PHOBIC. THAT’S WHY NATIONALISTS FORMED AND JOINED GANGS IN EASTERN UKRAINE. THEY INCREASINGLY VOICED TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AGAINST RUSSIA. THEY MOVED THEIR PEOPLE INTO POWER, INTO THE GOVERNMENT.

UKRAINIAN POLITICS & GOVERNANCE DON’T FIT ITS PEOPLE


UKRAINE IS A CORRUPT, OLIGARCHIC STATE FUELED BY U.S.A. BRIBES

ENTERED KYIV’S CAPITAL, OUSTED PRO-RUSSIA PRESIDENT YANUKOVCH, AND OVER-THREW THE GOVERNMENT; RUSSIA REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE HIS REPLACEMENT AS LEGITIMATE. THEY WERE BACKED BY FOREIGN STATES, FROM EVIDENCE WE HAVE. SUPPORT FROM THE SO-CALLED “PROTEST” CAMP, AT INDEPENDENCE SQUARE IN KIEV, CAME FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY, $1 MILLION PER DAY. ADDITIONALLY, LARGE SUMS OF MONEY WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE PRIVATE ACCOUNTS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS – TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. HOW MUCH DID THEY REALLY SUFFER, VERUS THOSE WHO DIED IN THE CLASHES AT INDEPENDENCE SQUARE AND THE STREETS OF KIEV?

RADICALS WHO CAPTURED POWER [IN UKRAINE, IN 2014] STARTED TO ROAR AGAINST THOSE WHO SUPPORTED CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, ESPECIALLY JOURNALISTS AND POLITICIANS. THE LATTER WERE HUMILIATED PUBLICLY. A WHOLE RANGE OF LARGE-SCALE CRIMINAL CASES COVERED UKRAINE. WE SHudder WHEN RECALLING THE SITUATION IN ODESSA, WHEN PEOPLE WERE BURNED ALIVE BECAUSE THEY PROTESTED THE AUTHORITIES. THE CRIMINALS WHO DID THAT WERE NOT PUNISHED. NO ONE EVEN LOOKS FOR THEM. BUT WE KNOW THEIR NAMES, AND WE WILL DO EVERYTHING TO FIND THEM, BRING THEM TO COURT, TO JUSTICE, AND PUNISH THEM.

UKRAINE IS NON-DEMOCRATIC; COUP D’ETAT IN 2014, ZELENSKY SINCE 2019

UKRAINE WAS NOT BROUGHT CLOSER TO DEMOCRACY BY THE COUP D’ETAT OF 2014. THE POLITICAL FORCES THAT BACKED THE COUP CAUSED A DEADLOCK AND PUSHED UKRAINE INTO THE CHASM OF CIVIL WAR. TODAY, EIGHT YEARS LATER, THE COUNTRY IS DIVIDED. IT’S IN DIRE ECONOMIC CRISIS. IN 2018, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ESTIMATE, ALMOST 6 MILLION UKRAINIANS, OR 15% OF THE POPULATION, HAD TO MOVE ABROAD, TO LOOK FOR JOBS. AS A RULE, THEY WERE DOING SOME BASIC WORK AND QUALIFIED WORK. HERE IS ANOTHER FACT: STARTING IN 2020, 60,000 DOCTORS AND OTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS LEFT UKRAINE. SINCE 2014, WATER PRICES HAVE INCREASED BY ALMOST A THIRD. ENERGY PRICES HAVE INCREASED MANY-FOLD. MANY PEOPLE HAVE NO MONEY TO PAY THEIR UTILITY BILLS.


UKRAINE DOESN’T HAVE AN INDEPENDENT

UKRAINE DESPOTS ARE NOW MERE PUPPETS OF THE WEST (U.S.A., NATO)

DO UKRAINIANS KNOW ABOUT THIS CHOICE? DO THEY UNDERSTAND THAT UKRAINE IS A COLONY [OF THE WEST]? UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES CALL THEMSELVES AUTHORITIES BUT DO NOT HAVE [IN MIND] THE FULL INTERESTS OF THE NATION. THEY CONTINUE TO ASSIMILATE RUSSIAN SPEAKERS BY FORCE, IMPOSING DISCRIMINATORY DECREES. NOW THEY HAVE A LAW THAT SAYS THOSE WHO DEEM THEMSELVES RUSSIAN DO NOT BELONG IN UKRAINE. ACCORDING TO THE LAWS, THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IS THROWN OUT OF SCHOOLS, OUT OF ALL PUBLIC SPACES, INCLUDING SHOPS. THE LAW CHANGED HOW PUBLIC SERVANTS BEHAVE. THEY ADOPTED DECREES EMPOWERING LAW ENFORCEMENT TO SUPPRESS FREEDOM OF CHOICE, FREEDOM OF SPEECH. WE KNOW THE PRACTICE OF UNILATERAL, LEGITIMATE SANCTIONS, ON FOREIGN INDIVIDUALS AND LEGAL ENTITIES. BUT IN UKRAINE THEY WENT FURTHER THAN THEIR WESTERN PARTNERS AND DEVELOPED SANCTIONS AGAINST THEIR OWN CITIZENS – AGAINST MEDIA OUTLETS, PARLIAMENT MEMBERS. THIS IS NOT AN EMOTIONAL ESTIMATE. WE HAVE DOCUMENTS AND DECISIONS ABOUT THIS. IT’S AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY. THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP [IN UKRAINE] DOES NOT GRANT REQUESTS FROM PEOPLE TO HAVE LEGAL COUNSEL. THE RIGHTS OF [RELIGIOUS] BELIEVERS ARE UNDERMINED.

CRIMEA (SO. UKRAINE) WANTED ANNEXATION (2014); NOW, AN EXCUSE FOR WAR

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK SEPARATELY ABOUT CRIMEA. THEY MADE THEIR CHOICE TO BE WITH RUSSIA [IN 2014]. UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE NOTHING TO SAY AGAINST THIS. THAT IS WHY THEY PLACE THEIR BETS ON AGGRESSION. USING INSTRUMENTS LIKE RADICAL ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS, THEY SEND SABOTEURS TO DESTROY INFRASTRUCTURE. THEY DENOUNCE RUSSIAN CITIZENS. WE HAVE EVIDENCE THAT SUCH AGGRESSIVE ACTIVITIES ARE SUPPORTED BY FOREIGN SPECIAL SERVICES. IN MARCH 2021, UKRAINE ADOPTED A NEW MILITARY STRATEGY, IN A DOCUMENT ALMOST COMPLETELY AIMED AT CONFRONTATION WITH RUSSIA. IT SEEKS TO DRAG FOREIGN STATES INTO THE CONFLICT WITH RUSSIA. THE STRATEGY SUGGESTS A TERRORIST UNDERGROUND. IT ALSO OUTLINES THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR. IT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, ON BENEFICIAL CONDITIONS FOR UKRAINE.

UKRAINE ENDANGERS RUSSIA VIA NATO TIES, ACCESS TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MILITARY SUPPORT FROM THE WORLD COMMUNITY AND GEOPOLITICAL CONFRONTATION AGAINST THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IS NOTHING BUT PREPARATION FOR ARMED CONFLICT AGAINST RUSSIA. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD STATEMENTS ABOUT UKRAINE WANTING TO CREATE ITS OWN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THAT IS NOT JUST AN IDLE THREAT. UKRAINE HAS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND CARRIERS TO DELIVER SUCH WEAPONS. THEY HAVE ROCKET LAUNCHERS DESIGNED IN THE U.S.S.R. WITH A RANGE OF MORE THAN 100 KILOMETERS. IT’S A MATTER OF TIME. THEY STILL HAVE THIS TECHNOLOGY FROM SOVIET TIMES.

GETTING TECHNICAL, NUCLEAR WEAPONS WILL BE MUCH EASIER FOR UKRAINE [TO ATTAIN] THAN FOR CERTAIN OTHER STATES. I’M NOT GOING TO LIST THEM, ESPECIALLY, IF THEY HAVE TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT FROM ABROAD. IF UKRAINE HAS A WEAPON
OF MASS DESTRUCTION, THE SITUATION IN THE WORLD WILL CHANGE DRASTICALLY. WE CANNOT HELP BUT REACT TO THESE REAL THREATS. WESTERN BACKERS CAN HELP UKRAINE GET A NUCLEAR WEAPON, TO CREATE YET ANOTHER THREAT FOR RUSSIA, BECAUSE WE CAN SEE HOW CONSISTENTLY THEY ARE PUMPING UKRAINE WITH WEAPONS. THE U.S. ALONE SINCE 2014 HAS TRANSFERRED BILLIONS OF DOLLARS, INCLUDING ARMS TRAINING PERSONNEL. IN RECENT MONTHS WESTERN WEAPONS HAVE BEEN SENT TO UKRAINE CEASELESSLY, IN FRONT OF THE EYES OF THE ENTIRE WORLD. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UKRAINIAN ARMY ARE GOVERNED BY FOREIGN CONSULTANTS. WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THAT. LAST YEAR, UNDER THE PRETEXT OF WARGAMES, NATO'S MILITARY CONTINGENTS WERE DEPLOYED IN UKRAINE. THE UKRAINIAN ARMY IS WAITING TO GET INTO NATO. UKRAINIAN MILITARY UNITS CAN BE DIRECTED FROM NATO HEADQUARTERS. THE WEST HAS EXPLORED THE TERRITORY OF UKRAINE AS A FUTURE THEATER, A FUTURE BATTLEFIELD, AIMED AGAINST RUSSIA.

UKRAINE ISN'T A NATO MEMBER BUT WANTS TO BE AND GETS NATO'S HELP

NATO HAS MORE THAN 20,000 TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT, HARDWARE UNITS. UKRAINE HAS ALREADY ADOPTED A LAW TO ALLOW FOREIGN TROOPS TO ENTER ITS TERRITORY, TO PARTICIPATE IN WARGAMES. NATO TROOPS IN 2022 PLAN NO FEWER THAN 10 DRILLS, WHICH SERVES AS A COVER TO INCREASE NATO'S CONTINGENT IN UKRAINE, ESPECIALLY IN AIRFIELDS. THESE CAN BE USED TO KEEP TROOPS. THE AIRSPACE OVER UKRAINE IS OPEN FOR RECONNAISSANCE AND NATO'S STRATEGIC PLANS. DRONES ARE USED TO MONITOR RUSSIAN TERRITORY. THE NAVAL OPERATIONS CENTER BUILT BY THE AMERICANS ALLOWS NATO TO USE IT AS A PORT. THE CENTER ALLOWS HIGH PRECISION WEAPONS IN THE BLACK SEA, AND [THREATENS] OUR ENTIRE INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE BLACK SEA COAST. SOME TIME AGO, THE U.S. WANTED TO BUILD SUCH INFRASTRUCTURE IN CRIMEA, BUT THE POPULATION OF CRIMEA SAID NO. WE REMEMBER THAT.

NOW, I'D LIKE TO REMIND YOU, IN THE 18TH CENTURY, SOLDIERS FOUGHT FOR THE CITY OF KIEV. THEIR BRAVERY ALLOWED THE CITY TO GO TO RUSSIA. THEY WANT TO FORGET THIS NAME [AND NOW CALL IT "KYIV"], LIKE THEY WANT TO FORGET THE DEEDS OF FAMOUS COMMANDERS. UKRAINE ITSELF WOULD NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE BLACK SEA [WITHOUT THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE]. YOU ARE RENOUNCING ARTICLE 17 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF UKRAINE, WHICH DOESN'T ALLOW THE MILITARY BASES OF WARRING STATES TO BE DEPLOYED, BUT IT SEEMS IT CAN BE BYPASSED. THEY HAVE DEPLOYED TRAINING MISSIONS OF NATO COUNTRIES IN UKRAINE. BASICALLY, THAT IS A MILITARY BASE ALREADY. THEY JUST CALL IT A MISSION AND IT IS DONE. THEY HAVE LONG DECLARED STRATEGIC GAMES AT JOINING NATO.

UKRAINE CAN'T ENHANCE ITS SECURITY AT THE EXPENSE OF RUSSIAN SECURITY

OBVIOUSLY, EVERY COUNTRY HAS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN ALLIANCES, TO SIGN MILITARY AGREEMENTS. THAT IS TRUE. BUT INTERNATIONAL LAW INCLUDES THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVISIBLE SECURITY, THAT NO COUNTRY CAN ENHANCE ITS SECURITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SECURITY OF OTHERS. I CAN REFER TO THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CHARTER ADOPTED IN 1999. IN OTHER WORDS, CHOOSING MEANS TO ENHANCE ONE'S SECURITY SHOULD NOT CREATE THREATS TO OTHER STATES. IF UKRAINE MUST JOIN NATO, IT WOULD SERVE AS A DIRECT THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF RUSSIA.

NATO MEMBERS ARE MERE U.S.A PUPPETS, ABLE & WILLING TO ASSAULT RUSSIA

IN 2018, THE U.S. URGED NATO MEMBERS TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT STATES WISHING TO JOIN NATO. A LOT OF EUROPEAN ALLIANCES UNDERSTOOD THE RISKS. THEY HAD TO SUBMIT TO THE WILL OF THE OLDER PARTNER. AMERICANS USE THEM TO PURSUE
ANTI-RUSSIAN POLICIES. NATO MEMBERS REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT UKRAINE JOINING NATO. SOME EUROPEANS ARE ASKING “WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?” AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS ARE NOW SAYING THE SAME. YES, IT’S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN TOMORROW. WHAT WILL IT CHANGE IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT? WE KNOW THE STANDS AND STATEMENTS OF U.S. LEADERSHIP ABOUT ACTIVE CONFRONTATION.

IN 1990 NATO LIED ABOUT ITS AIMS, SAID IT WOULDN’T EXPAND TOWARD RUSSIA

MILITARY ACTION IN UKRAINE WOULD NOT STOP UKRAINE FROM JOINING NATO. THEY TRIED TO CONVINCE US THAT NATO IS A PEACEFUL, A DEFENSIVE BLOC, SO THERE IS NO THREAT FOR RUSSIA. THEY AGAIN SUGGEST THAT WE BELIEVE THEIR WORDS. BUT WE ALREADY KNOW THE VALUE OF SUCH WORDS. IN 1990, WHEN WE TALKED ABOUT GERMANY UNIFICATION, NATO PROMISED SOVIET LEADERSHIP THAT ITS MILITARY WOULD NOT MOVE AN INCH TO THE EAST. UNIFICATION OF GERMANY WOULD NOT LEAD TO THE EASTWARD EXPANSION OF NATO. I AM QUOTING HERE. THEY WERE SAYING THESE THINGS, GIVING US ASSURANCES, BUT LATER THEY STARTED SAYING THAT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES JOINING NATO WOULD IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. MORE THAN THAT, IT WOULD ALLOW THEM TO CREATE FRIENDLY NATIONS. BUT IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND. THEY INSISTED ON INCLUDING SECURITY THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DEPLOYED AGAINST RUSSIA.

IT WAS HAPPENING IN THE 1990S BECAUSE OF OUR OPENNESS, THE POWER OF GOODWILL. RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST WERE AT HIGH LEVELS. RUSSIA FULFILLED ALL OF ITS OBLIGATIONS. IT WITHDREW TROOPS FROM GERMANY AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. IT MADE A HUGE CONTRIBUTION IN OVERCOMING THE LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR. WE CONSISTENTLY SUGGESTED ALL TYPES OF COOPERATION INCLUDING IN FORMS OF THE RUSSIAN NATO COUNSEL.

YOU ONLY NEED TO LOOK AT THE MAP TO SEE HOW WESTERN COUNTRIES REFUSED TO KEEP THEIR WORD ABOUT NOT EXPANDING NATO [EASTWARD]. WE’VE SEEN FIVE WAVES OF NATO EXPANSION. IN 1999, POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY JOIN NATO. IN 2004, BULGARIA [AND SIX OTHERS]. IN 2009 ALBANIA AND CROATIA. MONTENEGRO IN 2017, NORTH MACEDONIA IN 2020. AS A RESULT, NATO HAS DRAWN CLOSE TO THE BORDERS OF RUSSIA. THAT IS ONE OF THE CAUSES OF THE SECURITY CRISIS AND SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

THE MUTUAL TRUST CONTINUES TO GET WORSE IN STRATEGIC AREAS AS WELL. ROMANIA AND POLAND DEPLOYED ANTIMISSILE DEFENSES. WE ALL KNOW THE LAUNCHERS CAN BE USED FOR [OFFENSIVE] CRUISE MISSILES, TOMAHAWKS, STRIKE WEAPONS. THE U.S. IS DEVELOPING MISSILES NOT ONLY TO BE USED FOR ANTIMISSILE DEFENSE BUT TO STRIKE A TARGET FROM LAND AND SEA. THEY ARE EXPANDING THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE WITH NEW OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES. FROM THE INFORMATION WE GET, WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS DECISION HAS BEEN MADE. IT IS JUST A MATTER OF TIME. UNDER THIS SCENARIO THE LEVEL
OF MILITARY THREAT FOR RUSSIA WILL INCREASE MANY-FOLD.

THREATS OF AN IMMEDIATE ATTACK ON RUSSIA, INSTIGATED BY THE U.S.A.

I WOULD LIKE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE BIGGER THREAT OF AN IMMEDIATE ATTACK AGAINST OUR COUNTRY. IN AMERICAN STRATEGIC DOCTRINE, WHO IS THE MAIN ADVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES? WE ALL KNOW IT IS RUSSIA. IN NATO DOCUMENTS, OUR COUNTRY IS OFFICIALLY AND DIRECTLY CALLED A MAIN THREAT TO NORTH ATLANTIC SECURITY. WE DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT, BUT THAT IS HOW IT IS. PEOPLE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT UKRAINIAN AIRFIELDS ARE CLOSE TO OUR BORDERS. USING RECONNAISSANCE TOOLS WILL ALLOW US TO CONTROL THE AIRSPACE.

THE PENTAGON HAS STARTED DEVELOPING A WHOLE RANGE OF LAND-BASED MISSILES WITH A RANGE OF 6500 KILOMETERS, WHICH COULD HIT TARGETS IN RUSSIA. THE TRAVEL TIME OF THE TOMAHAWK MISSILES TO MOSCOW WOULD BE LESS THAN 35 MINUTES. FOR BALLISTIC MISSILES IT IS 7 OR 8 MINUTES. FOR HYPER-SOUND WEAPONS, IT IS 4 OR 5 MINUTES. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEY PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THESE IDEAS. AS PREVIOUSLY, MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE IS MOVING CLOSER TO OUR BORDERS. THEY'VE IGNORED OUR WARNINGS. THEY DID NOT CARE. THEY DEEMED WHATEVER THEY DEEMED. THE DID WHATEVER THEY DEEMED NECESSARY. I BELIEVE THEY PLAN TO CONTINUE DOING THINGS LIKE THAT.

RUSSIA WAS ALWAYS DEFENDING OR RESOLVING THE MOST DIFFICULT ISSUES AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. DIPLOMATICALLY, WE UNDERSTAND. IN 2008 RUSSIA CAME UP WITH AN INITIATIVE FOR SIGNING AN AGREEMENT ABOUT EUROPEAN SECURITY. ITS IDEA WAS THAT NO STATE OR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION COULD ENHANCE ITS SECURITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SECURITY OF OTHERS. OUR SUGGESTION WAS REFUTED FROM THE GET-GO, BECAUSE [WE WERE TOLD THAT NOTHING] CAN ALLOW RUSSIA TO LIMIT THE ACTIVITIES OF NATO. WE WERE TOLD THAT [REGARDING] LEGALLY BINDING GUARANTEE OF SECURITY, ONLY NATO MEMBERS COULD HAVE [SUCH] GUARANTEE.

LAST DECEMBER, WE SENT OUR PARTNERS A DRAFT DOCUMENT ABOUT SECURITY GUARANTEES, AND AN AGREEMENT ON MEASURES TO ENHANCE RUSSIAN SECURITY AND NATO MEMBERS' SECURITY. IN RESPONSE, NATO MEMBERS AND THE U.S. SAID A LOT OF WORDS. THERE WERE SOME REASONABLE IDEAS, BUT THEY TALK ABOUT SECONDARY THINGS. LOOK AT THE ATTEMPTS TO BRING THIS DISCUSSION AWAY FROM THE MAIN POINT. I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE ARE READY TO NEGOTIATE, ON THE CONDITION THAT ALL MATTERS BE CONSIDERED IN A PACKAGE, WITHOUT GOING AWAY FROM OUR MAIN PROPOSALS. OUR PROPOSALS HAVE THREE MAIN ITEMS. FIRST, NON-EXPANSION OF NATO TO THE EAST. SECOND, NON-DEPLOYMENT OF OFFENSIVE WEAPONS NEXT TO OUR BORDERS. THIRD, BRINGING MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE BACK TO THE CONSIDERATION OF 1997.

THE WEST & NATO HAVE IGNORED RUSSIA'S NEED FOR SECURITY ASSURANCES

THESE PROPOSALS WERE IGNORED. OUR WESTERN PARTNERS ONCE AGAIN SAY THE SAME WORDS. FREEDOM TO CHOOSE WAYS TO ENHANCE SECURITY, TO PROVIDE SECURITY, THEY TALK ABOUT THE SAME OPEN-DOOR POLICY. ONCE AGAIN, THEY TRIED TO BLACKMAIL US. ONCE AGAIN, THEY THREATENED US WITH SANCTIONS. THEY WILL STILL IMPOSE THOSE, THE STRONGER AND MORE POWERFUL OUR COUNTRY BECOMES. THEY WILL ALWAYS FIND AN EXCUSE TO IMPOSE MORE SANCTIONS, REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE. THEIR ONLY GOAL IS TO CONTAIN RUSSIA'S DEVELOPMENT. THEY'LL DO THAT AS THEY DID BEFORE, BUT WE'LL NEVER CONCEDE OUR SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONAL INTERESTS, OR VALUES.

I WANT TO BE FRANK. IN THE CURRENT SITUATION, WHEN OUR PROPOSALS RECEIVE NO
RESPONSE FROM THE U.S. AND NATO, WHEN THE THREAT LEVEL AGAINST OUR COUNTRY IS BECOMING GREATER AND GREATER, RUSSIA HAS A RIGHT TO TAKE COUNTERMEASURES TO ENHANCE ITS SECURITY. THAT IS HOW WE PLAN. AS FOR THIS SITUATION, WE CONCEDE A LACK OF WILLINGNESS TO IMPLEMENT AN AGREEMENT TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT. THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION. YOU REMEMBER HOW IT ENDED. NOW, ALMOST DAILY THEY ARE SHELLING SETTLEMENTS. THEY HAVE AMASSED LARGE TROOPS. THEY ARE USING VEHICLES AND OTHER HEAVY MACHINERY. THEY ARE TORTURING PEOPLE, CHILDREN, WOMEN, ELDERLY PEOPLE. IT DOES NOT STOP. WE HAVE SEEN NO END TO IT.

THE SO-CALLED CIVILIZED WORLD AND OUR WESTERN COLLEAGUES PROCLAIM THEMSELVES TO BE THE ONLY REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS. THEY PREFER NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS. THERE IS NO GENOCIDE PERPETUATED AGAINST 14 MILLION PEOPLE. THE ONLY REASON IS THAT THESE PEOPLE DID NOT WANT TO BACK THE [UKRAINIAN] COUP D’ETAT IN 2014. THEY STOOD AGAINST THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS NATIONALISM, STONE AGE NATIONALISM.

THEY WANT TO DEFEND BASIC RIGHTS, TO SPEAK THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE, TO PRESERVE THEIR TRADITIONS AND CULTURE. HOW MUCH LONGER? RUSSIA DID EVERYTHING IT COULD TO KEEP THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF UKRAINE. WE TRIED HARD TO IMPLEMENT THE RESOLUTION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. IT ENDORSED THE MINSK AGREEMENT TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION. BUT ALL WAS DONE IN VAIN. PRESIDENTS ARE CHANGING, PARLIAMENT MEMBERS ARE CHANGING, BUT THE AGGRESSIVE REGIME REMAINS THE SAME. A REGIME THAT SEIZED POWER IN KIEV. THAT IS WHAT HAS BEEN CREATED BY THE COUP D’ETAT IN 2014.

RUSSIA NOW RECOGNIZES THE INDEPENDENCE OF DONETSK & LUHANSK AND DEMANDS THAT THE UKRAINIAN REGIME NOW IN POWER “STOP IMMEDIATELY”

THOSE WHO CHOOSE VIOLENCE ADMIT TO SEEING NO OTHER WAY TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS OTHER THAN THE MILITARY WAY. IN THIS REGARD, I DEEM IT NECESSARY TO MAKE A DECISION THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE A LONG TIME AGO [IN 2014] – TO IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZE THE INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLICS [DONETSK AND LUHANSK, IN EASTERN UKRAINE, WHICH DECLARED INDEPENDENCE AFTER THE ELECTION OF 2014].

I ASK THE [RUSSIAN] FEDERAL ASSEMBLY [THE PARLIAMENT] TO SUPPORT THIS DECISION, TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL HELP WITH THOSE TWO REPUBLICS. WE WILL DRAFT THIS DOCUMENT AND SIGN IT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THOSE WHO SEIZE AND KEEP THE POWER IN UKRAINE, WE DEMAND TO STOP IMMEDIATELY. OTHERWISE, RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POSSIBLE CONTINUATION WILL BE ON THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE REGIME NOW RULING IN KIEV. IN MAKING THIS DECISION, I AM CONFIDENT I WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.
PUTIN: Thank you very much dear Madam Federal Chancellor, Mr. Teltschik, ladies and gentlemen. I am truly grateful to be invited to such a representative conference that has assembled politicians, military officials, entrepreneurs and experts from more than 40 nations.

This conference’s structure allows me to avoid excessive politeness and the need to speak in roundabout, pleasant, but empty diplomatic terms. This conference’s format will allow me to say what I really think about international security problems. If my comments seem unduly polemical, pointed, or inexact to our colleagues, I ask you not to get angry with me. After all, this is only a conference. And I hope that after the first two or three minutes of my speech Mr. Teltschik will not turn on the red light over there.

It is well known that international security comprises much more than issues relating to military and political stability. It involves the stability of the global economy, overcoming poverty, economic security and developing a dialogue between civilizations. This universal, indivisible character of security is expressed as the basic principle that “security for one is security for all,” in the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt, spoken during the first few days of WWII. “When peace has been broken anywhere,” he said, “the peace of all countries everywhere is in danger.”

These words remain topical today. Incidentally, the theme of our conference – global crises, global responsibility – exemplifies this. Only two decades ago, the world was ideologically and economically divided. It was the huge strategic potential of two superpowers – the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. – that ensured global security. This global stand-off pushed the sharpest economic and social problems to the margins of the international community’s agenda. Like any war, the Cold War left us with live ammunition, figuratively speaking. I am referring to ideological stereotypes, double standards and other typical aspects of Cold War bloc thinking.

The unipolar world that had been proposed after the Cold War did not take place either. The history of humanity certainly has gone through unipolar periods and has seen aspirations for world supremacy. But what is a unipolar world? In whatever way we might embellish the term, unipolar, in the end, means one type of situation, namely, one center of authority, one center of force, one center of decision-making. It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. At the end of the day this is pernicious, not only for all those within the system, but for the unipolar sovereign itself, because it destroys itself from within. This certainly has nothing in common with democracy because, as you know, democracy is the power of the majority, as against the interests and opinions of the minority.

Incidentally, Russia is constantly being lectured about democracy. But for some reason, those who try to teach us do not want to learn themselves. I consider the unipolar model not only unacceptable but also impossible in today’s world, and not only because the military, political and economic resources needed to maintain singular, individual political leadership in today’s world would not suffice. Even more important, the unipolar model itself is flawed because at its base there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilization.

Along with this, what is happening in today’s world is an effort to introduce the concept of a unipolar world into international affairs. With what results? Unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions, which have not solved any problems. Indeed, they’ve caused new human tragedies and new centers of tension. Judge for yourselves: broad wars as well as local and regional conflicts have not diminished. No fewer people perish in these conflicts. Even more are dying than before – significantly more, significantly more!

Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of military force in international relations, force
that’s plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflict. As a result, we do not have sufficient strength to find a comprehensive solution to any one of these conflicts. Finding a political settlement also becomes impossible. We are seeing a greater disdain for the basic principles of international law and independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state’s legal system. One state and, of course, first and foremost the U.S.A., has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural, and educational policies it imposes on other nations. Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?

In international relations we increasingly see the desire to resolve a given question according to so-called issues of political expediency, based on the current political climate. Of course, this is extremely dangerous. It results in no one feeling safe. I want to emphasize this. No one feels safe, because no one feels international law to be like a stone wall that protects them. Of course, such a policy stimulates an arms race. The force’s dominance inevitably encourages many countries to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, significantly new threats – although they were also well-known before – have appeared; today, threats such as terrorism have taken on a global character.

I am convinced that we have reached that decisive moment when we must seriously think about the architecture of global security. We must proceed by searching for a reasonable balance between the interests of all participants in the international dialogue, especially since the international landscape is so varied and changes so quickly. We see dynamic developments in so many countries and regions. The combined GDP (purchasing power parity) of India and China is already greater than that of the U.S.A. The total GDP of BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India, and China – surpasses the cumulative GDP of the European Union. According to experts, this gap will only increase in the future. There is no reason to doubt that the economic potential of the new centers of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity.

In connection with this, the role of multilateral diplomacy is significantly increasing. The need for principles such as openness, transparency, and predictability in politics is uncontested. The use of force should be an exceptional measure, comparable to using the death penalty in the judicial systems of certain states. However, we are witnessing the opposite tendency today, with countries forbidding the death penalty even for murderers and other dangerous criminals. They are airily participating in illegitimate military operations. In fact, these conflicts are killing people – hundreds and thousands of civilians.

At the same time, the question arises of whether we should be indifferent to various internal conflicts inside countries, to authoritarian regimes, to tyrants, and to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This was at the center of the question our dear colleague Mr. Lieberman asked the Federal Chancellor. If I correctly understood it, then of course it is a serious one. Can we be indifferent observers in view of what is happening? I will try to answer your question as well: of course not. But do we have the means to counter these threats? Certainly, we do. It is sufficient to look at recent history. Did not our country have a peaceful transition to democracy? Indeed, we witnessed a peaceful transformation of the Soviet regime (1990-91) – a peaceful transformation! And what a regime, with many weapons, including nuclear weapons! Why should we start bombing and shooting now at every available opportunity? Is it that without the threat of mutual destruction, we do not have enough political culture, respect for democratic values and for the law?

I am convinced that the only mechanism that can make decisions about using military force as a last resort is the Charter of the United Nations. And in connection with this, either I did not understand what our colleague, the Italian Defense Minister, just said or what he said was inexact. In any case, I understood that the use of force can only be legitimate when the decision is taken by NATO, the EU, or the UN. If he really does think so, then we have different points of view. Or I didn’t hear correctly. The use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the UN. And we do not need to substitute NATO or the EU for the UN.

When the UN will truly unite the forces of the international community and can really react to events in various countries, when we will leave behind this disdain for international law, then the situation will be able to change. Otherwise, the situation will simply result in a dead end, and the number of serious mistakes will be multiplied. Along with this, it is necessary to make sure that international law has a universal character, both in the conception and application of its norms.
must not forget that democratic political actions necessarily go along with discussion and a laborious decision-making process.

The potential danger of the destabilization of international relations is linked to obvious stagnation on dialogue over disarmament. Russia supports renewal of dialogue on this important question. It is important to conserve the international legal framework relating to weapons destruction, to ensure continuity in the process of reducing nuclear weapons. Together with the U.S.A., we agreed to reduce our nuclear strategic missile capabilities to up to 1700-2000 nuclear warheads by the end of 2012. Russia intends to strictly fulfil its obligations. We hope our partners will also act transparently and refrain from laying aside a couple of hundred superfluous nuclear warheads for a rainy day. If today the new American Defense Secretary declares that the U.S.A. will not hide these superfluous weapons in warehouse or, as one might say, under a pillow or under the blanket, then I suggest we all rise and greet this declaration standing. It would be a very important declaration. Russia strictly adheres to, and intends to further adhere to, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as to the multilateral supervision regime for missile technologies. The principles incorporated in these documents are universal ones.

In connection with this I would like to recall that in the 1980s the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. signed an agreement to destroy a whole range of small and medium-range missiles, but these documents do not have a universal character. Today, many other countries have these missiles, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel. Many countries are working on these systems and plan to incorporate them as part of their weapons arsenals. Only the U.S.A. and Russia bear the responsibility to not create such weapons systems. It is obvious that under these conditions we must think about ensuring our own security.

At the same time, it is impossible to sanction the appearance of new, destabilizing high-tech weapons. This refers to measures to prevent a new area of confrontation, especially in outer space. Star Wars (America's Strategic Defense Initiative, or “SDI”), is no longer a fantasy but a reality. In the middle of the 1980s our American partners were already able to intercept their own satellite. In Russia's opinion, the militarization of outer space could have unpredictable consequences for the international community. It could provoke nothing less than a new nuclear era. We've come forward more than once with initiatives designed to prevent the use of weapons in outer space. Today I would like to tell you that we have prepared a project for an agreement on the prevention of deploying weapons in outer space. Before long, it will be sent to our partners as an official proposal. Let's work on this together.

Plans to expand certain elements of the anti-missile defense system to Europe cannot help but disturb us. Who needs the next step of what would be, in this case, an inevitable arms race? I deeply doubt that Europeans themselves do. Missile weapons with a range of about five to eight thousand kilometers pose a threat to Europe and do not exist in any of the so-called problem countries. This will not happen in the nearer future; it is not even foreseeable. And any hypothetical launch of, for example, a North Korean rocket to American territory, through western Europe, obviously contradicts the laws of ballistics. As we say in Russia, it would be like using the right hand to reach the left ear.

Here in Germany, I cannot help but mention the pitiable condition of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was signed in 1999. It reflected a new geopolitical reality, namely the elimination of the Warsaw bloc. Seven years have passed and only four states have ratified this document, including the Russian Federation.

NATO countries openly declared that they will not ratify this treaty, including the provisions on flank restrictions (on deploying a certain number of armed forces in the flank zones) until Russia removed its military bases from Georgia and Moldova. Our army is leaving Georgia, even according to an accelerated schedule. We resolved the problems we had with our Georgian colleagues, as everybody knows. There are still 1,500 servicemen in Moldova that are carrying out peacekeeping operations and protecting warehouses with ammunition left over from Soviet times. We constantly discuss this issue with Mr. Solana and he knows our position. We are ready to further work in this direction.

But what is happening at the same time? Simultaneously, the so-called flexible frontline American bases, with up to five thousand men in each. It turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders, and we continue to strictly fulfil the treaty obligations and do not
react to these actions at all. I think it is obvious that NATO expansion isn’t due to any modernization of the Alliance or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991? Where are those declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr. Woerner, in Brussels, on May 17, 1990. He said “the fact that we are not ready to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee.”

Where are these guarantees? The stones and concrete blocks of the Berlin Wall have long been distributed as souvenirs. Don’t forget, the fall of the Berlin Wall was possible thanks to a historic choice – one also made by our people, the people of Russia – a choice in favor of democracy, freedom, openness, and a sincere partnership with all the members of the big European family. And now they are trying to impose new dividing lines and walls on us. These walls may be virtual, but they are dividing us, nevertheless, cutting through our continent. Is it possible that we will once again require many years and decades, as well as several generations of politicians, to dissemble and dismantle these new walls?

We are unequivocally in favor of strengthening the regime of non-proliferation. The present international legal principles allow us to develop technologies to manufacture nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes. Many countries with good reasons want to create their own nuclear power as a basis for their energy independence. But we also understand that these technologies can be quickly transformed into nuclear weapons. This creates serious international tensions.

The situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear program acts as a clear example. If the international community does not find a reasonable solution to this problem, this conflict of interests, the world will continue to suffer similar, destabilizing crises, because there are more threshold countries than simply Iran. We know this. We are going to constantly fight against the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Last year Russia put forward an initiative to establish international centers for the enrichment of uranium. We are open to the possibility that such centers not only be created in Russia, but also in other countries where there is a legitimate basis for using civil nuclear energy. Countries that want to develop their nuclear energy could guarantee that they will receive fuel through direct participation in these centers. And the centers would, of course, operate under strict IAEA supervision.

The latest initiatives put forward by American President George W. Bush are in conformity with the Russian proposals. I consider Russia and the U.S.A. to be objectively and equally interested in strengthening the regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their deployment. It is precisely our countries, with leading nuclear and missile capabilities, that must act as leaders in developing new, stricter non-proliferation measures. Russia is ready for such work. We are engaged in consultations with our American friends.

In general, we should talk about establishing a whole system of political incentives and economic stimuli whereby it would not be in states’ interests to establish their own capabilities in nuclear fuel but would still have an opportunity to develop nuclear energy and strengthen their energy capabilities. In the energy sector Russia intends to create uniform market principles and transparent conditions for all. It is obvious that energy prices must be determined by the market instead of being subject to political speculation, economic pressure, or blackmail. We are open to cooperation. Foreign companies participate in all our major energy projects. According to different estimates, up to 26% of oil extraction in Russia is done by foreign capital. Try to find me a similar example where Russian business participates extensively in key economic sectors in western countries. Such examples do not exist! There are no such examples.

I would also recall the parity of foreign investments in Russia and those Russia makes abroad. The parity is about fifteen to one. Here is an obvious example of the openness and stability of the Russian economy. Economic security is the sector in which all must adhere to uniform principles. We are ready to compete fairly. For that reason, more and more opportunities are appearing in the Russian economy. Experts and our western partners are objectively evaluating these changes. As such, Russia’s OECD sovereign credit rating has improved, and Russia has passed from the fourth to the third group. In Munich today I’d like to use this occasion to thank our German colleagues for their help in the above decision.
Furthermore, as you know, the process of Russia joining the WTO has reached its final stages. I would point out that during long, difficult talks we heard words about freedom of speech, free trade, and equal possibilities more than once, for some reason, exclusively in reference to the Russian market.

One more important theme directly affects global security. Today many people talk about the struggle against poverty. What’s happening in this sphere? On the one hand, financial resources are allocated for programs to help the world’s poorest countries, at times substantial financial resources. But to be honest — and many here also know this — the resources are linked with the development of that same donor country’s companies. On the other hand, developed countries simultaneously keep their agricultural subsidies and limit some countries’ access to high-tech products. One hand distributes charitable help while the other preserves economic backwardness and reaps the profits thereof. The increasing social tension in depressed regions inevitably results in the growth of radicalism and extremism. It feeds terrorism and local conflicts. When this happens in a region like the Middle East, where there is increasingly a sense that the world at large is unfair, there is a greater risk of global destabilization. It is obvious that the world’s leading countries should see this threat, and therefore build a more democratic, fairer system of global economic relations, one that gives everyone a chance and possibility to develop.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, speaking at this Conference on Security Policy, it is impossible not to mention the activities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). As is well-known, it was created to examine all aspects of security: military, political, economic, humanitarian and, especially, the relations between these spheres. What do we see happening today? The balance is clearly destroyed. People are trying to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument designed to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries. The task is also being accomplished by OSCE’s bureaucratic apparatus, which isn’t connected with the state founders in any way. Decision-making procedures and the involvement of so-called nongovernmental organizations are tailored for this task. These organizations are formally independent, but are purposefully financed, therefore under control.

According to OSCE’s founding documents, in the humanitarian sphere it is designed to assist country members in observing international human rights norms at their request. This is an important task. We support this. But this does not mean interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and especially not imposing a regime that determines how these states should live and develop. Such interference does not promote the development of democratic states at all; on the contrary, it makes them dependent and, as a result, politically and economically unstable. We expect the OSCE to be guided by its primary tasks and to build relations with sovereign states based on respect, trust, and transparency.

In conclusion, I would like to note the following. We often hear appeals by our partners, including in Europe, to the effect that Russia should play an increasingly active role in world affairs. Allow me to make one small remark. It is hardly necessary to invite us to do so. Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy. We are not going to change this tradition today. At the same time, we are aware of how the world has changed. We have a realistic sense of our own opportunities and potential. We’d like to interact with responsible and independent partners with whom we could work together in constructing a fair, democratic world order that would ensure security and prosperity not only for a select few, but for all.

Thank you for your attention.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: You talked about the danger of a unipolar world in which one sovereign decides without consulting anyone else. In many people’s opinion, in Russia we are seeing an increasingly unipolar government where competing centers of influence are forced to tow the party line, whether it be in the State Duma, the regional leadership, the media, business communities or nongovernmental organizations. Would a unipolar government be such a reliable partner when the issue of energy security is at stake?

PUTIN: Today the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the United Russia Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and other political forces as well sit in the Russian parliament. Their basic positions differ significantly. If you aren’t aware of this then just have a talk with the leadership of the Communist Party of the Rus-
sian Federation and then with the leader of our liberal democrats, Mr. Zhirinovsky. You will see the difference at once. There is no problem here, simply go to Moscow and talk to them. Our plans include a desire to have a mature political system, a multi-party system with responsible politicians who can anticipate the country’s development and not only work responsibly before elections and immediately after, but also over the long-term. That is what we aspire to. This system will certainly be a multi-party one. All our actions within Russia, including changing the State Duma election regime and the election regime in the Russian parliament are designed to strengthen a multi-party system in Russia.

QUESTION: Your opinion of NATO and NATO expansion suggests that each is dangerous for Russia. Would you acknowledge that this is not expansion but rather the self-determination of democratic states who want NATO membership, that NATO finds it difficult to accept states that do not declare this readiness? You could admit that thanks to NATO expansion eastern borders have become more reliable, more secure. Why are you afraid of democracy? I am convinced that only democratic states can become members of NATO. This stabilizes neighbors.

PUTIN: Regarding our perception of NATO’s eastern expansion, I already mentioned the guarantees that were made and that are not being observed today. Do you happen to think that this is normal practice in international affairs? But all right, forget it. Forget these guarantees. With respect to democracy and NATO expansion, NATO is not a universal organization, as opposed to the UN. It is first and foremost a military and political alliance – military and political! Well, ensuring one’s own security is the right of any sovereign state. We are not arguing against this. Of course, we are not objecting to this. But why is it necessary to put military infrastructure on our borders during this expansion? Can someone answer this question? Is the expansion of military infrastructure connected to fighting against today’s global threats? Let’s put it this way: What is the most important of these threats for us today – the most important for Russia, the U.S.A. and Europe? It is terrorism and the fight against it. Does one need Russia to fight against terrorism? Of course! Does one need India to fight against terrorism! Of course! But we are not members of NATO – and other countries aren’t either. We can only work on this issue effectively by joining our forces. Expanding military infrastructure to our borders is not connected in any way to the democratic choices of individual states. I would ask that we not mix these two concepts.

QUESTION: Mr. President, your speech was both sincere and frank. I hope that you understand my frank and direct question. In the 1990s Russian experts actively helped Iran develop missile technologies. Iran now has advanced medium- and long-range missiles that would enable it to strike Russia and part of Europe. They are also working towards placing nuclear warheads on these missiles. Your country has made efforts to negotiate with Iran on this issue and supported the UN Security Council resolution to prevent Iran from carrying out such a policy. My question is as follows: what efforts will Russia make – through the UN or otherwise – to stop these very serious events in Iran?

QUESTION: First, about arms control. Who needs a new arms race? I want to point out that the U.S.A. has not developed a new strategic weapon in more than two decades and that you recently tested the Topol-M missile, and that it is already deployed in silos and on mobile installations. You criticized the USA for unilateral actions and said twice that military actions can only be legitimate if they receive UN approval. The USA is carrying out military actions in Iraq and in Afghanistan according to UN decisions and today in Kosovo the majority of troops are supporting peace-making operations in this country. My question is the following: are you saying that independently of how Russia perceives a threat to its international interests, it will not undertake military operations without UN approval?

PUTIN: “The USA are not developing strategic weapons, but Russia is. Will Russia use force in the future if it is not sanctioned by the UN? Russia is developing a system of strategic weapons.” Fine question, excellent! I’m very grateful to you for this question. It will give me the opportunity to talk about the essence of what is happening. What are we indebted to in past decades is this: a stand-off between two superpowers and two systems, nevertheless a big war didn’t occur. We are indebted to the balance of powers between these two superpowers. There was an equilibrium and a fear of mutual destruction. In those days one party was afraid to make an extra step without consulting the other. This was certainly a fragile peace and a frightening one. But as we see today, it was reliable enough. Today, it seems that the peace is not so reliable.

Yes, the U.S.A. is ostensibly not developing an offensive
weapon, but the public does not know this. It is certainly developing them. But we aren’t even going to ask about this now. We know these developments are proceeding. But we pretend we don’t know. We say they aren’t developing new weapons, but what do we know? That the U.S.A is actively developing and already strengthening an anti-missile defense system. Today this system is ineffective, but we do not know exactly whether it will one day be effective. In theory it is being created for defensive purposes. Hypothetically, we recognize that when this moment arrives, the possible threat from our nuclear forces – Russia’s present nuclear capabilities – will be completely neutralized. That is. The balance of powers will be absolutely destroyed and one of the parties will benefit from the feeling of complete security. This means that its hands will be free not only in local but eventually also in global conflicts. We are discussing this with you now.

I would not want anyone to suspect any aggressive intentions on our part. But the system of international relations is like mathematics. There are no personal dimensions. And of course, we should react to this. How? Either the same as you – by building a multi-billion-dollar anti-missile system or, in view of our present economic and financial possibilities, by developing an asymmetrical answer. Then everybody can understand that the anti-missile defense system is useless against Russia because we have certain weapons that easily overcome it. And we are proceeding in this direction. It is cheaper for us. And this is in no way directed against the U.S.A.

I completely agree if you say that the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is not directed against us, just as our new weapons are not directed against you. I fully agree with my colleague and my friend about another thing. Despite all our disagreements, I consider the President of the U.S.A. (George W. Bush) my friend. He is a decent person. I know that today the wolves can blame the U.S.A for everything that is being done on the international arena and internally, but I know that he is a decent person. It is possible to talk to him and reach agreements with him. When I talked to him, he said: “I proceed from the fact that Russia and the U.S.A. will never be opponents and enemies again.” I agree with him. But I repeat once again that there are symmetries and asymmetries here. There is nothing personal. It is simply a calculation.

Now, about whether Russia will use military force without the sanction of the UN. We will always operate strictly within the international legal framework. My basic education is in law, so I will allow myself to remind both myself and my colleagues that according to the UN Charter, peace-keeping operations require the sanction of both the UN and the UN Security Council. This is for peace-keeping operations. But in the UN Charter there is also an article about self-defense – and no sanctions are required in this case.